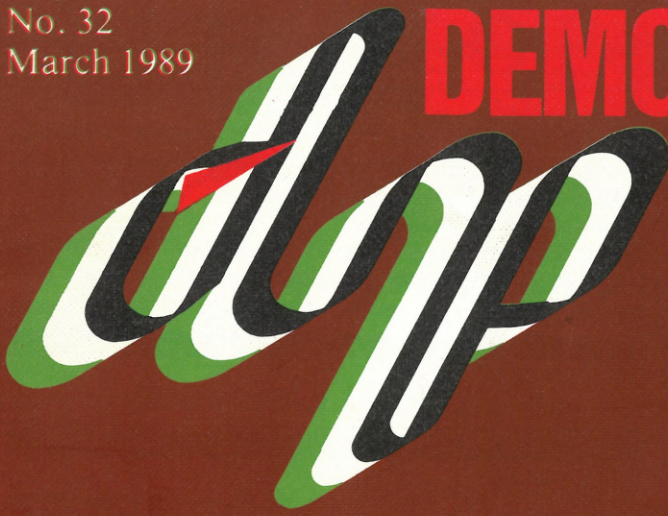


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# DEMOCRATIC PALESTINE

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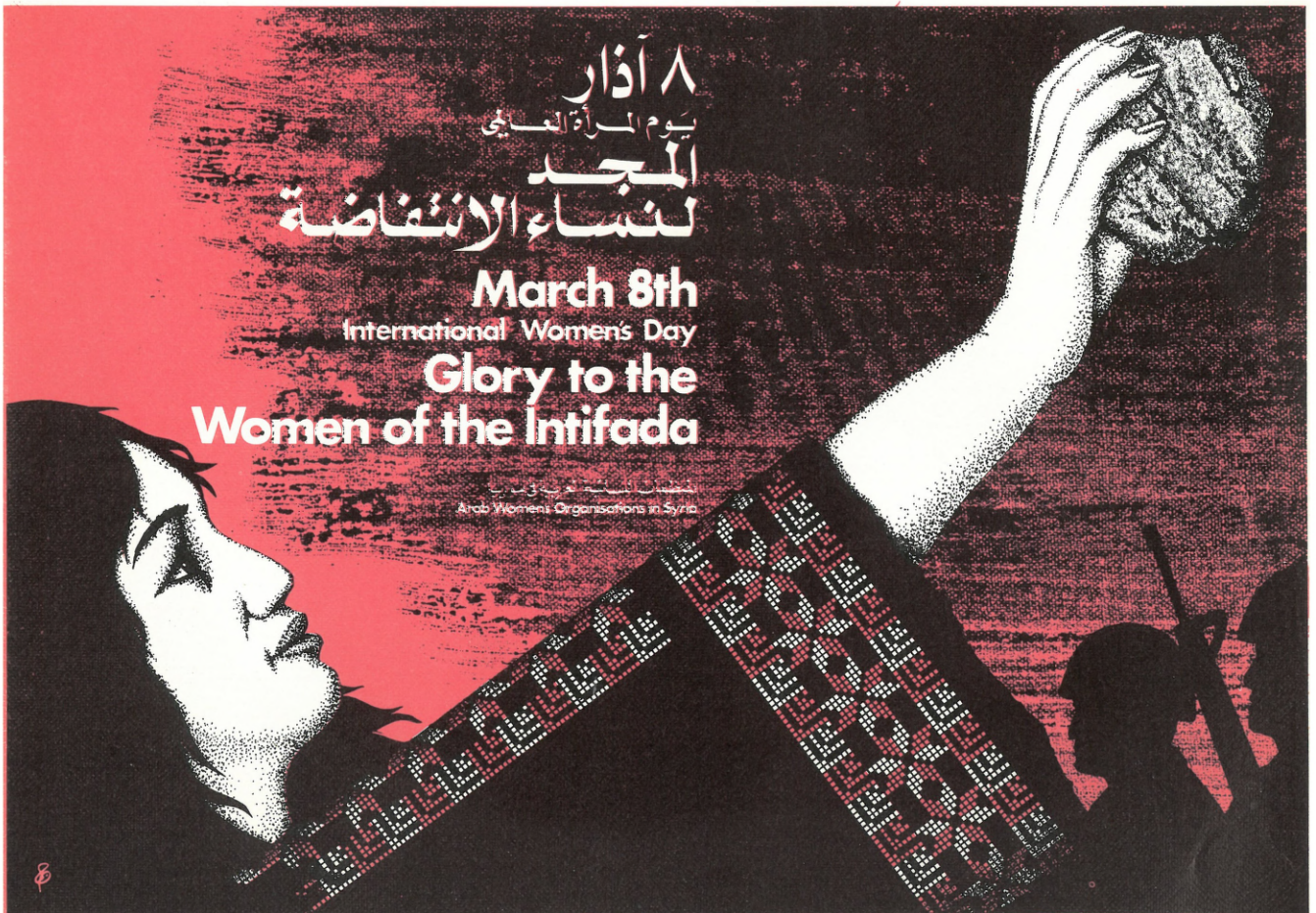
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# The PLO Peace Offensive

## Skillful Tactics or Unilateral Concessions?

The intifada marks a turning point in the history of the Palestinian and Arab national liberation movement. For the first time, the focal point of the Arab-Israeli conflict is the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. This has put Israel on the defensive, more so than the huge stockpiles of weapons in the arsenals of the Arab armies.

The intifada has propelled the Palestinian question to the top of the world agenda, and engendered worldwide support for the Palestinian struggle, as well as condemnation of the Israeli atrocities and brutal repression. There has been a notable change in the position of most European countries, as well as that of the US which finally lifted its 13-year-old ban on dialogue with the PLO. By doing so, the US, much to its own dismay, is acknowledging what the majority of the nations of the world had already recognized, i.e., that the PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, although officially, the US has not yet recognized the PLO or the Palestinian people's right to self-determination.

The US is interested in a political settlement now more than ever in the light of the intifada, a phenomenon which if left unchecked, could spill over to other parts of the region - a scenario which US officials would prefer not to contemplate. This is in addition to the US intent to counter the new Soviet initiative for peace in the region and, most of all, the US desire to «save Israel from itself.»

Nevertheless, the US decision to speak with the PLO is a step in the right direction and a victory for the Palestinian cause. It is not that the decision in itself is an asset, but given the role of the US in the Middle East, these talks, depending on their development, could play a significant role towards the achievement of a peaceful settlement.

The first US—PLO meeting took place in Tunis. Robert Pelletreau, the US ambassador in Tunis, headed the American delegation. The PLO delega-

tion included Executive Committee members, Abdullah Hourani, Mahmoud Abbas, and Yasir Abed Rabbo, and the Palestinian ambassador to Tunis, Hakam Balawi. The meeting was more symbolic than substantive. Nevertheless, the US placed the issue of «terrorism» at the top of its agenda, while the PLO placed the international peace conference at the top of its agenda.

The second meeting took place in late March, after months of procrastination by the US that continues to insist on keeping the meetings on the ambassadorial level. The second meeting did not result in any significant change in the US position. Despite a statement by US Secretary of State James Baker that Israel may have to talk to the PLO in the event of failure to find perspective, non-PLO, negotiating partners in the occupied territories, the US administration remains opposed to the establishment of a Palestinian state, as well as to a meaningful international conference.

The Palestinian reaction to the dialogue was positive despite the deliberate effort on the part of the US government to equate armed liberation struggle with «terrorism,» while making no mention of Israeli state terrorism which has been responsible for evicting more than half the Palestinian people from their own country, and practiced in a variety of other forms for over four decades.

### THE ISRAELI REACTION

The Israeli reaction to the US-PLO dialogue was one of anger and dismay, aside from the positive response of a small number of officials, such as Knesset members Yossi Sarid of the Citizens Rights Movement and Amnon Rubenstein of Shinui. Prime Minister Shamir described the move as «dangerous and painful» and as having a bad effect on US-Israeli relations. The former Israeli representative to the UN and deputy foreign minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, warned that «the US

decision will strain US-Israeli relations, and the complete trust Israel had shared with the US will be shaken badly.»<sup>1</sup>

Israel was jolted once again when the State Department's annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1988 was released. This report is prepared by a joint subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House of Representatives' Foreign Affairs Committee; 21 pages of the 1,500 - page report were devoted to Israeli human rights violations in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, conveying a grim picture of killings, bone-breaking, home demolitions, as well as the psychological and physical torture of detainees, «including forcing prisoners to remain in one position for prolonged periods, hooding, sleep deprivation and cold showers.» The methods mentioned in the report are but a small sample of what goes on daily in Israeli torture chambers. Torture is employed to extract false confessions to be used in mock trials to convict and imprison Palestinians. A number of the detainees don't survive to be convicted, but die under torture during the interrogation period.

Wayne Owens, the subcommittee chairman, warned Israel that its behavior in the occupied territories is unacceptable and could weaken US support in the future, although Israel will receive its allotted share for this year of over three billion dollars (the largest share of US foreign aid). The discussion of US aid to Israel in the light of criticism of Israeli human rights violations in the territories is unprecedented. It is the first time such discussions have taken place openly at such high levels and among those who make the decisions.

Even the formidable and staunchly pro-Israeli American Jewish community is becoming more and more openly critical of Israel's violations of human rights in the occupied territories, and its refusal to negotiate with the PLO. Michael Lerner, editor of *Tikkun* magazine, said, «We are warning Israel



that it cannot count on support forever if it appears to be the rejectionist in the peace process.»<sup>2</sup> Lerner was speaking at a conference in New York, organized by *Tikkun* and attended by over 2,000 American Jews from 37 states. Lerner added that programs will be held in every Jewish community in the US, in order to set up an alternative voice to the traditional leadership.

## THE TROIKA AND EUROPE

As for Europe, a flurry of activities have been taking place lately, most importantly, those of the troika which is composed of the foreign minister of Greece, Karlois Papoulis, France's Roland Dumas and Spain's Francisco Ordonez, who were delegated to visit the Arab countries and Israeli prior to their January 27th meeting with PLO Chairman Arafat in Madrid. Ordonez, the representative of Spain which assumed the presidency of the EEC as of January 1st, met with Shamir in Israel on behalf of the 12 European countries, but with no positive results. Likewise, Dumas arrived in Israel and met both Shamir and Arens. Dumas called for mutual recognition and for Israeli leaders to compromise and reciprocate the Palestinian peace initiative.

Shamir reacted by accusing the European community of having a «love affair» with the PLO; as far as he was concerned, the PLO peace initiative «in no way disguises the satanic plots and intentions of these people.» He added, «We are currently witness to the entire western world as they worship the flag of the people who hate Israel.»<sup>3</sup>

The EEC representatives said repeatedly that they had no peace initiative of their own and that their mission was aimed at breaking the deadlock. The EEC endorses the concept of an international peace conference under UN auspices with the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council, as well as all concerned parties, including the PLO. European Parliament Speaker Plum said the EEC wanted improved conditions for the Palestinians, and reminded the Israelis that the EEC had to apply sanctions against

Israel until it allowed direct exports of Palestinian citrus from Gaza.

Britain's deputy foreign secretary, William Waldegrave, met with PLO representative, Bassam Abu Sharif, in London, and later with Arafat in Tunis. On his return he was praised by Prime Minister Thatcher and other government officials who defended him after he called Shamir a «reformed terrorist,» which created an uproar in Israel.

The Scandinavian countries have also joined in the search for peace in the Middle East. Arafat visited Sweden and Finland on invitation, and held talks with Norwegian Foreign Minister Thorvald Stoltenberg in Tunis, not to mention the role played by Sweden as an intermediary between the US and the PLO.

## THE SOVIET PEACE INITIATIVE

In line with the Soviet Union's global peace offensive, Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze visited the Middle East, a tour which took him to Damascus, Cairo, Amman, Baghdad and Tehran. It was the first such visit by a Soviet foreign minister since 1975. Shevardnadze's visit, like that of the troika, was aimed at pushing the UN Security Council to convene an international peace conference with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the PLO. He suggested that the five permanent members of the Security Council assume the role of a preparatory committee to coordinate between the different parties and facilitate the convening of the peace conference, with the time limit for the preparatory phase not to exceed nine months.

Upon his arrival in Damascus, Shevardnadze said, «It is our profound conviction that favorable prerequisites are now in place for movement towards convening an international conference.»<sup>4</sup> He outlined three necessary steps for setting the stage for peace. The first is the role of the Security Council, and he suggested that the foreign ministers of the member states of the council meet and discuss the issue. The second step is the forma-

tion of a preparatory committee from the five permanent members of the Security Council, to be in contact with the parties involved in the conflict. The third is the role of the UN and its Secretary General.

Shevardnadze complained that although the Security Council, the General Assembly and the European countries all support the convening of an international conference, Israel still rejects this.

On February 22nd, Shevardnadze flew to Cairo where he held separate meetings with Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Arens and PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat. He told Arens that peace in the Middle East cannot be realized without a sincere effort on the part of Israel. According to the Israeli newspaper, *Maariv*, February 22nd, Arens told Shevardnadze, «We will reject any proposed solution if it includes the PLO.»

Afterwards, Shevardnadze met with Arafat. At a news conference after the meeting, Arafat said that he was satisfied with the position and support of the Soviet Union.

## TACTICS OR CONCESSIONS?

Although the US-PLO dialogue is a positive step, it has unfortunately led the PLO leadership to give unnecessary concessions, such as offering the US intelligence services «important» information, expressing willingness to conduct direct negotiations with Israeli officials, and the proposition to form an economic union between Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine, etc.

These concessions are contrary to the PNC's decisions, and detract from the main goals of the present phase, which are continuing the intifada and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. As such, they create confusion among the Palestinian and Arab masses, and impact negatively on Palestinian national unity which is of utmost importance at this crucial juncture. Such concessions could be harmful to the intifada which is the real reason for the US decision to open the dialogue with the PLO in the first place.

*Democratic Palestine, March 1989*



In order to preserve national unity and further consolidate the uprising, it is necessary to abide strictly by the resolutions of the PNC which did not call for confederation with Jordan prior to the establishment of a Palestinian state, *nor* for direct negotiations with Israel. The PLO must rather strive for its dialogue with the US to be in concert with the international consensus which is for peace through an effective

and fully empowered international peace conference with the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council and all parties to the conflict, including the PLO.

