

The Nation

0CT2988
TN MISS05D627H0191 03
MR HAROLD WEISBERG
7627 OLD RECEIVER RD
FREDERICK MD 21701
5P2
DIR

January 9, 1988 \$1.25; U.K. £1

EDITORIAL

THE BEST OF 1988 TO YOU

At this conjunction of the old and new years, the press is wont to wallow in the past, reviewing the most important stories of 1987. Rather than recite a litany of disasters, follies and tragedies, we prefer to look ahead—not to predict but to express freely our wishes on the glorious tabula rasa of the future. (For a true exercise in futurology, see "Cuomo's Diary," on page 3.) Herewith a happy headline history of the major events of 1988:

"U.S. Abandons S.D.I. Program; President Admits He Got Idea for Space Defense From 'Flash Gordon' Comic Book"

"Meese Resigns; Says Failure to Pass Urine Test 'Hampers' His Ability to Serve as Chief U.S. Law Officer"

"Pat Robertson Struck by Lightning During Campaign Speech, Withdraws From Race, Calling It a 'Sign'"

"Oliver North Weds Ms. Hall; Former N.S.C. Aide Admits Pair Devised Iran/Contra Arms Sale to Cover Up Their Romance"

"Bush Confesses He Had 'Many' Extramarital Affairs, Says They Prove He's No Wimp: 'I Chased a Little Ass, So What?'"

"Khomeini Agrees to Arm-Wrestle Saddam Hussein; Winner's Country to Be Declared Victor in Gulf War"

"Bare Thatcher Love Nest: Commons Narrowly Defeats P.M.'s Move to Abolish British Press"

"New Hite Report Shows Adultery Rate Rose Among Reporters in Wake of Gary Hart-Donna Rice Scandal: Author Says Too Many Sex Stories 'Demoralizing' Press"

"Reagan, Gorbachev Sign START Treaty, Leaders Vow a Phase-Out of All Nuclear Weapons"

The last headline represents our serious wish for our readers and for the world.

CUOMO'S DIARY

NEW LIGHT ON REMINGTON MURDER

Lee W. Jones

CATHOLIC DISSENTERS

Adelle-Marie
Stan

OLLIE'S NAVY

David Corn

THE DE MAN AFFAIR

Jon Wiener

ARE 17-YEAR-OLDS DUMB?

Deborah Meier
Florence Miller
Etta Mooser

THE POLITICS OF RAGE

PALESTINIAN YOUTH COMES OF AGE

AS'AD ABUKHALIL

The popular uprising in the Israeli-occupied territories of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank heralds the emergence of a new generation of Palestinians. In the past few weeks a network of young people, most in their teens, have seized the initiative and relegated the traditional leaders of the Palestinian national movement to the sidelines.

It is too soon to say for sure how this phenomenon will transform the Palestine Liberation Organization's structure and policies. However, it is clear that new forces are emerging among the Palestinian youths in the refugee camps of Lebanon and Syria. They are the Fatah-Revolutionary Council (Fatah-R.C.), known in the West as the Abu Nidal group, and a new Palestinian Sunni fundamentalist movement encouraged but not created by Iran. The former is attracting youth because it stands for a renewed commitment to armed struggle and can claim to be free of the corruption and ties to various Arab regimes that have plagued the main groups of the P.L.O.; the latter because it offers inspiration to a generation that has seen other, secular ideologies fail. There are no conspiratorial scenarios, all too popular in the Western press, that can explain these new trends. Rather, the underlying causes for their emergence are deeply rooted in the long history of Palestinian statelessness and displacement.

The two most significant developments that have shaped Palestinian attitudes in the past decade are undoubtedly the Israeli invasion of Lebanon (including, of course, the massacres at Sabra and Shatila) and the past three years of human attrition in the camps in that country. The

(Continued on Page 18)

The Phaler case is only one of several instances that provoke suspicion about the integrity of *contra*-related investigations run by Federal agencies. The Iran/*contra* committees, in their final report, listed seven episodes in which North or then-national security adviser John Poindexter interfered with probes that got too close to their secret *contra* support operations. Three involved the Customs Service in 1986. In one, North persuaded von Raab to delay an investigation into allegations that the Maule Aircraft corporation had shipped four aircraft to the *contras* in possible violation of U.S. export law. In another, North and Poindexter succeeded in blocking a Customs inquiry into Southern Air Transport, which was connected to both the covert *contra* resupply operation and the Iran initiative. During the hearings, retired Col. Robert Dutton, who supervised the resupply activity, testified that North said he spoke to Attorney General Meese about this probe and then told Dutton "it would be taken care of." The Customs agents, Dutton said, "didn't show up again." In the third case, a top Customs official handed over to Robert Owen the only copy of tape-recordings made by a Customs informant who had gone to Costa Rica to investigate a counterfeiting and drug ring that allegedly included Drug Enforcement Agency officials.

