

Nusseibeh beaten up by masked assailants

By JOEL GREENBERG

Masked assailants clubbed Birzeit University professor Sari Nusseibeh after he concluded a lecture at the campus yesterday, gashing his forehead and fracturing his elbow and wrist. The attack was apparently in response to Nusseibeh's recently publicized talks with Likud central committee member Moshe Amirav on expanded self-rule for Palestinians in the territories.

Leaflets denouncing Nusseibeh were distributed at Birzeit at the weekend by student supporters of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Similar leaflets were signed by the pro-Fatah campus group, but the faction later denied issuing them. The Fatah-dominated student council denounced the attack, which observers said appeared to be a product of rivalry between supporters of the PFLP and Fatah.

Nusseibeh's head wound was stitched at the Ramallah Government Hospital, and he was recovering last night at St. Joseph's Hospital in East Jerusalem. He is expected to be released today.



Sari Nusseibeh

Nusseibeh's British-born wife, Lucy, her shirt stained with blood, said her husband was attacked after he had completed a philosophy lecture. She said four persons whose faces were hidden by kaffiyehs approached him near the exit from the lecture hall and clubbed him with sticks, while brandishing knives to keep people away. A woman student who tried to help Nusseibeh had her arm scratched, and a faculty member was also lightly hurt before the assailants fled, she said.

Several PLO-backers in the West Bank yesterday condemned the attack as an attempt to violently quash free political debate among Palestinians. None criticized Nusseibeh's talks with Amirav.

MK Yossi Sarid (Citizens Rights

Movement) sent a cable to the Birzeit student council, in which he said students at the university should "learn a lesson in democracy." He said they could not demand tolerance for their views when they used violence against those who do not share their opinions.

Tehiya MK Geula Cohen said the attack on Nusseibeh demonstrated the PLO principle that "a moderate Palestinian is a dead Palestinian."

The Birzeit University administration, which met in emergency session after the incident, called the attack on Nusseibeh "brutal" and "intellectual terrorism". The strongly worded condemnation was to be published today in the East Jerusalem press. University spokesman Albert Aghazarian said the administration was "incensed" and "extremely worried" by the attack, which he said threatened to undermine the university's stated policy of academic freedom. He said he would personally see to the apprehension of those responsible.

In the past four months, Nusseibeh joined Arab Studies Society head Faisal Hussein and an editor of the *Ash-Sha'ab* newspaper, Salah Zuheikeh, in secret talks with Amirav on proposals for expanded Palestinian self-rule as an interim solution for the Arab-Israeli conflict. They also discussed guidelines

Nusseibeh, 38, a moderate PLO backer, is the son of the late Anwar Nusseibeh, who had been a Jordanian defence minister and chairman of the Jerusalem District Electricity Company.

In other campus violence, a clash at Bethlehem University between Moslem Brotherhood supporters and pro-Fatah students spilled into a nearby street. Students threw stones at IDF troops who had arrived at the scene, a military spokesman said. The troops used tear gas to push the students back onto the campus and the demonstration broke up after intervention by the university administration, the spokesman said.

Students denied that there was infighting at the campus, and said they had marched to protest against Israeli security measures at the Balata refugee camp and the shooting of a Palestinian by Border Police in Jerusalem on Sunday. They said troops used tear gas to break up the demonstration and then surrounded the campus.

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