The new realities born out of the intifada and the international support it has engendered should be utilized to consolidate and broaden it, in order to advance to the next phase of total civil disobedience. By providing the

necessary support to the intifada - materially, militarily, morally and politically, we can contribute to its continued escalation which is the only real guarantee for Israeli withdrawal and the achievement of freedom and independence. ●

<sup>1</sup> Associated Press, December 20, 1988.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Associated Press, February 20, 1989

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# George Habash

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## The Ultimate Challenge of the Intifada

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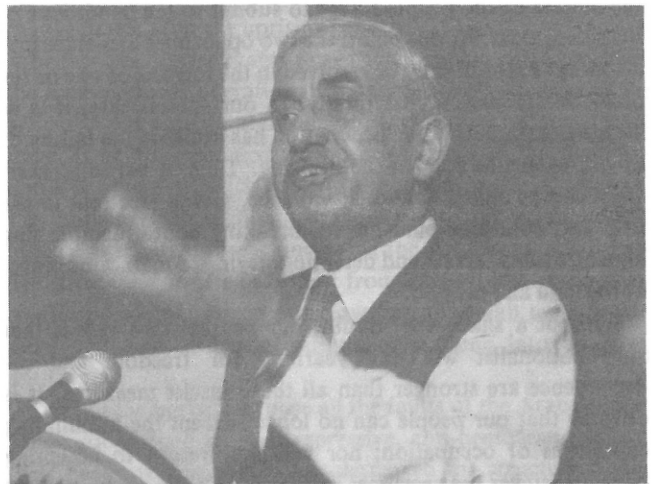
The Palestinian popular uprising will go down in history, not only Palestinian and Arab history, but international history as well. The uprising, as acknowledged by the vast majority, will have the same significance as other great historical events, such as the Paris Commune, the victory of the Iranian revolution and the great independence battles of colonized and semi-colonized countries. This is no exaggeration. The uprising, which has entered its second year, is the first of its kind in the area. The results of its first year put it in the forefront of the events and battles in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The effects of the uprising in different fields are continuing, bearing all kinds of possibilities.

The uprising could not have maintained its momentum had it not possessed the mechanisms for escalation and renewal, based on a set of qualities and features. These give us confidence that we are witnessing a new way of life, especially for our masses under occupation. Thus, the uprising will continue and escalate until achieving freedom and independence.

Organization is an essential factor for continuing and escalating the uprising. This concerns not only the United National Leadership of the Uprising (UNL), but also the tens and hundreds of popular and working committees, and strike forces, which constitute the base of the UNL, and in whose ranks thousands of our people will be organized. Even the enemy leadership has been forced to admit that if they want to put an end to the popular committees, this means arresting all the people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Such advanced organizing has had a noticeable effect in guaranteeing the continuation of the uprising, in accordance with a calculated program which takes into consideration the daily needs of our people on the one hand, while keeping the flames of the uprising burning on the other. Such organizing would not have been possible without the accumulation of militant experience, and the crystallization of the Palestinian subjective factor in the occupied territories. This is clear if one views the extent of the development which has occurred in the effectiveness of the Palestinian nationalist and democratic organizations, and the mass organizations affiliated with them, such as the unions and committees for workers, students, women, youth and professionals, and the voluntary work committees.

*Democratic Palestine, March 1989*



Our satisfaction with the developed organizing of the uprising, which has been created by our masses and vanguard forces, should not, however, rule out the need for exerting more efforts to bridge the current gaps and any gaps which may arise, especially concerning the UNL in the occupied territories. It should not eliminate the necessity of striving to form more organs of popular authority to organize all the people in this long, militant process, and to derive formulas that guarantee the participation of all groups, forces and individuals, in the uprising, despite differences. The democratic organizations and the PLO should continue to focus on this task.

Comprehensiveness is the second distinctive feature of the uprising. We don't mean comprehensiveness only in the geographic sense, but in the demographic sense as well. The uprising includes all the people, of all ages, professions, classes and strata. All our people are participating in their own way or field, according to their potentials and special skills. Thus, the influence of agents and reactionaries has decreased, and a new set of values and social standards has evolved in accordance with the characteristics of the new stage. Individualism, selfishness and consumptive tendencies have given way to self-reliance, self-confidence, social solidarity, austerity and productivity. The woman's view of her role has changed markedly, as has the man's view of the woman's role, in the course of



the daily battles against the occupation. We were able to rid ourselves of many of the social diseases that had prevailed in our society for over two decades of occupation and the two preceding decades of subjugation. The features of the revolutionary situation are reflected in every home in occupied Palestine.

We do not speak of this revolutionary situation from a romantic point-of-view or motivated by an unrealistic air of optimism. Rather, we speak on the basis of a scientific reading of the situation in the occupied territories, and the results of our people's experience gained from many lessons.

## THE REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION

The most important lesson relates to the revolutionary situation which begins the moment the ruling class is unable to continue governing with its old methods, while at the same time the masses of the people refuse to submit to the conditions of the ruling class. At this point, the two opposing poles enter into a conflict that can only be resolved in the interest of one or the other, either partially or totally. In our special case, it is as clear as daylight that the occupation has declared the failure of its old means to control the uprising. Thus, it began to exert what can be called irrational violence, giving free rein to the iron fist, collective punishment, breaking bones, demolishing houses, killing, arrest and detention, trying to maintain control of the land and people.

Without a shadow of doubt, our people have shown that their nationalist will and yearning for freedom and independence are stronger than all these fascist measures. It is obvious that our people can no longer accept the humiliating conditions of occupation; nor will they return to accepting them, whatever the sacrifices. Consequently, December 9, 1987 opened a new chapter in the national democratic liberation struggle. This will prevail until the conflict is resolved to the interest of one of the two sides, partially or completely. By partially, we do not mean some immediate or limited tactical gains; rather we mean something related to the interim goals of one side or the other. For the Palestinians, these can be summed up as repatriation, self-determination and the establishment of an independent state. For the Israelis, these can be summed up as completing the absorption of the results of the 1967 war (i.e., the territories occupied in 1967).

In fact, we are very confident that the results of this new chapter in the Palestinian-Zionist and Arab-Zionist struggle will be resolved in favor of our people, revolution and uprising. Our confidence is based on the following set of considerations.

1. The gains made by the uprising in its first year, the most important of which are the Declaration of Independence, international recognition of the Palestinian state, and the priority given to the Palestinian issue in the international arena, which was recently crowned by the US being forced to open a dialogue with the PLO. These victories stem from the gains made beginning with Security Council resolutions 605, 607, 608; the General Assembly resolutions of December 15, 1988; the Algiers Summit decisions and King Hussein's historical decision to sever the legal and administrative ties with the oc-

cupied West Bank; in addition to scores of international and local resolutions, and the change in world public opinion, including Western Europe and the US, and among a large number of Jews in Israel and other countries; as well as Israel's growing isolation in the international arena.

2. As a result of their own experience, the Palestinian people began to face the fact that they have only one option, i.e., to continue the uprising. This is being understood on the regional and international levels. Now the Palestinian cause, and not only the Arab-Zionist conflict, has become the main concern. For the first time in forty years, a comprehensive settlement for the Palestinian question is being seriously discussed. We realize that there are many obstacles to this settlement, and that the distance between declaring the state and actually forming the state is long, and paved with martyrs, sacrifices and sufferings. Still, this is the first time it is being seriously discussed.

3. The isolation of Israel and the US, due to their intransigent policies: The US has been put in an unenviable situation. Detente is steadily advancing, pushed forward by international pressure. In view of its new political thinking, the Soviet Union is playing a major role in extending detente. In the long run, the Middle East cannot be an exception to these developments. In spite of our deep conviction that there are many obstacles due to the character of the Zionist leadership, the US will find itself obliged to accept the international consensus favoring detente which, in the Middle East, means an international conference under UN auspices. This was clear in the General Assembly resolution calling for the convening of this conference, which was passed by a majority of 138, including Western Europe and Japan, and opposed only by Washington and Tel Aviv. In fact, such a situation doesn't even serve US policy and interests, and Washington will find itself obliged to retreat in the face of international pressure, as when it decided to open a dialogue with the PLO.

As for Israel, there is no doubt that its position will be more difficult. Although it continues its intransigence and ignores international public opinion, its leaders can no longer hide the fact that they are facing a state of isolation. They think that this will soon disappear. However, Israel is not like South Africa; it cannot withstand such a situation without jeopardizing the future of its project in the area. The uprising has posed major questions related to the future of this project and the Zionist leaders' ability to realize it. It will not be impossible to force the enemy to give up the results of the 1967 invasion, in order to maintain the results of the 1948 invasion (the establishment of its state). However, this will not happen until the costs of the occupation become greater than its benefits. This is where the role of the Palestinian and Arab national struggle comes in, as does the question of Israel's international reputation and relations, especially with the West and Jewish communities around the world; these figure prominently in Israel's political considerations because they mean economic support, immigration and political protection, etc.

Finally, we can say that the uprising is the major reason for these gains made by our national struggle. The uprising is the basic factor on which we can rely in saying that the results of this round of the conflict will be resolved in favor of our people



and cause. The uprising has drawn international support and awakened the conscience of the world. It will enable us to achieve freedom and independence, in tandem with the efforts and struggle of our people in exile, and the support of our friends and allies on the regional and international levels.

## TOWARDS A THEORY OF THE UPRISING

The Palestinian uprising continues to pose a series of questions. Some of these concern the political strategy of the Palestinian national movement; others concern tactics, slogans, compromises and political moves. During the last year, the Palestinian arena has been preoccupied with direct and tactical political questions related to the uprising, such as the international conference, the prerequisites for its convention, the supportive Arab environment, the Algiers Summit resolutions, Palestinian-Syrian relations, the evaluation of the Egyptian position, the status of UN resolutions, the European position on the Palestinian-US dialogue, etc.

Of course, these are important questions to which we were required to give answers. Otherwise, in the absence of a Palestinian role, the political arena would have been filled by other players eagerly awaiting our banishment from the political scene. We have previously stated our position on all these matters, so there is no reason to repeat what has already been said. Rather, the subject to be specifically discussed is related to the strategic questions raised by the uprising, such as: How shall we crystallize the theoretical framework upon which our political positions and slogans are based? Is it true that we have succeeded in creating the theory of the uprising? Have we created its ideological framework? How shall we link tactics and strategy, politics and theory?

Our response to these questions must be negative. The Palestinian and Arab organizations and intellectuals are still preoccupied with examining daily events and very far from deriving theories for the uprising. In spite of our conviction in the importance of immediate tactics and political thinking, our loyalty to the uprising and its repercussions requires efforts to formulate the theory of the uprising, and to discuss its strategic direction. For example, is it enough, when examining the effects of the uprising on the Zionist society, to confine ourselves to the number of seats and votes gained by the peace camp? Or to monitor Israeli leaders' statements which recognize the Palestinian people's rights to repatriation, self-determination and, maybe, an independent state and, maybe, the need for dialogue with the PLO? Is this really sufficient? In fact, the uprising has posed questions about Israel's ability to absorb the results of the 1967 war, and consequently questions about the Israeli theory of expansionism, settlement-building and security; it has shaken the fundamentals of Zionist ideology and, for the first time ever, seriously posed the possibility of destroying these fundamentals.

Has not the uprising posed the question of the Israeli future and demographic destiny more seriously than ever before? In response, some have spoken of the need for Israel to withdraw from densely populated areas, which would mean the beginning of the defeat of the Zionist project as a whole. Others have emphasized the need to resort to transfer (of the Palestinians), which would lead to other problems, not confined to the Mid-

dle East. Let's not forget the question related to the future of the Zionist project. What does the formation of an independent Palestinian state mean for the Zionist plan of expansion and settlement-building? Does it mean the beginning of the final countdown for this scheme? Or will we be faced by a miniature of the Zionist scheme? We must devote more time to responding to these questions in line with our immediate goals.

On the other hand, did not the uprising pose important questions related to the nature of the Palestinian national movement, its forms of struggle, the changes in the degree of influence exerted by its social forces? Did not the uprising pose a question as to the crisis of the leadership and the alternative to this crisis? Did not the uprising raise the problem of the relationship between the struggle inside and outside of Palestine, and about the revolution's need for a supportive base, and the strategic relationship with Jordan in terms of its people? Did not the uprising pose a question concerning the needed change in Palestinian political thinking and the actual change in this after the uprising?

In fact, the uprising also raised the question of the crisis of the Arab national liberation movement after the decline of the official Arab policies and the adjustment to the Camp David stage. It also accentuated the historical crisis of the Arab national bourgeoisie which controls the course of this movement. The uprising also highlighted the crisis of the Arab revolutionary alternative forces, including the Arab communist parties, after their failure to benefit from the objective opportunity offered by the uprising to reawaken the Arab mass movement and transform the Palestinian uprising into an Arab uprising.

Did not the uprising expose all the faults of the Arab regimes - their subordination, their repressive, anti-democratic nature, their backwardness which has destroyed the structure of the Arab society, turning it into a consumer market for the latest technological inventions in weaponry and consumer goods, serving only to keep these regimes in power?

This is only part of the many questions and strategic concerns posed by the uprising. The organizations, leaders and revolutionary intellectuals have a very important duty to start offering scientific answers if we are truly faithful to the uprising. This article cannot give answers for all these questions, but rather aims to encourage attempts to arrive at theories for this turning point.

## A NEW STAGE

Since the first month of the uprising, two points-of-view have crystallized in the Palestinian arena concerning this qualitative phenomenon. The first point-of-view is that which governed the positions of the bourgeois trend, and its policies in the revolution and the PLO. The advocates of this view also included some of the democratic forces and individuals. This trend strives for realizing quick political gains from the uprising. The positions taken by this trend reflect the Palestinian bourgeoisie's lack of faith in the masses on the one hand. On the other hand, some of the democratic forces have become impatient, fearing that the uprising will end without having produced any gains.



The second point-of-view dealt with the uprising as a qualitatively new stage in the Palestinian national struggle, considering that it could establish a qualitatively new stage for the Arab national liberation movement. This view does not belittle the need for striving to make political gains from the uprising. It advocates striving to open new strategic horizons to enable the uprising to create the needed change in the nature, structure and role of the Palestinian national liberation movement. This would prepare for changes in the nature, structure and role of the Arab national liberation movement, in order to overcome its crisis.

Some have evaluated our call to deal with the uprising as a qualitatively new stage, as a kind of revolutionary romanticism and a tendency towards the strategic at the expense of immediacy and tactics. But our view differs totally from this mistaken evaluation. We remain convinced that the value of tactical or interim slogans lies in their ability to shorten the distance to the strategic aims. There is a vast difference between dealing with the uprising as an event to be utilized under all circumstances, and dealing with the uprising as a qualitatively new stage which will make needed changes in the nature of the Arab-Zionist conflict and its motive forces on the Arab-Palestinian front. We are still convinced that the ideal realization of our aims, even in immediate slogans, involves dealing with the uprising as a qualitatively new stage, because in this way we can best support the uprising.

Why do we believe that the uprising constitutes a qualitatively new stage? What are the conditions for transforming the uprising into a qualitatively new stage in the Palestinian and Arab struggle? In this article, I will try to answer these questions.

## FEATURES OF THE UPRISING

Three major features have made the uprising a qualitatively new stage in the Palestinian-Zionist and Arab-Zionist conflict; they give us confidence that the uprising can constitute the beginning of a qualitatively new stage in the Arab national liberation movement.

### 1. THE CENTER OF GRAVITY SHIFTS TO PALESTINE

The first feature is that for the first time since the establishment of Israel, the center of gravity of the Palestinian national movement has shifted to inside Palestine. After 1948, only 170,000 of our people remained in Palestine, and no one mentioned them when speaking of the balance of power. No one paid attention to the role of this minority living on their land in the midst of the Zionist majority who were celebrating their victories, meanwhile viewing the remaining Palestinians with suspicion and hostility. The main concern of this minority was self-defense and guaranteeing the minimum necessities of life. Meanwhile, the Palestinians outside the 1948 occupied territories were facing conspiracies to obliterate, disperse and confiscate their national identity. The Palestinian national movement was in exile and was absorbed into the Arab national movement - Nasserism, the Baath Party, the Arab Nationalist Movement, the Arab communist movement and the

Islamic fundamentalist movements which began to appear at that time.