Though investigators for the Iran/*contra* committees were aware of the Phaler deal, they did not explore the matter fully. "We did not have the resources or the time," said one staff member. Owen was asked by committee investigators about the stealth boats prior to his public testimony. When he appeared, however, Owen was not queried about the ships. The craft—and the quashed investigation—were never mentioned during the hearings.

And so the question remains, Who in Customs decided to kill what field officials thought was a promising investigation? And what prompted that decision? These are questions that the House subcommittee on crime, which is now investigating various aspects of the Iran/*contra* affair, should try to answer.

The suspended Phaler investigation offers further evidence that the White House's covert crusade against Nicaragua undermined law enforcement in the supposed law-and-order Administration of Ronald Reagan. "A lot of cases," a former Justice Department official said with some bitterness, "brought issues like this. . . . You're dealing with a Republican-run Department of Justice and Customs. It's very difficult. You're talking about their friends and their secret plans. . . . This was very enlightening, in a disturbing way." □

The Nation.

PUBLISHING INTERNSHIPS

The Nation offers a comprehensive intern program for students and recent college graduates interested in magazine journalism and publishing. Write: The Nation Internship Program, 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011.

Palestinian Youth

(Continued From Front Cover)

Israeli invasion led many Palestinians to question the wisdom and rightness of the military and political policies pursued by the P.L.O. leadership over the years. Many demanded a new definition of "struggle" (a key word in the Palestinian political lexicon) in order to condemn the widespread corruption and lethargy in P.L.O. ranks before 1982. The dissident movement within Yasir Arafat's Fatah organization, which was launched in the spring of 1983 and led by the veteran P.L.O. commanders Abu Musa and Abu Khalid al-Amlah, initially attracted many of those disillusioned young Palestinians who were looking for new answers to an old problem. Abu Musa and Abu Khalid promised an escalation in the military confrontation with Israel, in sharp contrast to Arafat's acceptance of several cease-fires in the period prior to the invasion, and rejected diplomatic maneuvering as futile.

Nevertheless, the Abu Musa group quickly lost its popularity. It was discredited in the eyes of many Palestinians as early as the summer of 1983, when Syrian troops used its fighters to defeat Arafat's forces in the northern port city of Tripoli, utilizing indiscriminate shelling of refugee camps. The dissident movement also lost support when it incorporated many former P.L.O. leaders and members who were notorious for their corruption and thuggery in pre-1982 Lebanon. Furthermore, the fierce battles that erupted in 1985 between Shiite Lebanese militias backed by Syria and Palestinians in the refugee camps of Beirut eroded the last vestiges of respect for Abu Musa and his comrades. What became known as the war of the camps illustrated that the dissident movement was no more than a pawn of the Syrian regime, to be used even in inter-Palestinian fighting, thus undermining the dissidents' claim to political independence.

Abu Nidal was the first to take advantage of the changing situation. By gradually distancing himself from the Syrian regime and by heavily engaging his forces in the defense of the camps, his organization was able to attract many disenchanted fighters from other P.L.O. organizations. Fatah-R.C. came to symbolize "action against all enemies" and "insulation from the corruption of Beirut." En masse desertion from Abu Musa's movement to Fatah-R.C. is geometrically increasing the size of the organization to an extent that worries the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (the Marxist-Leninist Palestinian organization led by George Habash) and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (another Marxist-Leninist Palestinian organization, led by Nayef Hawatmah). Both are older splinter groups that have historically appealed to frustrated and disillusioned Fatah members but are now seen as too dependent on the Syrian regime and too close to what Fatah represents in its military practice and political objectives. In the Rashidiyyah camp, near Tyre, for example, the fighting

As'ad AbuKhalil is finishing his doctoral dissertation in comparative government at Georgetown University.

Force of the Fatah-R.C. is second only to the power of Arafat's Fatah. In Syria, the government became increasingly uncomfortable with the erosion of popular support for Abu Musa's people in Syrian refugee camps in favor of Abu Nidal, and finally closed Abu Nidal's offices and expelled his men from the country in the summer of 1987. (It should be noted that there is no evidence, as yet, of Abu Nidal's links to Palestinians in the occupied territories.)

