

# Israel—dignity or oppression?

Modern Israel as "the expression of western capitalism in the Middle East" came under attack Thursday in a forum on the Arab-Israeli

conflict.

About 100 persons attended the discussion in SUB, sponsored by the University of Alberta Young Socialists and moderated by Mark Priegart.

Speakers were U of T law student Harry Kopyto, a member of the Executive Committee of Young Socialists of Canada, and Al Hassan, regional director of the Federated Zionist Organization of Canada.

Zionism "has only brought bloodshed to both Arab and Jew" said Mr. Kopyto because the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Israel has necessitated the displacement of Palestinian Arabs.

Mr. Hassan, however, maintained that Zionism is the expression and outgrowth of the "self-determination of peoples" in the Middle East. Israel is based on the principles of nationalism and human dignity for the Jewish people, he said.

El Fatah is the expression of the struggle of the Arab people against the influence of Israeli capitalism, Mr. Kopyto responded.

Groups like the Palestinian Liberation Movement are the only hope for peace in the area, because they alone offer an alternative to

rule by the chauvinistic and capitalistic governments on both sides, by uniting the poor and oppressed in developing a social revolution, Mr. Kopyto said.

But, claimed Mr. Hassan, Israel is in control of its own economy, and is not upheld by Western capitalists. "There are no Shell, Esso or Mobile signs hanging over our filling stations," since Israel has been developed by Israeli interests.

Mr. Hassan feels that there is no analogy between the Arab-Israeli situation and that of Vietnam, as charged by Mr. Kopyto. There are no American bases in Israel, and the current conflict is not a fight between progressive and conservative elements but between Arab and Jew, with radical elements on both sides. "There is no 'people's war' in Palestine . . . it does not deserve the name of guerrilla warfare," he said, referring to El Fatah activities.

Mr. Kopyto maintained that getting the rulers of both sides at the conference table would gain nothing since they represented the same outside interests. Only a "socialist revolution" would accomplish anything.

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