From 1948 until the June 1967 defeat, the Palestinian national movement had not emerged as an influential force in the area, despite the beginning of the nationalist reawakening and the feeling that it was necessary to restore the Palestinian national identity in the late 1950s. The roots of the reawakening had always been there, as seen in the attempts to infiltrate back into Palestine. Some of the events which contributed to this national reawakening were the Israeli attempt to divert the course of the Jordan River, Syria's withdrawal from the United Arab Republic (with Egypt) and the victory of the Algerian revolution in 1961. In this period, the center of gravity was embodied in Nasserism. The masses attached their hopes to Nasser. For all these reasons, the issue of the struggle inside Palestine, as opposed to the struggle outside, did not exist.

After 1967, around 40% of the Palestinian people fell under occupation. It was no longer a question of a small minority, but involved vast sectors of our masses. Consequently, a new question arose to be solved by the Palestinian national movement. This was parallel to the defeat of the Arab nationalist regimes and the frustration of the Arab masses with the slogans propagated during this period, as well as the emergence of the Palestinian national movement as a center of gravity in the area.

It is true that the national reawakening's roots date back to the 1950s, and the militant Palestinian organizations were established in the 1960s, which together began a qualitatively new stage towards crystallizing the Palestinian national identity and an independent center for our people. However, it is also true that the failure of the Arab national bourgeoisie's program, as exposed by the June defeat, played a prominent role in the establishment of the contemporary Palestinian revolution and in the great national reawakening of the Palestinian movement.

When speaking of this period, we cannot but mention the earlier instincts about the importance of the struggle inside Palestine, as was manifested in the first attempts by the Palestinian organizations to assert themselves in the interior by sending weapons, cadres, fighters and leaders into the occupied territories. In this, they were able to benefit from the relative weakness of the new occupation, and from the potentials offered by the armed Palestinian presence in Jordan. This enabled infiltration into Palestine before the occupation authorities had tightened their control through population registration and security measures.

The early nationalist consciousness came up against many obstacles, the most important of which were: (1) the total security measures enacted by the occupation to stop infiltration attempts, leading to the arrest and expulsion of scores of cadres and leaders, and hundreds of militants; and (2) the spontaneity which characterized the movement of cadres and weapons into Palestine, due to our lack of experience and organization. This led to the failure of early attempts to consolidate the base of the revolution inside Palestine. The objective conditions of that period ruled out big achievements on this level.

However, the new situation after the June 1967 defeat, coupled with our effective presence in Jordan, enabled us to struggle against the Zionist enemy on a wider scale with many small military operations. This had a tremendous effect in restoring the confidence of our people in the armed struggle and people's war, especially after the heroic battles of Al Karameh, Al Wahdat and the Jordan Valley. Our effective presence in Jordan had a dual impact on the issue of the relation between the struggle inside Palestine (the interior) and the struggle outside it (the exterior). On the one hand, the presence of the bulk of the revolution's forces outside Palestine provided an objective alternative for presence in Palestine. This in itself led to lack of concern about transferring the center of the revolution to the interior. On the other hand, preoccupation with defending the Palestinian armed resistance against the enemy plans for liquidating it, led to the dissipation of a major part of our potentials, weakening our efforts to transfer the movement to the interior. This applies especially to the battle between the Jordanian regime and the Palestinian resistance, which terminated the state of dual power (September 1970-July 1971).

This stage ended in July 1971 with the departure of the Palestinian fighters from Ajloun and Jerash, and the transfer of the revolution, its leaders, forces, organizations and institutions to Lebanon. The center of gravity of the Palestinian national movement shifted to Lebanon, where the leadership's preoccupation with defending the second base of the revolution, and with the Lebanese arena, led to insufficient concentration on occupied Palestine. This preoccupation was necessitated by the Palestinian-Lebanese alliance and joint struggle against the Zionist - rightist front. This situation continued until 1982, and in that period, the PLO was able to impose the Palestinian presence in the constellation of forces, because of its effective presence in Lebanon and continuous confrontation of the Zionist enemy and its agents. Consequently, the political successes of the PLO constituted a practical substitute for serious, organized efforts to move the center of gravity into Palestine.

At this time, the mass situation in the occupied territories rose and fell in accordance with the developments in the Palestinian arena outside; the mass movement did not possess clear-cut and mature subjective conditions. However, there was a move in this direction due to the democratic forces' effective role which was geared to the development and the socioeconomic structure of the Palestinian society under occupation. Other factors contributing to this were the minimal influence of the policies of individualism and hegemony (of a single group) which affected the Palestinian revolution outside, and the relative absence of the Arab regime's interference. Finally, and most importantly, was the masses' experience of direct confrontation with the occupation over the years.

Because of all these factors, it was natural for the base of the revolution to be consolidated in Palestine, and to increase mass activities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, especially in the decisive confrontation of the occupation's plans and the attempts of the Jordanian regime to create false alternatives to the PLO... The Palestinian revolution prepared for and created the objective base for these activities via political,

military and material support to the masses in the occupied territories. The confrontation of the attempts at political liquidation contributed to increasing the role of the masses in the interior, and to making the revolution give greater priority to the interior.

But the overriding characteristic of the pre-1982 period was the revolution's strong presence in Lebanon. Moreover, at that time, the deterioration of the official Arab situation had not yet reached its current low level. The center of gravity of the Palestinian national movement was in the exterior at the expense of the interior, even though the interior had begun to occupy a more important place both in the Palestinian strategy and in the enemy's strategy against our revolution.

The stage which followed the Israeli invasion of Lebanon was characterized by a set of facts which contributed to enhancing the importance of the occupied land in the Palestinian strategy for confronting the Zionist occupation.

The first of these facts was the weakness of the second base of the revolution due to the results of the Zionist invasion and the departure of the Palestinian fighters to new places of exile. In this light, it seemed that Palestinian military action had suffered another setback which would have tangible effects on the equation of the interior and the exterior. This impression was reinforced by ensuing developments as the Palestinian revolution faced a chain of camp wars aimed at finishing what the Israeli invasion had begun, i.e., to put an end to Palestinian armed presence in Lebanon once and for all.

The second of these facts was the weakness of Palestinian national unity and the split in the PLO which lasted from May 1983 until the unifying PNC in 1987. This problem emerged due to deviationist tendencies on the one hand, and adventurist nihilist tendencies on the other; it was coupled with unparalleled political tension between Syria and the PLO, which reinforced the split whose influence is still felt in the Palestinian arena.

The third of these facts was the decline of the official Arab policy, and the diminishing importance of the Palestinian cause on the Arab political scene which was preoccupied with a set of regional conflicts: the Gulf war, the Lebanese crisis, the Maghreb conflict, Egypt's continued adherence to the Camp David accords, etc. This culminated in the Amman Summit which reinforced the collective Arab evasion of the Baghdad Summit's decisions concerning Camp David and the boycott of the Egyptian regime. The aim of all this was to restore Egypt's position in Arab officialdom as it was apparent that the opponents of Camp David had become very few in number. There is no doubt that the extraordinary summit in Amman aimed to minimize the PLO's role in favor of King Hussein and his policies for subordinating the Palestinian cause.

In the light of all this, the masses in the occupied territories had two options: either to submit to the capitulationist trend, or to take the initiative and play their required role in keeping alive the flame of the revolution and the national cause. The rise in mass action in 1986-87 was a signal that the masses chose to escalate the struggle, leading to the uprising. We should also point out that after 1982, the Palestinian leadership concentrated more on the interior in order to compensate for



the weakness of the second base of the revolution, and reacting to the new state of exile and dispersion. This strengthened the subjective conditions of the Palestinian national movement. From 1982 to 1987, there was a revival of the mass movements - workers, students, women, voluntary work committees, etc., despite all the problems they faced, such as splits, secondary conflicts and the emergence of the (Islamic) fundamentalist trend.

Meanwhile, a set of objective conditions were building up, chiefly the unbearable conditions imposed by the occupation on our masses. This, combined with the crystallization of the Palestinian subjective conditions, created the uprising. With the uprising's having continued for a year and all the gains it has made, it is clear that the center of gravity of the Palestinian national movement has begun to shift to the occupied territories. By the center of gravity, we do not mean the Palestinian leadership and the institutions of the PLO. According to their nature and role, these will remain in the exterior. Rather, we mean that the frontline with the enemy has shifted into Palestine. We also mean the transformation of the Palestinian cities, villages and camps into battlefields against the occupation on a daily basis. In the battles with the occupation forces, the United National Leadership of the Uprising has succeeded in leading the people more successfully than has ever happened before. On the other hand, the occupation still controls the land. The day will come when the uprising will gain control of the people and the land; at that time, the dawn of freedom and independence will be at hand.

## THE INTERNAL BALANCE OF FORCES

At the beginning of this article, we criticized the point-of-view which is trying to realize quick gains from the uprising, and posing only tactical questions. In fact, this is just another version of the point-of-view which for many years regarded the occupied territories as the «backyard» of the Palestinian decision-making center in the exterior, remembering the occupied territories only when the center was besieged or beset by conspiracies. At the same time, this trend regarded developments in the occupied territories with a degree of anxiety, for they might reverse the balance of forces in the PLO -the «equation of the exterior» (which does not allot representation to all organizations on the basis of their actual degree of activity and influence on the mass level).

Despite all the channels connecting the occupied territories with the exterior, the interior remained relatively free of the direct influence of the «exterior equation» just as it was relatively removed from the harmful influence of the Arab regimes. Moreover, a set of social and economic transformations have occurred in the occupied territories. These constitute new objective conditions conducive to the rise of the democratic forces in the course of the daily battles against the occupation. This has consolidated the role of the democratic forces to the point that the unjust «exterior equation» no longer applies to the interior. The mass struggle has shown that there is a new balance of forces on the ground, which should impose itself on the decision-making center and have an influence in defining the overall course of the Palestinian national movement.

The problem of the «equation of the exterior» is one of the reasons for the failure of the pre-1982 efforts to establish the Palestinian National Front in Palestine, and for mistakes in directing the union, student and women's movements. This «equation of the exterior» may explain the attempts to spread the ways of individualism, domination (of the single organization) and corruption. Some insist on imposing the «exterior equation» on the interior whenever there are serious discussions about unifying the mass movements in the occupied territories.

There are still some who resent dealing with the fact that the center of gravity has shifted to the interior. They are ready to use the same methods that have been used in the exterior, in order to control the movement and political decision-making. The critical issue is that some are dealing with the uprising as an «emergency issue.» Of course, it is an urgent issue, but we should primarily deal with it as a qualitatively new stage for consolidating the revolution. We can understand that the Palestinian bourgeoisie is dealing with the uprising as if it were an «emergency.» However, we cannot understand that some of the democratic forces are falling into the same trap, confining themselves to tactical and interim questions, while neglecting the future of the Palestinian national movement. Loyalty to the uprising imposes strategic, tactical and interim tasks on us. Finding answers to these questions will lead us to serious discussion of how to overcome the crises of the Palestinian and Arab national movements.

## 2. ACCENTUATION OF THE PALESTINIAN—ZIONIST CONFLICT

The second feature of the uprising is that the Arab-Zionist conflict has assumed the character of a Palestinian-Zionist conflict, occurring in the framework of the overall struggle between the Arab nation and the Zionist enemy. Obviously, the pre-1948 struggle against the Zionist invasion of Palestine was in its essence a Palestinian-Zionist conflict. The Palestinian people were facing the Zionist settlers who depended on the support of the British Mandate. This did not minimize the importance of Arab participation in confronting this invasion, as was apparent in the continuous waves of Arab volunteers to the war for Palestine. However, we cannot overlook the negative influence of Arab reactionary interference in Palestinian internal affairs. The reactionary regimes played a major role in aborting the great Palestinian revolt in 1936-39, and then in squandering Palestine with the scenario orchestrated by Prince Abdullah who led the Arab armies that entered Palestine in 1948.

From 1948 until 1967, the nature of the conflict was an Arab-Zionist struggle, with the total absence of an independent Palestinian national role. All the attempts to create a Palestinian national center failed to make any serious change in the nature of the struggle, because the Arab national dimension predominated over the Palestinian national dimension which was exposed to obliteration, dissipation and confiscation. In spite of the rise of the Palestinian revolution after the 1967 war, the struggle against Israel remained confined to the Arab-Zionist framework, especially after the 1973 war, and until 1982, when the Palestinian revolution, alongside the Lebanese

nationalist forces, waged the longest war in the history of the Arab-Zionist conflict. This change began to impose itself on the nature of the conflict. We can now say, without hesitation, that the uprising has for the first time given the struggle against the Zionist enemy the nature of a Palestinian-Israeli conflict in the framework of the Arab-Zionist conflict. There is no doubt that the 1982 war signalled the beginning of this transformation of the nature of the conflict, but this was not consolidated until the uprising. In other words, the uprising has restored the conflict to its primary nature and put the regional crisis in the correct perspective. Thus, the most important task is the struggle to resolve the Palestinian problem in all its aspects, not being satisfied with border arrangements between the Arab regimes and the Zionist enemy.

Since it is now clear that it is a Palestinian-Zionist conflict, the enemy will have to face up to its ultimate opponent. This means the collapse of the false Israeli claims, such as «a land without a people for a people without a land,» «Greater Israel» and so on, upon which the Zionist ideology is based.

Unfortunately, this new nature of the conflict did not come about as a result of scientific discussion about the dialectics between the Arab and Palestinian national dimensions. Under no circumstances should we belittle the importance of the Palestinian national dimension in favor of the Arab national dimension. Nor should we concentrate only on the Palestinian dimension, discarding the Arab one. What has happened is the increase of the Palestinian role and the retreat of the Arab role due to the decline and weakness of Arab officialdom.

In fact, a period of two decades has culminated in the heroic Palestinian uprising. These two decades were characterized by vacillation between the Palestinian and Arab national dimensions. Although the uprising has given the Arab-Zionist conflict new features, it is important to remember that the Arab national dimension is necessary as well. The Zionist enemy threatens not only the Palestinian people. Consequently, foiling the Zionist plan is not the responsibility of the Palestinian people alone. The future of this struggle for liberation, social progress and unity will join the Palestinian people together with the other Arab peoples.

The falsity of the nationalist slogans which had prevailed, coupled with the decline of the Arab regimes, made it imperative for the Palestinian people to take the initiative. This situation also requires that the Arab national liberation movement give top priority to overcoming its crisis.

The new features of the conflict brought about by the uprising, in conjunction with the official Arab decline, has led to the following new realities:

a. The Palestinian people are striving to crystallize the features of their national identity, and to create the basis for their independent national existence. Together with the Jordanian regime's relinquishing its ties with the West Bank, the uprising has provided the objective basis for this process which culminated in the declaration of the independent state on Palestinian land. At the proper time, this process will continue with the declaration of an independent Palestinian provisional government.

b. The Palestinian factor has become very strong. Whether on the battlefield in Palestine or in the diplomatic arena,

Palestinian presence has grown to where it cannot be contained by any other party or regime. The independence of Palestinian decision-making cannot be overlooked.

c. The Palestinian cause has imposed itself in the international arena, as a cause of self-determination for a people who have been deprived of their rights for more than 40 years. The traditional friends of Israel have been obliged to deal with the new realities. This is precisely the essence of the change that has occurred and the essence of the strategic threat posed to the Zionist entity and plan in the area.

d. These new realities have given our people, especially those under occupation, a glimpse of hope which further motivates their struggle. It is clearer than ever before that this struggle will not stop until the achievement of freedom and independence.