The new situation has forced the leaders of Fatah-R.C. to restructure their organization. To be sure, the old secretive organization, which has been responsible for several notorious acts of violence that have claimed the lives of innocent civilians, such as the attacks at the Rome and Vienna airports in 1985, has been maintained. However, a new structure was created to help Fatah-R.C. broaden its appeal in public recruitment. These two organizationally independent structures now constitute the Abu Nidal group. The internal organizational bodies, which are superficially similar to the organization of Freemasonry, still insist on a degree of secrecy. No Palestinian—or other Arab—is allowed to become a member unless that person passes through a trial period lasting nearly a year, which is called having candidacy status. After the candidate becomes a member, he (or sometimes she) pledges an oath never to leave the organization. This strict condition may account for the high number of executions that take place within its ranks. Every issue of the Fatah-R.C.'s weekly publication, *Filastin ath-Thawrah*, contains reports of executions of members who are typically called "traitors." The issue of March 31, 1987, for example, announces the execution of "two murderous agents . . . of the dirty king," in reference to Jordan's King Hussein. Such practices incite terror within the rank and file of the organization and insure strict obedience and discipline.

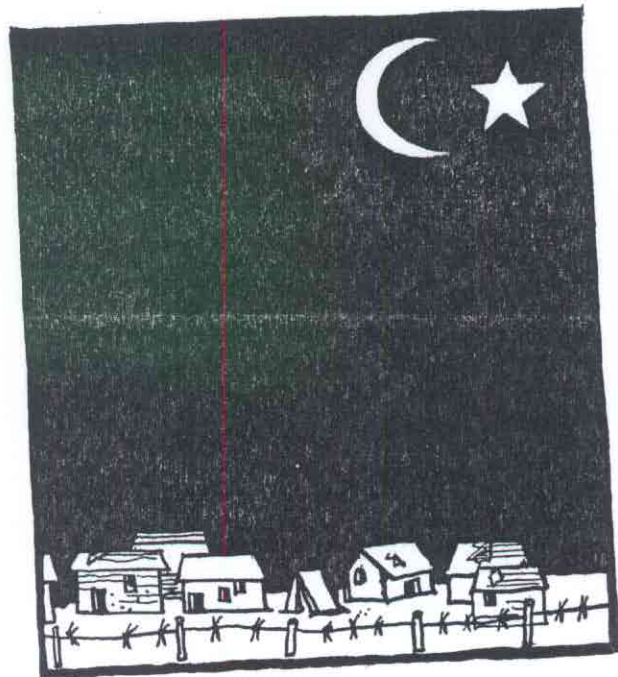
The growth of the Abu Nidal group has led it for the first time in its history to operate in public, to organize and sponsor rallies in Lebanon and Syria and to attempt to establish a mass-based organization to compete with other P.L.O. factions. This new method of operation was in evidence by early last November, when Walid Khalid, a Lebanon-based leader of the group, claimed that the Fatah-R.C. had hijacked a boat with Israeli passengers aboard. Much to the surprise and embarrassment of the Abu Nidal group, the passengers turned out not to be Israelis (they are believed to be Europeans). As of this writing, eight hostages are still being held. Other Palestinian groups have criticized the operation for its sloppiness. Nonetheless, it is significant that the whole event, which was shrouded in much confusion, was not conducted in secrecy. Khalid chose to face the press unhooded, in a local hotel.

The success of the Fatah-R.C. in its expansion and recruitment campaigns was recognized in Arafat's agreement to meet with Abu Nidal's representatives in April 1987 in order to bring him under the wings of the P.L.O., in sharp contradiction to past P.L.O. pledges to "liquidate the presence of Abu Nidal and his men." Arafat even offered to grant Fatah-R.C. official recognition and membership within the various P.L.O. bodies. Negotiations between the two

organizations eventually concluded with an agreement that ended the state of war between them—an important step, given that Abu Nidal's men had killed several P.L.O. representatives in Europe for having met with Israelis. Abu Nidal also pledged to suspend temporarily all "international military operations." However, the prospects for a continuing improvement of ties between the two groups will depend to a large degree on Arafat's relationship with Syria and the changing political map of the Lebanese camps.

The other new movement is a pro-Iranian Palestinian fundamentalist organization (a Palestinian Party of God of sorts) that is developing within the womb of Arafat's Fatah. Leaders of the new movement are recruiting and organizing in order to capture the leadership of the largest Palestinian organization. They appeal to a generation that sees religion as a radical form of political expression and mobilization and that perceives Marxism and Baathism (the official ideology of the ruling regimes of Syria and Iraq) as bankrupt.

Fundamentalism is not a uniquely Palestinian phenomenon, of course; religious and sectarian thought now tend to characterize the predominant movements throughout the region. But the Palestinian fundamentalist movement does not have a leader who can command the support of all Palestinians. However, Sheik Abdallah al-Hallaq has emerged as its leader in Lebanon. Hallaq is based in Sidon, where Palestinian organizations feel immune from the harassment of either Syria or its Lebanese client Amal. The Sunni majority in the region and Syria's reluctance to deploy its troops in the city for fear of provoking Israel have made it a secure place for a Palestinian military presence, as well as for Moslem opponents of the Syrian regime.