These significant new realities would not have crystallized as such if the decision-making power had remained in the Arab capitals. With the accentuation of the Palestinian role in confronting the Zionist enemy, the struggle in the area has entered a qualitatively new stage. There is no doubt that the outbreak of the uprising, and its escalation, played the major role in this transformation.

### 3. THE POPULAR NATURE OF THE UPRISING

The third significant feature of the uprising is that our masses in occupied Palestine, the creators of the uprising, gave this turning point a distinguished popular nature. This feature alone would make the uprising go down in world history, and for this reason, the uprising is a model to be emulated.

Before 1948, the Palestinian struggle against the Zionist invasion had a broad popular nature. The urban and rural population participated in a series of revolts against Zionist immigration and colonization. In most cases, these struggles had a broad popular nature, without minimizing the role of the political and militant vanguard forces who shouldered the main responsibility for mobilizing the masses, and were always in the forefront.

From 1948 until the uprising, the struggle against the Zionist enemy took the form of classical warfare waged by the Arab regimes against Israel, or self-defense. On the other hand, there was the guerrilla warfare waged for more than a quarter of a century by the Palestinian resistance organizations in occupied Palestine or from across the borders. During that period, there were moments of mass explosion, especially in Nasser's Egypt, in Jordan during the Palestinian resistance's presence there, and in Lebanon prior to the outbreak of the civil war. Throughout this period, there was increased mass participation in the struggle against the enemy. The Arab and Palestinian masses were always ready to struggle against the enemy. In most cases, they paid the price for this, at the hands of the Arab regimes. In the occupied territories, our masses have repeatedly confronted the Zionist enemy, proving their unlimited militant potentials and readiness. However, these positive manifestations in the state of the mass movement had not yet become concrete action. There had not been a direct continuous and comprehensive confrontation of the Zionist



enemy until the uprising moved the Arab-Zionist conflict to a qualitatively new stage.

The uprising began, and for the first time in forty years, it was the war of our masses, not the classical war of the Arab armies and regimes. It was also not the war of vanguards and revolutionary groups alone. For the first time, the struggle against the Zionist enemy acquired a comprehensive and distinguished popular nature. It is a fact that the Palestinian masses have suffered most from the defeat and weakness of Arab officialdom. Our masses, especially under occupation, had truly despaired of the Arab demagogy. From their own experience, they discovered that all these lies and claims led to nothing but Camp David that is now spreading in the area.

After the results of the 1982 invasion of Lebanon, the weakness of the revolution's second base, and official Arab negligence towards the PLO, the masses sensed the direct threat to their national cause and the future of their legitimate struggle. Consequently, they rose in revolt with their collective will and consciousness, rejecting surrender and presenting an example for the Arab masses of how to confront Camp David and its consequences in the area.

It is no exaggeration to say that the popular nature of the uprising has elicited the fears of the Arab regimes. This makes them assume the role of spectators, if not conspirators against the uprising. The lesson drawn by the generation of the uprising can spread in the area. At that time, the stones of the uprising will ring the alarm bells in more than one Arab capital.

As we have said, the Palestinian uprising is a qualitatively new stage in the history of the Palestinian national struggle. It will have a great impact on the strategy, major forces and social structure of the Palestinian national movement. It will also have irreversible interim and strategic effects. As such, the uprising provides an objective opportunity for the Arab national liberation movement to enter a qualitatively new stage. The preceding stage, from Sadat's visit to Jerusalem, was the stage of Camp David. It has become clear that Camp David is not simply a legal framework for organizing bilateral relations between the Zionist entity and the Egyptian regime. Camp David is actually a social, political, economic and historical process aimed to end the Arab-Zionist conflict at the expense of our people's interests and those of the Arab nation. It aims to reinforce the subordination of the Arab regimes to imperialism, so that they ally with Israel in confronting the Arab mass movement, having surrendered to the humiliating conditions of Washington and Tel Aviv.

In confronting this capitulatory process, we notice that the Arab regime's response was insufficient to counter the enemy's strategy. The form and instruments of confrontation were only tactical - the Steadfastness and Confrontation Front, the Arab People's Conference, the National Charter and the Baghdad Summit aimed at isolating Camp David. Today, a decade afterwards, what did this achieve? Are the Arab regimes still serious about rejecting the Camp David regime in Egypt, and the Camp David accords?

Our response to this question is based on a scientific assessment of the results of this painful experience, i.e., the failure of these forms and frameworks in most cases. The decision taken at the Amman Summit, to end the boycott of the Camp David

regime, is the prime example. It is not unthinkable that the Egyptian president will be welcomed at the next Arab summit. This signifies the decline of the Arab regimes and their inability to protect themselves from the Zionist enemy's aggression, or to seriously resist its plans. Moreover, the Arab regimes have taken part in efforts to contain the Palestinian cause, to abort the uprising and liquidate our people's rights. Without the uprising, these regimes would have appeared to be the spearhead of the confrontation, marginalizing the Palestinian role as they moved to do in the Amman Summit...

The Palestinian uprising against the fascist enemy has presented the objective opportunity for the Arab national liberation movement and the Arab masses to overcome this dilemma and open a new stage of serious and comprehensive confrontation of the Camp David stage. The objective conditions for overcoming this crisis have existed for a long time, but the uprising highlighted the depth of this crisis. However, objective conditions are not sufficient, but must be combined with mature subjective conditions in order to overcome this crisis and begin a qualitatively new stage.

The Arab bourgeoisie which led the liberation movement for more than half a century has become impotent and bankrupt. What is needed is a revolutionary alternative to meet the requirements of the new stage, and work for establishing a new Arab revolutionary movement. The weapons of criticism, review and evaluation of our experience are the point of departure for this historical process. We should adopt a new vision in view of the new international and regional developments, as a prerequisite for launching this new revolutionary movement.

What is needed in the Arab arena is needed in the Palestinian arena as well. The Palestinian left, including its main forces and trends, should rise to meet the challenge of this qualitatively new stage, and not be satisfied with engaging only in the tactical questions of the uprising. The left must pose the real questions of the uprising in order to guarantee scientific responses. It is the left, and not the Palestinian bourgeoisie, that is expected to move the uprising into a qualitatively new stage. We are deeply convinced that the PLO should, objectively speaking, be moving in this direction. There is a sharp contradiction between the minimal concessions the Palestinian bourgeoisie is willing to give, and the maximal concessions which the Arab regimes want the PLO to make, in order to incorporate it in their plans. Still, we cannot but hold the Palestinian left responsible for moving the uprising to a qualitatively new stage.

In conclusion, it is time to stop repeating the terms of crisis and difficulties which the Palestinian and Arab liberation movements have faced. It is time to start charting the course for overcoming this crisis. I am not being unfair to anyone when I say that those who have acknowledged this crisis are responsible, more than all others, for starting this work; of course, this includes ourselves. This is the most essential issue raised by the uprising, from among the many important and strategic questions it has highlighted. We must crystallize the theoretical and ideological framework for our political practice, and for the uprising itself. This is the challenge to all parties, organizations and intellectuals, to search for scientific answers to these questions. ●

## Women on the Frontline

One of the most prominent feature of the current Palestinian uprising is its comprehensiveness, geographically and demographically. The confrontations with the occupation forces have expanded to all cities, villages and camps in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The massive participation of women, children, elderly, youth and men, from all sectors of the Palestinian society, is a logical result of the fact that Zionist terrorism and suppression has affected all our people.

The intifada which began on December 8, 1987, has come to end the suffering and oppression which Palestinians have endured for over 20 years. Naturally it is the Palestinian women who have been the most affected by the occupation. Added to their social oppression was a new oppression. This explains their broad participation in the Palestinian national struggle and outstanding role in the intifada. This role is manifested on all levels. The past 15 months of daily struggle against the Zionist occupation have borne witness to the prominent role of women to the point that the development of their role has become an important feature of the intifada.

### POLITICAL MATURITY

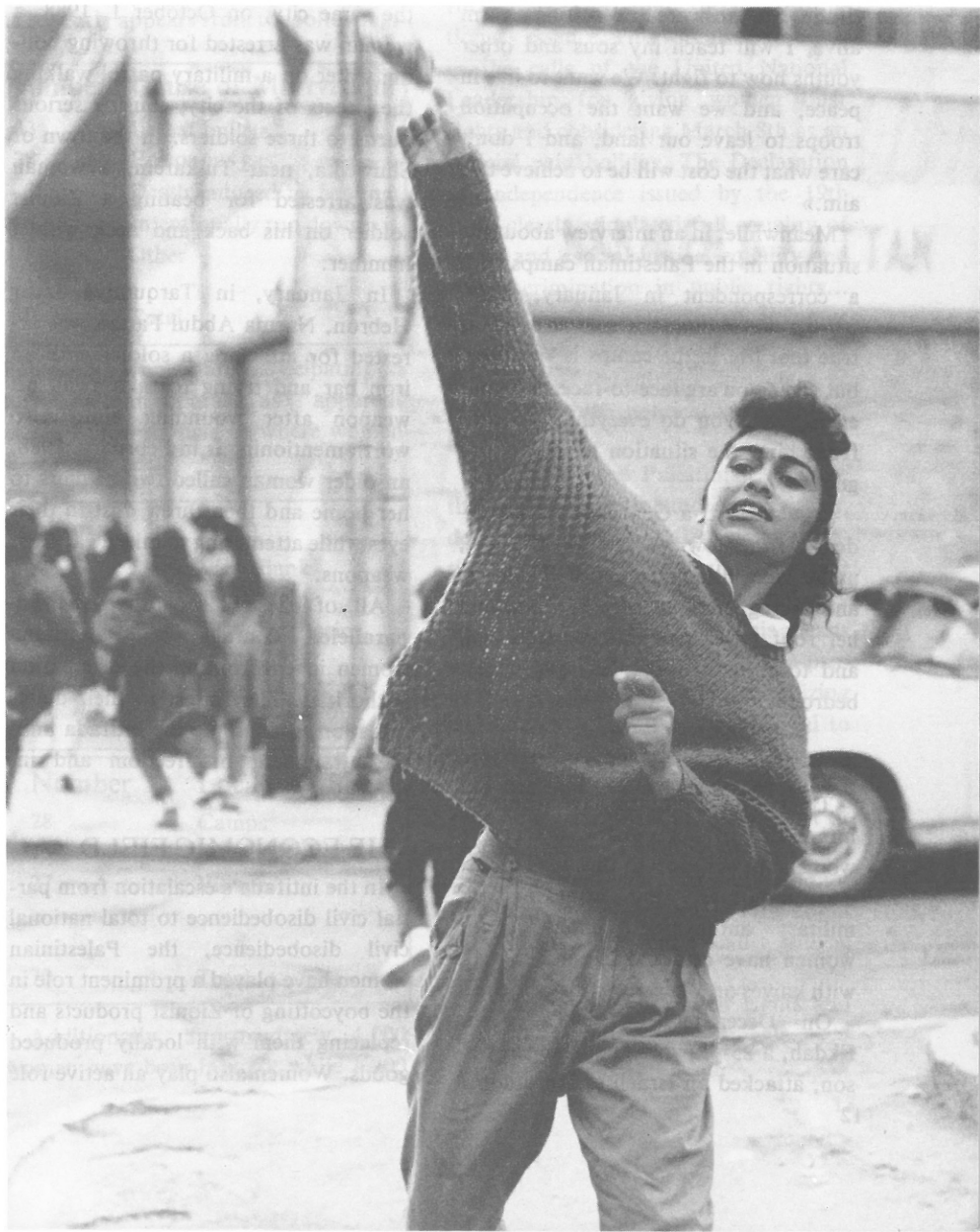
Women have been involved in the political and military fields of the struggle since the beginning of the century. They have accumulated much experience from demonstrations, marches, political statements, pamphlets, lectures, slogan-writing on the walls, military work and armed struggle.

They have intensified their political activities over the last 15 months. Undoubtedly, the most significant aspect is their level of political awareness and maturity, as well as their adherence to the political organizations in the occupied territories, in addition to active participation in the militant struggle. To emphasize the degree of women's

political awareness and consciousness, it is enough to point out the qualitative contribution made by the women's sector in the occupied territories. As the intifada entered its second year, the women's organizations held a series of meetings to address the continuation, escalation and consolidation of the intifada. They concluded that reinforcing national unity is one of the major means of consolidating the intifada, and therefore decided to unify all the women's organizations and establish the Higher Women's Council, thus providing a model for unifying all mass

organizations and unions in confronting the occupation.

The Higher Women's Council issued its founding statement on December 1, 1988. In this statement, the Palestinian women reasserted that they welcomed the PNC's decisions, specifically the Declaration of Independence and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. They also declared their adherence to the UNL calls. They called for continuing the struggle and for the convening of a fully empowered international peace conference with the participation of the PLO, the sole





legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Finally, they appealed to the UN to provide international protection to the Palestinian people, and to put an end to the repressive Zionist practices.

This conscious initiative was made to escalate the popular uprising and reaffirm its goals of freedom and independence. Meanwhile, Palestinian women are participating side-by-side with men in confronting the Zionist occupation authorities and foiling all political conspiracies, oppression and terrorism which aim at aborting the intifada.

A Palestinian woman, the mother of the martyr, Abdul Salam Eftaha, was asked by a journalist if she would allow her other sons to participate in the intifada. She answered, «As long as I'm alive, I will teach my sons and other youths how to fight. We want to live in peace, and we want the occupation troops to leave our land, and I don't care what the cost will be to achieve this aim.»

Meanwhile, in an interview about the situation in the Palestinian camps with a correspondent in January, 1988, 24-year-old Asma Kharoub said, «It is true that life in the camps is very bad, but when you are face-to-face with your enemy and you do everything to confront him, the situation becomes very good.»

Last August, a *Guardian* correspondent wrote how he saw a little girl, under six, attacking Zionist soldiers and asking them to leave her land and her roof top where they were posted, and to stop throwing tear gas in her bedroom.

## POPULAR RESISTANCE

The previous months have witnessed hundreds of courageous acts by women. In addition to throwing stones and molotovs, and attacking the military authorities' centers, many women have attacked Zionist soldiers with knives or other sharp instruments.

On December 14, 1987, Aisha Ekdah, a 25-year-old handicapped person, attacked an Israeli officer and hit

him in the face with her shoe. She was arrested, but the military authorities in Abasan Al Kubra were later forced to release her after women attacked their center with stones, and refused to leave until Aisha Ekdah was released.

On June 2, 1988, a Jerusalem woman shot at Zionist settlers who were walking in Shamir Park which is near the Knesset. She killed one, and the second ran away before the police arrested her. Likewise, another woman from Maghazi Camp in the Gaza Strip attacked a soldier with a pair of scissors, wounding him seriously.

On September 26, 1988, a military court in Nablus sentenced Rania Tawfiq to five years in prison for stabbing a soldier who was guarding the military governor's office in the city. In the same city, on October 1, 1988, a woman was arrested for throwing boiling water on a military patrol walking the streets of the city, causing serious burns to three soldiers. In the town of Shuweika, near Tulkarem, a woman was arrested for beating a Zionist soldier on his back and neck with a hammer.

In January, in Tarqumiya, near Hebron, Naema Abdul Fattah was arrested for attacking a soldier with an iron bar and trying to take away his weapon after wounding him. Also worth mentioning is in February, 1988, an older woman called two soldiers to her home and then threw dust in their eyes while attempting to take away their weapons.

All of these cases prove the unparalleled courage of Palestinian women in confronting the occupation authorities. They attest to their determination to continue the intifada until the attainment of freedom and independence.

## THE ECONOMIC FIELD

In the intifada's escalation from partial civil disobedience to total national civil disobedience, the Palestinian women have played a prominent role in the boycotting of Zionist products and replacing them with locally produced goods. Women also play an active role

through giving lectures and visiting homes to inform the people about this process. The export of many Israeli products to the West Bank and Gaza Strip has been sharply reduced. For example, during the first year of the intifada, the sale of make-up fell by approximately 70%. According to the Israeli daily, *Yediot Ahranot* (September 20, 1988), most factories and companies, which depend on the West Bank and Gaza Strip for marketing their products, have been negatively affected or unable to expand their production; this applies especially to companies dealing in luxury items, furniture, carpets and women's clothing; their sales have fallen 70%-90%. It is apparent that these sectors are closely related to women.

The occupation authorities have intensified their economic siege against the Palestinian people because of the continuation and escalation of the intifada. The conscious positive response to these measures was self-sufficiency and returning to the land to cultivate it. Naturally, it is the Palestinian women who have been prominent in this field. They have raised slogans in compliance with the UNL calls, for example, «Lentils are the meat of the poor,» «Wheat and oil are the essentials of the home» and «Organization is the result of planning.»

Thus, «victory gardens» emerged with the cultivating of small gardens of green vegetables, onions, tomatoes and other produce. Additionally, Palestinian women are preserving fruits, pickling vegetables, raising chickens and baking bread at home. They have established cooperatives and increased bazaars to sell all sorts of low-priced, home-made products in support of needy families.

Girls have played a prominent role in the voluntary work committees, especially in helping with the olive and citrus fruit harvests, the production of olive oil and the marketing of these products, despite the occupation authorities' new measures aimed at preventing farmers from harvesting their products.

*Democratic Palestine, March 1989*

Women have joined men in refusing to work in the territories occupied in 1948, in compliance with the UNL calls. Israeli sources state that the percentage of women boycotting work in Israeli factories and farms was higher than that of men. This is due to the new realities borne out of the intifada where women are obliged to stay at home, not only to take care of their children and homes, but also to cultivate the land and to encourage the self-sufficiency program.

### THE SOCIAL FIELD

Women are participating in large numbers in the popular committees and the various special function committees, such as those for popular education, food provision, medical aid and supporting the families of the martyrs, injured and detained.

The social field is one of the most important arenas where the intifada has created a new system of social and moral values, based on cooperation, collective thinking and internal solidarity. Women's effective participation in the intifada has created new conditions for influencing the social attitudes of even the most traditional men. With the advent of self-sufficiency and home gardening, women have gained added respect for their work. Men have been obliged to help in the work of the home, resulting in more equal partnerships.

Naturally, it is the Palestinian women who have played a prominent role in the reduction of dowries and the costs of getting married, by promoting modest weddings and doing away with the luxuries which characterized Palestinian weddings in the past. Wedding celebrations have now turned into nationalist occasions with nationalist songs and popular dances.

### STATISTICS

To further exemplify the prominent role of Palestinian women in the intifada, it is necessary to point to some important statistics. During the last 15 months, 70 Palestinian women have

been martyred, which constitutes almost 13% of the total of 545 martyrs. The age distribution of female martyrs is shown in the following table:

Number of Female Martyrs	Age
22	Under 15
28	15-49
20	Over 50
70	Total

These figures attest to the broad participation of Palestinian women in the intifada, while exposing the reality of Zionist terrorism against women, children and elderly, employing lethal bullets, poisonous gases, killings, beating until death, provocation, etc., as it clearly appears from the following:

Number	Cause of Martyrdom
33	Lethal bullets
28	Poisonous gas
3	Death induced by beating
3	Intentionally run down
3	Other
70	Total

Palestinian women are participating in the intifada in all areas, as is apparent in the following lists of where women were martyred:

Number	Area
40	West Bank
29	Gaza Strip
1	1948 Territories
70	Total

Number	Location
28	Camps
15	Cities
27	Villages
70	Total

Additionally, approximately 4,000 women have been injured, while 1,200

have suffered miscarriages due to violent confrontations and the Zionists' use of tear gas. Women constitute approximately 16% of the total number of injured, 33,000. (This figure does not include the many women who were treated on the spot for injuries.)

West Bank lawyers estimate that 40,000 Palestinians have been detained at one time or another in the first 15 months of the uprising. Among them are over 3,000 women. In recent months, 100 Palestinian women have been administratively detained, and 120 have been placed under house arrest. This is the first time the Zionist authorities have imposed these restrictions on women on a wide scale.

The broad participation of the Palestinian women in the intifada is a further confirmation of its revolutionary essence. This was also expressed in the calls of the United National Leadership for giving women their rights and considering March 8th as an official paid holiday. The Declaration of Independence issued by the 19th PNC clearly stipulated full equality of rights and «social justice, equality and non-discrimination in public rights... on grounds of race, religion, color or sex.» Appreciation of women and their role in the Palestinian struggle was reiterated in the political statement of the PNC.

Loyalty to the Palestinian women, their struggle and boundless sacrifices, demands of all the Palestinian revolutionary organizations to shoulder their responsibilities and take the necessary steps to enhance this role. This means giving maximum attention to the process of educating and mobilizing women, enabling them to be equal to men. It also entails providing women with the opportunity to attain leadership positions, raising their portion of representation in leading bodies in accordance with their active, militant role. Otherwise, continued talk about the women's role and equality will be only idle talk.

Let us give women their rights and honor their sacrifices and struggle.



# The Call of Confrontation

Text of Call no. 33 issued by the PLO/United National Leadership of the Intifada, January 24, 1989.

The Zionist enemy imagines that its new policy, which permits killing and using different kinds of lethal bullets, can succeed in facing up to the intifada, abating its flames and then stopping the great change which is occurring in the international position in favor of the Palestinian people and their leader, the PLO. The criminal occupation authorities think that escalating these measures will create the proper atmosphere in the State of Palestine, for reviving the so-called autonomy plan. We realize that the escalation of the repressive policy is an attempt by the Zionists to break out of their international isolation and the political dilemma caused by the intifada.

To the heroes of the war for national independence:

Long live your struggle which the Zionist military establishment remains incapable of suppressing. We salute the stones which have defeated the so-called invincible army. You, the masses of the intifada, are daily creating heroic images of struggle, demonstrating your high spirits and boundless ability to continue the struggle. However brutal the violence, repressive measures will not prevent you from continuing the intifada until the achievement of the national goals. However much the pressure increases, you will inevitably foil all new conspiracies, first and foremost, imposed political elections (the new Israeli proposal); just as you foiled the preceding conspiracies of civil administration, autonomy, improved autonomy, the Camp David accords, the Reagan plan, the Shultz initiative, the Jordanian option, the condominium plan (joint Israeli-Jordanian administration), «saving what can be saved» (King Hussein's motto) and «improving the quality of life.» You will send all these to the rubbish pile of history.

To the masses of the heroic intifada:

Escalate your struggle and determination in order to achieve our goals. Let us declare loudly to the world: We will not give up the struggle to gather our people, from all places of exile, in the homeland; we will not surrender our right of self-determination or any of our just national rights; we will not retreat from efforts to attain a just and lasting peace in the area, via a fully empowered international conference where the PLO participates in an independent delegation on an equal footing with other parties. We will not neglect the martyrs' blood, the groans of the wounded or the tears of the mothers who have been bereaved of their children. Our people's sacrifices have only one aim which is the attainment of freedom, independence and national sovereignty over the soil of our sacred homeland. As we renew the pledge to continue the struggle - whatever the sacrifices - and declare that the repressive measures will not terrify us, we call on the international community to shoulder its responsibility for providing international protection for our people, from the crimes of the occupation army. We call on the UN Security Council and other international bodies to insure protection for our heroic people who are steadfast on their national soil.

To the masses of our heroic people:

The PLO's militant arm in the State of Palestine, the United National Leadership, calls on you to carry out the following:

- Merchants should act in a spirit of cooperation with our people and their suffering, and refrain from exploitation and raising prices. We confirm that the people and popular committees, as well as the strike forces, will not hesitate to hold accountable anyone who toys with the people's food or betrays them. We call on money changers not to toy with the prices of currency, as this would harm our people.

- We confirm the war on Zionist products and call on dealers to stop distributing them especially those which are superfluous or for which there is a local substitute.

- We confirm the continuation of the tax boycott... We call on the strike forces to increase their activity in the cities, villages and camps, effectively confronting the Zionist tax collectors who suck our people's blood.

- The owners of national factories, workshops and institutions should raise the wages of workers and employees in line with the devaluation of the (Jordanian) dinar and the new wave of price rises; the increase should not be less than 40%. We call on the committees and trade and professional unions to act earnestly to implement this.

- We call on academics and teachers... to devote their time to studies that will contribute to developing educational curricula with a Palestinian national character,... to encourage and participate in popular education and to form national educational bodies in every city, village and camp for this purpose. This will thwart the occupation authorities' policy for making our students ignorant by ordering the collective closure of schools, universities and institutions.

Be alert to the attempts by agents to plant confusion and division in our people's ranks by threatening honest citizens' lives and property at night. We call on the masses to activate the guarding committees in order to thwart the acts of the enemies of the people. The strike forces should teach them a lesson. The masses should be alert to suspicious calls and lies, and adhere to the calls of the United National Leadership, the sole leading body of the intifada in the State of Palestine.

- Stay away from the suspicious meetings and parties called by the civil administration and the instruments of the occupation. Attending such gatherings is considered a violation against the masses of the intifada and the national consensus.

- Continue to establish the institutions of the Palestinian state by completing the unification of all professional and mass sectors. In this respect, we greatly appreciate the unity of the writers' union, since such unity is one of the goals of our people's intifada.

- We call on world public opinion, and on Israeli democrats and progressives, to do their civilized, human duty towards the Palestinian Arab people, to prevent barbaric practices against the detained Palestinian freedom fighters and to keep the detention centers from becoming death camps like those of the

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Nazis. The detainees in Ansar III feel that their lives are in jeopardy because of the constant provocations and killings, which occur according to the whim of the officers and administration.

- We greatly appreciate the militant role of the strike forces and call on them to increase their confrontation of the occupation troops, settlers, traitors, thieves and anyone who blackmails the merchants or the masses. The strike forces must attack the appointed councils and those who work in the civil administration apparatus.

- We salute the national role of the honest workers who comply with our calls. They should not spend the night at their work places on general strike days, nor harvest citrus fruit in the Zionists' groves. It is prohibited to work in the Zionist settlements established on the land of our future Palestinian state.

- We appreciate the positive steps taken by those who complied with the calls and resigned from their work in the civil administration apparatus. We demand that the remaining employees resign immediately, and warn anyone who tries to retract his resignation or to take the work of those who resigned.

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To the masses of our independent Palestinian state:

Continuing to escalate the intifada is linked to increasing political action on various levels. Therefore, we confirm the following:

- The need to continue the political struggle led by our brother and leader, Abu Amar, and the PLO Executive Committee vis-a-vis the states of the world, on the basis of the PNC resolutions and the historical peace initiative, in order to attain more international support for our national cause.

- The need for consistent adherence to the goals of the struggle, as they are defined by the intifada and stated in the PNC resolutions from the session of the intifada. We warn against any attempt to break the PNC decisions, to practice them selectively or out of context, or to go beyond them, by dealing with the «laying down of arms» (including stones) as called for by the Israeli government. The sole guarantee for our national rights is adherence to the PNC decisions.

- We salute the states which have upgraded the Palestinian diplomatic representation, meanwhile demanding that the Arab states, and all states of the world, continue their support to the Palestinian people and their just cause via the PLO, the sole, legitimate representative of our people. We appreciate the positive action of the states of the European group, aimed at activating the peace process in the Middle East, and guaranteeing our people's national rights.

- The US stand remains hostile to our people, their aspirations and rights. We therefore refuse the US logic which equates the occupation army with our unarmed people who are fighting for their human dignity and national rights. In this respect, we demand that the US administration officially recognize the PLO as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, as well as their right of repatriation, self-determination and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on their national soil.

- We call on the UN Secretary General and the permanent

members of the Security Council to exert great efforts to provide international emergency troops to protect the Palestinian citizens in the territories of the occupied Palestinian state for an interim period, in preparation for an international peace conference. We call for forming an international committee to investigate the crimes of the occupation troops against our people.

- We salute the peace forces in Israel, those who supported the Palestinian peace initiative. We call on all peace-loving sectors of the Israeli people to support our national rights to repatriation, self-determination and an independent state, as well as the legitimacy of the PLO as the sole representative of our people everywhere. We call on them to grasp the historical chance for peace.

- We demand that all fraternal Arab states comply with their obligations to support the intifada in accordance with the decisions of the Algiers Summit, and to conduct Arab political action in support of the Palestinian peace offensive. We also call on the Arab masses to make the 9th of each month a day of Arab solidarity with the Palestinian intifada.

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To the masses of our people, the people of the PLO:

The following struggle activities should be carried out:

1. January 25th and 26th are days of struggle for the strike forces to confront traitors and appointed councils.
2. January 28th is a day of escalating the struggle; sit-ins, demonstrations and marches should be organized, as well as writing memoranda of solidarity with the detainees of the intifada.
3. January 30th is a day of Palestinian molotovs.
4. January 31st is a general strike day to protest the policy of collecting taxes, and for solidarity with our brave merchants.
5. February 1st and 2nd are days for encouraging local products and waging war on the Israeli ones.
6. February 4th is a day of marches and demonstrations to protest the house demolition policy.
7. February 8th and 9th are general strike days on the occasion of the monthly anniversary of continuing the intifada.
8. On February 10th, we congratulate the Palestinian Communist Party for the 7th anniversary of its establishment. This is a day of escalating the struggle; demonstrations should be organized.
9. Marches should be organized from mosques and churches after Friday and Sunday prayers.



# The Uprising Enters its Second Year

While the Palestinian uprising continues to move forward, building the base for the Palestinian state, the Israeli government remains committed to its age-old formula for dealing with the Palestinian question, a policy which is tantamount to mass killing.



The Zionist occupation authorities began 1989 by imposing a two-day curfew in the occupied Gaza Strip, and by expelling 13 more Palestinians on charges of participating in leading the intifada. The 13 were among the 27 arrested in August, and served with deportation orders. Coming after the expulsion of three on December 14th, this brought to 49 the number of Palestinians expelled from their homeland in the first year of the uprising. A further two Palestinians were administratively expelled on February 13th, because they were found to lack Israeli-issued ID cards, despite having lived in the West Bank for 22 years.