The ascendance of Islamic fundamentalism in the Lebanese camps has been accompanied by a similar emergence in the Israeli occupied territories. The movement is centered in Gaza, where the Islamic College provides intellectual and political guidance. Fundamentalist students have run the student council there since 1978. On the West Bank, a fundamentalist slate won in student elections at Hebron University this year, and the movement also is very influential at An-Najah University, in Nablus. At Bir Zeit University, the leftist and centrist (Fatah-oriented) groups had to join forces to prevent the fundamentalists from becoming the dominant political grouping in the student council. The movement often uses the name of Islamic Jihad (though it should not be confused with the Lebanese Islamic Jihad or the Egyptian group of the same name) for its military operations, such as the attack on Israeli soldiers at the Western Wall in October 1986. It is increasing its popularity by resorting frequently to daring operations against the occupation army. Its domain of decision-making is purely local

and indigencous, unlike other P.L.O. organizations in the territories. The fundamentalists call for the liberation of all Palestinian territories and reject Israel's existence on religious grounds.

The rise of the new movements in Palestinian politics is a direct result of frustration and anger among Palestinian youths, who are impatient with years of international inaction and indifference on the Palestinian question. They also resent the failure of P.L.O. organizations to achieve the aspirations contained in their charters. The continued occupation and suffering breeds an atmosphere of despair. The recent riots in the occupied territories attest to a growing spontaneity of political activism among Palestinian youth. The ability of diaspora Palestinian organizations (i.e., the P.L.O. leadership) to dictate decisions and policies to their people under occupation has diminished markedly. The occupation and three-year-old war of the camps in Lebanon has shattered many of the axioms of Palestinian politics. That new ones have emerged should not be surprising. □

EDITORIALS.

(Continued From Page 5)

tempt but never straight on, at eye level, with fellow-feeling and respect.

LYNNE SHARON SCHWARTZ

Lynne Sharon Schwartz's most recent book is The Melting Pot and Other Subversive Stories (Harper & Row).

W.H.O. Needs It?

The World Health Organization is in a financial crisis, largely because of Washington's decision to withhold part of the United States' membership assessments for 1986 and 1987. This large cut in the financial resources of W.H.O. poses a serious threat to world health. Diminished U.S. financial support for the United Nations is a result of the anti-U.N. sentiment successfully promoted by Reagan conservatives. Unlike U.N. bodies such as Unesco that have been sharply criticized for poor management and programs inimical to the interests of the United States, W.H.O. had been considered effective and until recently noncontroversial. Certain W.H.O. efforts, however, raised the ire of ideologues on the right.

The United States has yet to pay the nearly \$62.8 million owed W.H.O. for 1987, which was due at the beginning of the year; it is also in arrears by \$15.4 million for 1986. The levy on member states is fixed according to a formula based on each country's ability to pay. By withholding payments, Washington has reduced by 22 to 25 percent the portion of W.H.O.'s budget contributed by its members. Brazil, Iran, Iraq, Poland and several other countries are also behind in payments. The Soviet Union has met its 1986 obligation of \$25.4 million and its 1987 assessment of \$24.6 million.

While withholding part of its W.H.O. payment, the United States has made voluntary contributions—\$17.1 million in 1987—to such W.H.O. programs as health education, re-

search and training in tropical medicine, and the control of particular diseases. Knowledgeable observers suggest that the Reagan Administration's strategy toward W.H.O. and the other international agencies is to maximize American influence in them by withholding money for general operations but giving funds for those programs the Administration likes. For W.H.O. this has meant a retrenchment that threatens even those activities the United States supports.

W.H.O. carries the heavy responsibility of helping governments deal with the AIDS pandemic. It has launched a global immunization campaign to protect all the world's children against diphtheria, measles, poliomyelitis, tetanus, tuberculosis and whooping cough by 1990. The prevention and treatment of diarrheal diseases and malnutrition—ravagers of children in the poorer countries—and the encouragement of breast-feeding for newborns are other areas of W.H.O. activity. The recent rise in maternal deaths in childbirth has also brought an investment of W.H.O. funds and effort. Committed to disease prevention, W.H.O., in cooperation with governments and international agencies, is helping countries provide safe drinking water and basic sanitation for their people. The organization's mandate extends to the industrial world with programs on health and safety in the home and workplace, alcoholism, drug abuse, mental illness and diseases of the elderly.

Ultimately, the withholding of membership payments by the United States is economically, medically and politically unwise. Health is a fundamental component of economic and social development, and actions that undermine the work of W.H.O. threaten efforts to prevent malnutrition and disease and to slow the growth of the world's population.

HAROLD FRUCHTBAUM

Harold Fruchtbaum teaches the history and philosophy of social medicine at Columbia University's School of Public Health and writes about international health affairs.