On January 17th, Defense Minister Rabin announced that he had authorized broader use of plastic bullets which were introduced in August, and are acknowledged to be lethal even by Israeli sources that count 47 killed by such bullets as of January. Previously, plastic bullets were to be issued only to specially trained troops;

now any soldier can fire them at «violent demonstrations» - defined as three or more Palestinians - even if his life is not endangered. This means shooting at stonethrowers even as they are running away or otherwise after the act, and shooting at those erecting barricades and burning tires.

In the «war against stones» declared by Brigadier General Ramot, head of the Israeli civil administration in the Gaza Strip, the army is authorized to arrest and punish anyone over 12 years old for throwing stones; they will get prison terms of two-three years; their families' homes will be demolished or sealed; and their parents fined or threatened with closure of their shop or property confiscation.

## LEGALIZING THE DEATH SQUADS

While this appears as a substantial tightening of Zionist repression, most of these measures have been in practice, to varying degrees, since the outbreak

of the intifada. Rabin simply legalized them. It is difficult to ascertain whether the occupation authorities really envision that this old-new policy can stop the uprising, or whether it is more designed to boost morale in the military establishment.

The Database Project on Palestinian Human Rights listed 43 Palestinian deaths as «under investigation or possible official responsibility,» in addition to the 432 known to have been shot, beaten, burned, stoned or teargassed to death by the occupation forces and their agents from December 9, 1987 to December 8, 1988. These undetermined cases, added to documented assassinations, point not only to the regular troops, but to special army and Shin Beit units, as well as settlers.

Curfews and massive raids on villages, towns and camps, especially on strike days, provide a cover for a range of brutal tactics, including the summary execution of Palestinian activists, rather than arresting them. From June, there were reports of vandalism, beatings and other terror acts by a unit calling itself the Black Scorpions, thought to be part of the elite paratrooper unit, the Golani Brigade. Soldiers of this unit, aside from imposing collective punishment on whole villages and camps, are known to have injected Palestinians with that they called a «truth serum» - inducing chemical poisoning in a number of the victims. The Black Scorpions target those who have spoken out against Israeli abuses, attempting to terrorize others into silence. For example, in Arura village where four Palestinians were buried to above their waists with stones on May 18th, the Black Scorpions later raided the home of one of them and beat him unconscious.

In October, Andrew Whitley of *Financial Times*, and Paul Taylor and Steve Weizman of Reuters were deprived of their press credentials by the Israeli government after writing that Israel was sending hit squads to the West Bank to assassinate Palestinian activists. Named was the Cherry Patrol which may be the new intelligence and

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commando unit set up by cabinet decree. Such commandos report directly to the Army Chief of Staff, rather than functioning via the normal chain of command. They typically move in cars with West Bank and Gaza license plates, as do the Black Scorpions. Such units have previously been used to assassinate PLO cadres abroad; with the intifada, they are operating more in Palestine itself. As if to prove their existence, «unknown assailants» in November violently attacked the two Reuters correspondents who had written about the hit squads. Such methods are obviously part of the Israeli command's thinking: Chief of Staff Shomron was a member of the IDF/Mossad unit, the General Staff Headquarters' Reconnaissance Patrol, when he led the attack on Entebbe airport in 1976; chief of army operations, Major General Ehud Barak, commanded the 1973 raid on Beirut in which three PLO leaders were killed, and was also involved in the assassination of Abu Jihad (*Israel and Palestine*, October-November 1988).

The Israeli government has denied the existence of such units. Yet in early December, Rabin thanked the Shin Bet for «solving» over 600 attacks on Israeli targets and arresting over 600 Palestinians in the past two months.

The most substantive proof of the existence of death squads, in one form or another, is events themselves. From November through January, over ten Palestinians died in circumstances which point to the existence of hit teams or the army acting as such. Here we are not speaking about martyrs who fell when the army opened fire on demonstrations, but about local activists singled out for death or beating in ambushes, kidnappings, house raids, shooting from civilian cars, etc. In most cases, the assassins seemed to know who they were looking for; in several cases, eyewitnesses and/or members of the victim's family were arrested, beaten or otherwise harassed to silence them.

## SHOOTING TO KILL

Such events make us view Rabin's recent measures more as a routinization of existing lawlessness by the occupation army and intelligence services, *Democratic Palestine*, March 1989

rather than a new policy. The other indication of the murderous intent of Israeli policy is the rising casualty rates: From November 1st to 27th, 250 Palestinians were hospitalized in the Gaza Strip alone, according to UNRWA counts, the bulk of them after November 15th as the occupation army punished Palestinians for celebrating the Declaration of Independence. Palestinian doctors noted an increase in head injuries. December recorded one of the highest death tolls from shooting to date, including Black Friday in Nablus, December 16th, when nine people died and over 40 were injured as a result of the occupation troops firing on a peaceful funeral procession for a martyr. In mid-January, Palestinians were being martyred at a rate of two daily. According to Palestinian sources, half the deaths were from «rubber bullets» - actually a metal ball thinly coated with rubber, which came into use in late 1988.

## THE ARMY'S DILEMMA

Aside from obvious failure to halt or even lessen the intifada, the new Israeli measures appear to be doubly doomed, since they were announced amidst plaintive cries from the army itself about the impossibility of suppressing the uprising by brute force, and the consequences of this for the military's integrity.

On January 13th, Major General Menachem Einan, the army's logistics chief, resigned. Though the army spokesman claimed his resignation was simply to take a civilian job, Einan told the Israeli daily *Maariv*: «I am very worried about the level of morality of Israel's soldiers in the territories. We are making them face provocations that inspire maliciousness all too quickly» (AP, January 12th). Einan traced his uneasiness about this question back to the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

In February, the 56th Israeli soldier was sentenced to prison for refusing to serve in the occupied territories during the uprising. In addition, it is estimated that 500 soldiers have requested and received transfers out of the territories without disciplinary measures being taken.

Perhaps the most significant statement came from the army chief of

staff, Shomron, who on January 10th told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that «there is no such thing as eradicating the intifada because in its essence it expresses the struggle of nationalism... Elsewhere in the world, the ruling power relinquished occupied territory when civilian participation went beyond a certain degree, but our position is not the same since the confrontation is happening right here at home.» Shomron, of course, didn't draw the obvious conclusion of his own realization, but rather pledged that the army would continue in its duties to «enable the political echelons to operate from a position of strength, so that the violence cannot force the government to take decisions under pressure.»

Shamir was highly critical of Shomron's admissions, but he was subsequently confronted by even stronger expressions of doubt when he visited reserve paratroopers deployed in occupied Nablus, on January 18th. Below are examples of what he heard as reported by the Israeli paper *Hadashot*, January 20th:

«Here, in this place, a people is being born. Among us, in contrast, our unity is disintegrating. I think that a solution can be found only through diplomacy.»

«We're people who grew up on universal values, on human values. But in order to impose order in the casbah, we're obliged to behave violently and brutally against innocent people. I am conscious of the fact that I break the law of the army in order to force people to be frightened of me... I fell humiliated before the man I have to beat, because these aren't the values I was raised on. These aren't the values of dignity. I feel that he (the Palestinian) is getting stronger and I'm getting weaker. Whoever comes and says, then don't beat (people) simply doesn't understand the reality on the ground. An oppressive regime must oppress. That's what it is all about. That's why this situation is catastrophic.»

The rising discontent in the army is only one of several conflicting internal pressures on the Zionist government. On the one hand, the settler movement in the West Bank has staged a series of protests against the government and army failure to quell the intifada; ▶



meanwhile, as reported by Israeli radio on January 26th, hundreds of settlers are leaving the Gaza Strip under the impact of the uprising; the number of police stations has been greatly reduced after the resignation of the 300 Palestinian policemen who were replaced by only 38 Israelis. At the same time, the Givati Brigade went on strike in January to protest the detention of four of their troopers for investigation of the murder by beating of a resident of Jabalia camp in August.

From the other side, the peace movement has staged large demonstrations urging the government to find a political solution. Democratically inclined Israelis had been questioning the use of plastic bullets since last autumn, and with the advent of the new measures, Shinui MK Rubenstein called on soldiers to disobey orders to fire on stonethrowers, while Energy Minister Shahal termed the new rules for opening fire «possibly illegal.»

Added to this are the manpower problems experienced by the Israeli military as the result of such long-term, concentrated deployment in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Experts agree that this is a vicious cycle: At first, the younger combat troops were sent to confront the uprising; with its continuation, they were called back for needed training, and reservists became the bulk of those expected to suppress the intifada; however, they proved to be more sensitive to the practical and moral problems involved in fighting a whole population. Also, this entailed doubling reserve duty time, which has caused discontent, forcing Rabin to promise to cut it back again.

In view of these factors, added to the Israeli government's lack of ability and/or will to compromise its Zionist ambitions, we can only anticipate con-

tinued use of the military option, perhaps with modifications as proposed by Major General Barak. To solve the Israeli army's manpower problem, he proposed «flying squads» (*International Herald Tribune*, January 31st). This idea of top-trained commandos, fewer in number but covering more territory, can only mean officially constituted death squads in practice.

## FIGHTING THE DEATH CAMPS

The situation of the political detainees has figured prominently in the recent events of the intifada. The detainees' own struggle has escalated substantially with hunger strikes and other forms of protest. This has been bolstered by solidarity from outside; relatives have become more militant in their protests; larger numbers of democratic Israelis have demonstrated against administrative detention; and there have been international protests as well.

The sheer number of detainees has contributed to this build-up. Already last fall, figures reported in the *San Francisco Chronicle* (September 14th), showed that one out of 83 Palestinians had been detained. This means the Zionist occupation authorities are arresting Palestinians at a rate seven times higher than the apartheid regime has arrested blacks in South Africa since the 1986 state of emergency (one in every 600 people).

In January, West Bank lawyers estimated that 40,000 Palestinians have been jailed at one time or another since the uprising began. Currently, there are about 6,000 political detainees; only about eight per cent of them are convicted; roughly one-third are administrative detainees, while the rest await being charged and tried. On December 1, 1988, Amnesty International released a report condemning the Israeli policy of administrative detention, and adopted 18 administrative detainees as prisoners of conscience. The organization is investigating a further 104 cases of Palestinians believed to be detained only for non-violent expression of their views.

The situation has been heightened by continuing mass arrests, as on the night

of February 8th, when the occupation troops snatched 175 Hebron residents from their homes, preceding according to prepared lists of names. The 175 were held for 16 hours in a local soccer stadium, evoking images of the 1st year of the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile, before scores were taken away to detention centers and the rest sent home. While Rabin's new policy will not end the intifada, it will transport even more of its activists into the prisons, as witnessed by the trials after his announcements, handing out up to three years for stonethrowing, even when no injury had been incurred.

To the subhuman conditions in the detention centers run by the Israeli army is added ongoing torture and the policy of opening fire on detainees at the least sign of protest, making these centers into death camps where the detainees' lives are constantly at risk. At least 15 Palestinians were killed in detention during the first year of the uprising, and incidents of opening fire on the detainees are on the rise.

On January 3rd, West Bank lawyers went on strike protesting the lawlessness of the Israeli occupation authorities' arrest and detention policy. «Our offices continue to serve as missing persons bureaus,» said the lawyers, citing a long list of Israeli practices which rule out the concept of due process, while leading to abuse of the detainees and preventing lawyers from functioning with a minimal degree of professional integrity. Gaza lawyers had previously been on strike, and the Palestinian lawyers' boycott of court appearances was joined by progressive Israeli lawyers and by detainees in Ansar III (in the Naqab desert of South Palestine) and those in Megiddo military prison in the Galilee.

The situation in the detention centers has become increasingly explosive. A hunger strike in Ansar III, protesting the miserable conditions, was met by soldiers opening fire on the detainees on January 8th, injuring one. Again on February 9th, soldiers attacked Ansar III prisoners, injuring ten, two of them by shooting.

In contrast to most Ansar detainees, those in Megiddo have been allowed family visits. However, relatives were several times turned away in December

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and January, adding to fears that the prison administration has a lot to hide. There were reports of attacks on the detainees on December 13th, when 30 were injured while protesting. Again, in late January, after the escape of three political prisoners from Megiddo, the guards attacked the prisoners. Then on February 8th, the 400 Palestinians who had come to visit detained relatives were harassed by the prison personnel; they immediately staged a militant protest. The soldiers cancelled visiting hours and arrested 300 of the visitors, meanwhile attacking others departing in a bus, with tear gas. When word spread in the prison that visits had been cancelled, the detainees began a protest that lasted two days, despite soldiers opening fire and killing two of the prisoners, while injuring a number of others.

Protesting the killings, Megiddo detainees began an open-ended hunger strike. Protests spread to the Ansar III, Al Fara and Dhahiriya detention centers as well, and on February 15th, Palestinian political prisoners in all Israeli jails joined together in a one-day hunger strike.

## 1989 IN THE STATE OF PALESTINE THE RISE OF THE POPULAR ARMY

Palestinians began the new year with demonstrations celebrating the 24th anniversary of Fatah's first guerrilla attack against the Zionist occupation. In some places, there were quasi-military parades by the strike forces which in the recent period have begun to assume the form of a people's army. In call no. 32, issued in early January, the United National Leadership hailed the emergence of the Palestinian Popular Army as «the army of the PLO, the army of the uprising which basically comprises our vanguards, is subject to the UNL's orders and includes all organizations of the PLO,» calling on all youth to join.

The escalation continued, and in mid-January, the Israeli newspaper *Yediot Ahronot* quoted senior army commanders as saying «the violence was a return to the bloodshed earlier in the 13-month Palestinian uprising after several months of relative calm» (AP,

January 16th). The escalation was also apparent in an increasing number of strike days: To the five days of general strike originally scheduled by the UNL in January, were added three consecutive days of total commercial strikes throughout the 1967 occupied territories to protest the occupation army's increased killing of demonstrators and children, as well as local strikes to protest specific things, ranging from expulsions, killings and demolitions, to tax raids. In February, in addition to the traditional two-day general strike marking the monthly anniversary of the intifada, the UNL for the first time scheduled three consecutive strike days. The general strike of February 19-21st was not a protest but an assertion of basic principles, namely, Palestinian rights to repatriation, self-determination and an independent state.

## TARGETING EXPLOITATION

Another noteworthy characteristic of the struggle in 1989 has been the increasingly precise focus on hitting the institutions whereby the occupation exploits Palestinian resources, whether labor or income. Call no. 32 emphasized burning the establishments of the occupiers. In January, the Israeli labor office in Jerusalem was set on fire, while the Jenin and Nablus branches of the Israeli Bank Leumi were attacked. In February, the Israeli tax office was burned in Qalqilia, as was the civil administration's financial department in Nablus, and the Israeli labor department office in Khan Younis. In addition, the boycott of Israeli goods (for which there is a Palestinian alternative) was substantially tightened. In many places, the strike forces publicly burned Israeli goods found on the local market, in accordance with the war on Zionist products declared in the UNL's calls.

These militant acts served to highlight the success of the economic boycott, which with call no. 21, has included Palestinians' withdrawing their savings from Israeli banks. In mid-January, the Israeli Discount Bank permanently closed its branch in Tulkarem, having earlier closed bran-

ches in Jericho and Ramallah. The consumer boycott's results were reflected in a report issued by the Bank of Israel on February 9th, according to which Israel sold only \$650 million in goods to the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1988, compared to \$928 million worth of products in 1987.

The intifada inflicted new setbacks on the Israeli civil administration apparatus. On February 20th, seven Palestinians who had been serving as judges declared their intention to resign. There was a renewed popular offensive against appointed mayors and other collaborators, with fifteen attacks on such persons in January and February.

The main focus of militant struggle, however, continues to be against the occupation itself. In addition to ongoing mass confrontation of Israeli soldiers and settlers, well-directed firebombs were thrown against military patrols, buses and posts, at a rate of more than one every other day throughout January and February. On March 5th, Israeli radio reported that two million shekels had been spent on reinforcing Egged buses against such attacks. Even more significant, in the third week of February, two Israeli occupation soldiers were killed, while a third is missing.

## BUILDING UNITY AND INDEPENDENCE

Alongside militant confrontation of the occupation, Palestinians have continued building the infrastructure for its alternative, the State of Palestine, with ongoing efforts at collective self-sufficiency, increased local production, expanding cooperatives, social welfare and medical care. Education has received even more attention, especially since the January 20th closure of all West Bank schools, after a less than two-month opening that was itself marked by temporary closures of many schools. Realizing that the Israeli policy of enforcing ignorance is taking on a permanent character, the UNL reemphasized its calls for organizing popular education and for educators to draw up a national curriculum worthy of the students in the Palestinian state in the making. The people of the in- ▶



tifada have also found time to hold cultural events, such as a major exhibition of paintings in December, and folklore evenings in Al Hakawati theater in Jerusalem. The reunification of the Union of Palestinian Writers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, announced January 13th, will surely contribute to increasing cultural efforts, in addition to strengthening the drive to close the remaining gaps in national unity. A major step in this direction had already occurred on December 8th, with the declaration of a coordinating committee for all the women's organizations in the occupied territories, putting women on the forefront of efforts to unite the popular organizations.

## 1948 OCCUPIED PALESTINE

Events in the part of Palestine occupied in 1948 have also served to assert the Palestinian cause. Palestinians here have intertwined their historical struggle against national oppression with their struggle to support the intifada. The Israeli authorities pointedly warned them against celebrating the Declaration of Independence, fearing reenactment of the December 21, 1987 nation-wide strike. Nevertheless, there was a strike in the 1948 occupied territories at this time, protesting the demolition of 15 houses in Taibeh, and reports that the Zionist authorities intended to demolish 50 homes in Um Al Fahm.

Though less than the intifada in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the struggle of the Palestinians in the Zionist state is at a level which alarms the occupation authorities, as has been seen in increasing repression in the Galilee where special patrols harass and beat villagers. This reached absurd proportions in early February, when police broke into a Nazareth elementary school and arrested an 11-year old who had drawn a Palestinian flag on his ruler; five other youngsters were also arrested, as was the principal when he tried to protest the arrests. In the same period, the village of Dabborya was besieged by the police and border guards who made arrests after discovering that slogans signed by the PLO were written on walls, and the cars of four collaborators had been burned.

Moreover, Israeli radio has several times reported the arrest of «terrorist cells» involving cooperation between Palestinians of the 1967 and 1948 occupied areas - something which they appear to be very concerned about. In the same period, the occupation authorities have been faced by demonstrations in the occupied Golan Heights - one celebrating the first anniversary of the intifada, and the other protesting on the seventh anniversary of the annexation of the Syrian Heights.

Aside from harassing the people at large, Zionist repression has concentrated on two targets in particular: the Sons of the Village, and the municipal and village councils where the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (DFPE) and Rakah (the Israeli Communist Party) hold the majority of seats.

In mid-January, Israeli police broke up a song festival in Sakhnin, sponsored by the Sons of the Village, where 700 Palestinians had gathered in support of the uprising; 11 were arrested, including three of the singers. On January 15th, the editor of the Sons of the Village newspaper, *Al Raya (The Banner)*, was summoned by the Israeli district commander and informed of the authorities' intention to revoke the paper's license, due to alleged connections to the PFLP. *Al Raya* has consistently and militantly called for Palestinians in the Zionist state to be more active in supporting the intifada, which is the most likely reason for its being singled out at this particular time. On February 4th, a rally was held in Nazareth, to protest the planned closure. The paper was closed in early March.

The other prong of the Israeli attack on political forces concerned the February 28th municipal elections. Prior to their being held, the Zionist authorities escalated their campaign to deprive Palestinians of independent national representation and empowerment, using a variety of 'legal' devices. An Interior Ministry plan was approved to dissolve the councils of four villages and merge them with Israeli-controlled councils. Significantly, all four councils were controlled by the DFPE or Rakah. Then, on January

23rd, the mayor of one of these villages, Jdayda, was arrested on trumped up charges of fraud. Two weeks before the elections, a bill was brought to the Israeli Knesset to bar former «security prisoners» from running for office, because it was found that three candidates had previously served time in Israeli jails for nationalist activities, and been released in 1985.

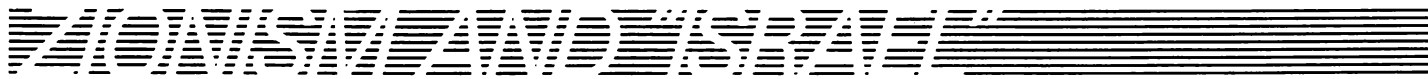
A less publicized struggle highlights the impossibility of reconciling Zionist principles with any kind of justice or equality. On January 11th, there was a joint demonstration of democratic Jewish and Palestinian Arab students at Tel Aviv University, under the slogan: «No to Apartheid» in protest of a decision to segregate dormitories on the basis of students being Jewish or not. An Israeli court upheld the decision, and Palestinian students were moved from dormitories which should receive Jewish students coming from abroad. The reason behind all this was the Israeli-Jewish Agency rule governing such incoming students who should experience living with other Jews - not with Palestinians.

The real background for the increasing Zionist repression is the Israeli authorities' concern about their own failure to create the «pure Jewish state» to which they aspire. At a time when the intifada has shown the unviability of the 1967 occupation, any display of nationalism from Palestinians in the Zionist state shows that the problem really is, as Shomron said, «at home.» Statistics show that the number of Jews living in the Galilee has dropped by ten per cent over the past ten years. This was the decade that should have witnessed the opposite trend, in accordance with the Judaization plan adopted by the Israeli government in the wake of the 1976 Day of the Land's reassertion of Palestinian nationalism. This is one of many signs that, in the long-run, the Zionists are fighting a losing battle. ●

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In addition to our own sources and the quoted news reports, our main source for the article was *Uprising Update: December 8, 1989*, published by the Database Project on Palestinian Human Rights, and the weekly English editions of *Al Fajr*, January 2nd-February 20th.

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## A Coalition Government, A Likud Program

The failure of the Israeli policy of attempting to end the intifada through brutal military force is becoming more apparent with each passing day. The gains of the intifada and its repercussions locally and on the international level are taking their toll on the Israeli government. The failure of the «military solution» is being uttered increasingly by government officials from both the Likud and Labor. In the words of the army's Chief of Staff, Dan Shomron, «There is no such thing as eradicating the intifada because in its essence it expresses the struggle of nationalism.»<sup>1</sup>

Israelis from a broad political spectrum have also voiced their ambivalence vis-a-vis a military solution, including Defense Minister Rabin who was quoted as saying in an inner cabinet meeting, «It is not possible to put an end to the intifada militarily.»<sup>2</sup> The head of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Security Committee, Eliahu Ben Elissar admitted: «The Palestinians are winning and we are losing.»<sup>3</sup>

This phenomenon, which is an offshoot of the intifada and which permeates the Israeli army and government circles, has not yet manifested in a practical and viable political program for reaching a solution.

In addition to the intifada and as a result of it, there has been mounting pressure in Israel and internationally for the coalition government to work towards a negotiated settlement. Two separate polls taken this year by the Israeli Institute of Applied Social Research and Dafah indicate that more than half of the Israelis are in favor of negotiations with the PLO. According to the Institute of Applied Social Research, 65% of Israelis are in favor of exchanging territory (occupied) for peace.<sup>4</sup>

On the international level, the European Economic Community has praised the PLO peace initiative and called on Israel to reciprocate. The US had decided to open a dialogue with the PLO. The Palestinian state was

declared at the 19th PNC (Palestine National Council) in Algiers and has gained the recognition of 87 countries world-wide, and at the UN numerous resolutions have been passed in the Security Council and in the General Assembly condemning Israeli atrocities, in addition to the decision to allow the state of Palestine to speak, as any other nation, within the Security Council.

The reaction of the Israeli government has been to step up repression - more killings, expulsions, home demolitions, land confiscations, imprisonment, collective punishment, etc., meanwhile declaring sham «political initiatives.»

One month before the formation of the government, Shamir announced his «new ideas» for a solution. Far from an initiative or a plan, these ideas are in essence within the framework of the Camp David agreements which were signed between Israel and Egypt a decade ago. Shamir presented three «new ideas.» The first calls for holding municipal elections without the participation of the PLO, but PLO sympathizers would be allowed to run for office. The second idea is the establishment of limited «self-rule» (Bantustans) whereby elections for this «self-government» would take place at a later date. The third idea is to conduct direct negotiations with the Arab governments on the basis of the Camp David agreements and the participation of Jordan. The UN, the US and the Soviet Union would be allowed to attend but not to participate in any way.

Shamir is trying to abort the intifada first and foremost, and to create an alternative Palestinian leadership instead of the PLO. This Palestinian «leadership» would then be in charge of «self-rule,» i.e., taking care of municipal and administrative duties, while the Israeli army would remain to oversee security matters.

Meanwhile, Rabin who has been using the big stick (brute force and beatings) to quell the intifada has finally offered the Palestinians the carrot.

To his dismay, however, it did not stop the intifada or slow it down; nor did it win support or encouragement from the Palestinians, or anyone else. Before declaring his initiative, Rabin delegated his generals to meet with Palestinians in an effort to illicit their support. Afterwards, Rabin called for elections (excluding the PLO) as a prelude to direct negotiations with the alternative «leadership.» In return Rabin is asking for an end to the intifada. Rabin's «generosity» extends to such limits as allowing this alternative «leadership» to consult with the PLO. However, according to Rabin, only the Palestinians in the occupied territories are to be included in his initiative.

In an effort to instill life in this doomed initiative, Rabin later extended his offer to any Palestinian in the West Bank to be part of this scheme, regardless of their political views. Rabin's attempts at bypassing the PLO and dividing the Palestinian people have failed miserably. As far as he is concerned, negotiating with the PLO would lead to an eventual Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories and the establishment of a Palestinian state and that, Rabin explains, is a «national catastrophe which can only be accepted by someone who is crazy.» Rabin will have a hard time trying to find a Palestinian crazy enough to accept his plan. Meanwhile, Peres declared his own plan which includes a confederation between Jordan, Israel and the occupied territories.

The United National Leadership of the Intifada has warned against these proposed elections in its call number 33, and considered them a conspiracy like «self-rule» and the Shultz plan which called for negotiations between Israel and a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. The UNL categorically refused the idea of holding elections under occupation.

The program of the Israeli government is clearly against the attainment of peace, despite the new political realities born out of the intifada, the declaration of the Palestinian state, the 19th PNC

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resolutions and the international support they received. The Israeli government has yet to present a viable plan for peace; its program does not add much to the 1984 program which was based on NO negotiations with the PLO, and «self-rule» for Palestinians in the occupied territories. Israel is against the establishment of a Palestinian state anywhere between the Jordan river and the Mediterranean Sea. This is an indirect suggestion by both Likud and Labor that a Palestinian state should be established in Jordan, rather than in Palestine.

The new government of «national unity» is in reality a government of national paralysis. Likud has not offered anything outside the framework of the Camp David agreements, while Labor is in harmony with Likud over the three No's: No to negotiations with the PLO, No to withdrawal from the 1967 occupied territories, and No to a Palestinian state.

According to *Haaretz*, the inner cabinet discussed a report prepared by Israeli experts in its mid-March meeting. This report suggests that the Israeli government should conduct negotiations with the PLO and find a political solution, because «the intifada might continue for years to come.»<sup>5</sup> The report warned of Israel's deteriorating image in the world and the weakening of US-Israeli relations in the continued absence of a political solution.

On the other hand, the latest report by the Brookings Institute urges the US administration to place the Arab-Israeli conflict on its priority list, and warns against a protracted stalemate which might endanger US interests. The report adds that what is needed is more than bringing the two sides to the negotiating table. There is an urgent need for a realistic strategic policy to achieve peace.

The intifada has established itself

formidably and has now become a way of life for Palestinians living under Israeli occupation, who are now erecting the structure of the future Palestinian state. There is now international consensus for a negotiated political settlement. The US has finally come to realize the futility of excluding the PLO from such negotiations. The Palestinian people and their leadership want a negotiated settlement; the majority of Israelis want a negotiated settlement; and the Israeli government is still holding out. A continuation of Israeli intransigence will only prolong the bloodshed and isolate the Zionist state even more. ●

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<sup>1</sup> Database Project on Palestinian Human Rights, February 1st; Shomron was speaking at a Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee briefing on January 10th.

<sup>2</sup> *Destour*, Arabic, February 10th.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> AP, February 13th.

<sup>5</sup> *Haaretz*, March 20th.

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## A Garrison State

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In previous issues of *Democratic Palestine* we have printed a study on the role of the Zionist state in the Middle East, focusing on its wars, nuclear power, reactionary alliances and special military operations in the service of imperialism. Below, the concluding installment of this study deals with aspects of its internal structure that allow the Zionist state to play this role.

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The connection between the Zionist state's internal structure and its regional role lies in its origin as a settler colony. Predicated on the Palestinians' dispossession on the one hand and massive external support on the other, 'Israel' carved out its enemies and alliances which provided the rationale and source, respectively, of its military build-up. At the same time, it created its own crisis which was described from the demographic angle by Yigal Allon (former Palmach commander, deputy prime minister and foreign minister), as follows: «... the rate of Jewish immigration which followed the establishment of the State of Israel proved to be much lower than expected and the Jewish birth rate in the country did not exceed that of the indigenous Arab population, and so the dream of the Jewish people rapidly becoming a solid majority within an undivided Erez Israel, without an exodus of the Palestinian Arab population, vanished into thin air. The military victory of 1967 did not change an iota of this basic demographic reality despite a temporary rise in Jewish immigration figures which followed the Six Days War» (*Middle East Review* 12, no.2, Winter 1979-80).

It is clear from this statement that aggression is the only outlet for fulfilling the Zionist dream - How else to effect the desired Palestinian exodus? It is equally clear that aggression-like that of 1967 - only brings another stage of the built-in Israeli crisis.

### FIRST STRIKE POLICY

The Israeli policy of preemptive first strikes as seen in the 1956 and 1967 wars, repeated invasions of Lebanon and innumerable air and commando raids, actually began «at home». According to Samuel Divan, Ben Gurion's advisor on Arab affairs, in a 1958 interview: «Ben Gurion always reminded us that we cannot be guided by subversion which the Arab minority (in 'Israel') has not engaged in. We must be guided by what they might have done if they had been given the chance» (quoted by Sami Hadawi, *Palestine in Focus*, 1969). It was this thinking that guided the organization of the IDF, border guards, Shin Bet, police and the Israeli state apparatus in general. Because the society was a settler colony and the enemy was within, the Israeli military build-up was not

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government policy during the war in Lebanon, according to a 1959 law which authorizes the government to decide what level of government employees are forbidden to make such criticism. It had previously been assumed that higher-ranking employees were referred to, but Spiro lost the job he had held for 40 years at the Education Ministry, and his pension rights (reported by the International Committee for Palestinian Human Rights, May 26, 1986, Paris).

There have been several recent cases of Israelis being imprisoned for contact with Palestinian organizations in the interests of peace and/or informational work. One case involves dedicated Zionists, four MKs who were sentenced to six months in jail and heavy fines for meeting PLO officials in Romania in 1986. Two other cases concern anti-Zionist Israelis who face even stiffer punishment for publishing work. In 1987, the Alternative Information Center in Jerusalem was closed and its director, Michael Warshawsky arrested, on charges of links to the PFLP. The center's work focuses on human rights violations against Palestinians. In February 1988, the newspaper *Derech Hanitzotz* was closed. In April, its three Israeli editors were arrested on charges of affiliation to the DFLP; they face up to 40 years imprisonment if convicted. (Since this writing, the three have been tried; on January 25th, they were sentenced to prison terms ranging from nine to 30 months, as a result of plea bargaining.)

Even the ordinary Israeli citizen is subject to more surveillance than the citizens of most countries, as attested to by the CIA and State Department documents found in the US embassy in Teheran after the 1979 revolution, and first published by *CounterSpy*: «Security checks on native born Israelis are relatively easy to do, for the young Israeli, whose life is well documented, rarely enjoys the luxury of privacy. Police files, school records, university professors, army records, youth movements, political affiliations, voting records, family history, political persuasions and friends are scrutinized. If the applicant is foreign born, detailed immigration records may reveal pertinent information which can be cross-checked. Loyalty to Israel is the principal criterion. If the subject was a Zionist from early youth, he belongs to a special category; if he has never belonged to the leftist parties, MAPAM, MAKI and RAKAH, or to Herut, a rightist party, his employment opportunities are considerably enhanced.»

## MILITARY PRIORITIES IN SETTLEMENT

The high degree of social cohesion in Israeli society is not alone due to indoctrination, though this of course occurs. More important, it is related to the very way the state was built up, starting with such a simple thing as where people lived. From the beginning, military priorities predominated in how the settler population was distributed. Along the 1949 armistice lines, a chain of armed kibbutzim was established, filled with settlers drawn mainly from the 'socialist' Zionist youth movements who had constituted the Palmach, the Zionist strike force in pre-state days. Thus, when Ben Gurion dissolved the Palmach, this didn't reduce the Zionist military forces, but

integrated them into the nominally civilian population.

Behind this frontline, a second line of 'defense' was created by crowding newly arrived Oriental Jews into moshavim and 'development towns' on confiscated Palestinian land. «... the numbers of people the Israeli authorities installed in these areas exceeded the needs of normal economic planning, and can only be explained by this political motive (preventing Palestinians from returning to work their land)» (Raphael Shapiro, «Zionism and its Oriental Subjects,» *Forbidden Agendas*, 1984.) Shapiro's point is borne out by the fact that unemployment is consistently twice as high in the 'development towns' as in 'Israel' generally. The pro-Zionist writer, Emmanuel Marx, also affirms the essentially military priorities of Zionist settlement policy: «The (development) town was planned within the framework of a national settlement policy... This scheme sought in particular to settle the strategically sensitive regions along the Egyptian and Jordanian borders... the Israeli defense authorities felt no urgent need to establish many Jewish settlements in Galilee, as the Lebanon border stayed peaceful» (*Israel in the Middle East*). Of course, this changed in the seventies with the nationalist reawakening of the Palestinian Arabs; new plans were adopted for Judaizing the Galilee, while the Zionists dealt with Lebanon through outright aggression.

The phenomenon of settlements as military outposts was repeated in the 1967 occupied territories. Military priorities are blatant in that far greater per capita subsidies go to West Bank settlers than to residents of 'Israel' proper, accounting for 80% of the state's development budget in 1983. Within the West Bank, the priorities are also clear: «By 1985, the World Zionist Organization alone had invested \$80,000 per family on Jewish settlements in the highlands of the occupied West Bank and \$160,000 per family in the Jordan Valley» - the most strategic part (*Middle East Report*, May-June 1988). Transportation routes follow the same priorities. Yaacov Granek, director of national planning for the Egged Bus Cooperative, said that Egged has for years run lines that «can be called political lines for they are not at all economically viable» (quoted in *Journal of Palestine Studies* 49, Fall 1983).

Far from being founded on socialist principles, the communal form of living was chosen for military and economic efficiency. Although kibbutzniks constitute only 3% of the Israeli population, they account for 10% of the gross national product (*International Herald Tribune*, February 18, 1987). They have remained a bastion of the political-military elite, contributing 25% of Israeli ministers, 22% of the middle and high military command and the majority of air-force pilots (Uri Davis, *Israel: Utopia Incorporated*, 1977). The kibbutzim followed the Israeli economy into industrialization and then the age of hightech, including arms production for export. The January 7, 1983 edition of *Haaretz* reported that kibbutz Beth Alfa, affiliated to the self-proclaimed socialist party, Mapam, had been providing equipment to the Chilean army. In 1987, *Israeli Foreign Affairs* reported that the same kibbutz had sold six water cannons to the apartheid regime in Pretoria, which

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Israeli exports... Israel's ratio of defense exports to total exports is the highest in the world» (ibid).

While aggressive aims motivated the Israeli military build-up in the first place, this dynamic is self-perpetuating in part because war is seen as a solution to economic problems. In the mid-sixties, 'Israel' experienced its first recession. Reparations from Federal Germany were coming to an end; the gross national product had stagnated as had immigration. The 1967 war reversed this trend. The conquest of new territories provided both a captive labor force and new markets. In the same period, 'Israel' began to develop international markets for what would become the single largest sector in the economy - arms sales. Israeli performance in war has proven to be the most effective form of advertisement for its war products. Thus, the premise that aggression and occupation are profitable has deep material roots in Israeli thinking. It was never challenged until the 1982 occupation of almost one-third of Lebanon, and then not again until the current popular uprising in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. While the invasion of Lebanon was a fiasco for 'Israel' in many respects, it did boost arms sales. Less than a year after the Israeli army withdrew from most of Lebanon, Mapam's newspaper, *Al Hamishmar* wrote in the midst of the Israeli economic crisis and threats to Syria: «A not-too-long war, one which would continue for two or three weeks, will solve most of the problems of the Israeli military and security industries.»

## DEFORMATION OF THE WORKING CLASS

The Zionist state's militarization has decisively shaped the class structure of the settler society as well, leading to further deformation of the working class, in addition to that inherent in Zionism's colonial nature. Here, three factors have been determining: (1) imperialist aid, (2) access to cheap Palestinian labor, and (3) the army.

Half of all industrial workers are employed in military-related projects, and 70% of all US aid to 'Israel' over the years has been in the military field. The combination of these facts means that substantial cuts in the Israeli defense budget and/or in US aid would mean mass unemployment. Thus, willingly or not, the core of the Israeli Jewish working class had immediate material interests in the prevailing situation.

A corollary of this is that the contradiction between social and military spending, which serves as a focus of popular struggle in many capitalist countries, is almost absent in the Zionist state. The sole exception is the movement of a sector of the Oriental Jewish population which has second-class status compared to Jews of European origin.

While the creation of a Jewish proletariat figured among the stated aims of the early Zionists, the state's actual nature and its increasing militarization and expansion have produced quite the opposite phenomenon. In 1960, young men were 80% of the Israeli (Jewish) labor force, but only 63% in 1974. This is partly due to longer education, but mainly to the higher rate and longer period of military mobilization. The other side of this phenomenon is the increase in Palestinian Arab and Jewish

female labor: «Men are released for the front (army) when women take over the 'rear' economic activity,» writes Avishai Ehrlich in «Zionism, Demography and Women's Work» (*Forbidden Agendas*), which exposes the myth of the liberated Israeli woman.

Emmanuel Farjoun, writing on «Palestinian Workers in Israel: A Reserve Army of Labor» (*Forbidden Agendas*), adds to this: «The percentage of the total population employed or seeking employment is among the lowest in the world, just 33 per cent. By way of comparison: the corresponding figure for England is 46 per cent... Israel, in fact, is in the same category as countries like India (33 per cent)... quite low for an industrialized country. One reason for this is the size of the standing army... Also, in comparison with other industrialized countries, Israel has relatively few people engaged in agriculture, construction and industrial production.»

This gap is filled primarily by the labor of Palestinians from the 1967 occupied territories. Histadrut has actively contributed to this structural deformation of the work force, concentrating Jewish workers in white-collar and high-tech jobs needed by the military in particular. The only Histadrut company to employ Palestinian Arabs is Soleh Boneh, the construction firm. This corresponds to the deformation which became blatant after the 1967 occupation. Whereas in 1960, 70% of construction and manual workers were Jews. this percentage is now 30%, the remaining jobs being filled by labor from the territories (*Jerusalem Post*, June 10, 1986).

## MILITARIZED SOCIETY

Aside from where he or she may work, the average Israeli citizen's life is permeated by the military in a variety of ways. Yigael Yadin, former chief of staff and later deputy prime minister, once said, «the civilian is a soldier on eleven months leave» (*New York Times*, May 28, 1986). Most Israeli men spend 47 days on reserve duty each year, while the average Israeli is taxed at a rate of 58% to maintain the state as the world's fourth-ranking military power. According to Martyn Halshall, writing in the British *Guardian*, May 12, 1987, «Every Israeli appears to listen to every hourly radio news bulletin, not just for traditional information, but in case their coded military signal is being broadcast. The whole nation is an army, capable of mobilizing within a few hours.»

According to Baruch Kimmerling of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the Israeli army has not fulfilled original expectations as a tool for integrating immigrants from different countries, but it does serve as a «rite of passage for acceptance into the Israeli society... the symbolic differentiation between the 'old timer' and the 'immigrant' is not the number of years that the person has been living in the country, but whether he has lived in the country during a war or not... for all the other members of the population, participation in the armed forces grants a feeling of intense participation in the society» (*Israeli Society and its Defense Establishment*).

Whereas in many societies, higher education defers military service, the opposite is true in 'Israel' where «the Israeli draft

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law makes it almost impossible to have college education before being drafted» (ibid). Traditionally, the Israeli air force gets first crack at high school graduates, selecting the top 10%. There is also the Talpiot program whereby the brightest high school graduates get military and scientific training to prepare for defense research. This program has been in operation for several years, but only recently did the censor permit publication of details about it (*Jewish Week*, September 13, 1985).

Completion of military service carries with it a range of privileges, including access to housing and scholarships - a system that serves to exclude Palestinian Arabs who are Israeli citizens, since they do not serve in the army. In addition, it is only after completing military service that soldiers get certificates allowing travel abroad. Educational standards may even be tampered with in relation to military needs. For example, following two years of almost full mobilization to pursue the war and occupation in Lebanon, the Technion (the main Israeli technical teaching institute) decided to assist candidates who had completed military service by awarding an additional three points to their final marks for each year of service they had done (*Haaretz*, August 21, 1984).

Jewish religious values are also eroded by the needs of the militant settler society. One example concerns the Hesder Yeshivot, religious students who were previously 'closeted away' to pursue their religious training. With the increasing militarization of the Israeli society and the evocation of religion to serve extreme right-wing goals, these students are now in paramilitary 'religious' settlements from the Gaza Strip to the Golan Heights. They combine military service with religious instruction, signing up for four to five years rather than the required three. They spend five months annually in the army and the rest in their settlement where they are on call for emergency mobilization; most of them are constantly armed. According to top army people, «We are getting some of the best material in the army today from the Hesder Yeshivot» (*Jewish Press*, September 19, 1986).

### 'STATE WORSHIP'

In this study, we have focused on the material factors which predispose 'Israel' to play its aggressive role, meanwhile forging a consensus in the population at large to the same end. Accounting for this latter phenomenon would require a thorough review of the racist Zionist ideology itself, and how it has permeated Israeli social and cultural life, including the school curriculum and the media. This subject is too extensive to be included here, despite its importance in maintaining a settler population which is constantly ready to go to war for the sake of the state and imperialist aims. The social stability and reliability of the Israeli society are, of course, a main asset to imperialism.

Raphael Shapiro gives a number of reasons for what he terms «state worship» which accounts for the lack of dissent in Israeli society and general willingness to participate in the state's designated goals: «First, the organization of the processes of immigration and colonization gave rise to a huge

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bureaucracy, accustomed to manipulating large population groups. Second, the constant conflict with the Arab world has tremendously boosted the prestige and power of the military; a large and growing part of the social, bureaucratic and political elite is made up of retired generals...» (*Forbidden Agendas*). Shapiro poses the question of why 'Israel' has until now «shown only partial symptoms of fascist tendencies» and attributes this to the lack of serious internal opposition as well as the blunting of internal contradictions due to external aid. On the other side, one can conclude that the chance for change in Israeli society is fundamentally bound up with the advance of the Palestinian liberation movement, rather than to internal Israeli factors left to themselves.

### THE POLITICAL—MILITARY ELITE

For 'Israel' the early eighties were marked by the invasion of Lebanon, an aggravated economic crisis and the rise of the supposedly autonomous armed settler movement. In this situation, there was much speculation about the possibilities of a military coup and/or the rise of fascism. We would contend that outright implementation of these two options is superfluous, for they already exist in forms especially geared to the needs of the Zionist project. A military regime is not needed in view of the existence of a closely integrated political-military elite; it would only harm the Zionist state's international image, and thus complicate its alliances and foreign aid, etc. Semi-fascist control is already exercised against the internal enemy in the form of the military dictatorship which exists in the 1967 occupied territories, and when needed against Palestinians living in the state itself. On the other hand, maintaining a democratic facade for Jewish citizens is an integral part of fully mobilizing their capacities for the Zionist project.

Those who were shocked by Israeli conduct in the 1982 war in Lebanon cited in particular the role of Defense Minister Sharon and Chief of Staff Raphael Eitan who directed the advancing army way beyond the geographical and time limits approved for «Operation Peace for the Galilee.» However, a deeper historical perspective reveals that similar «manipulation» of adopted objectives by the military leadership have often occurred before. For example, in the 1967 war, the approved military plan called for penetrating the Sinai without conquest of the Gaza Strip or reaching the Suez Canal. There were those in the political leadership, notably then Labor Minister Yigal Allon, who disagreed with this plan, because they favored controlling the canal. In any event, 'Israel' went to war on June 4th, and on June 8th, the army had reached the canal, not to mention occupied the Gaza Strip. According to Haim Benjamini, retired brigadier general, «The Israeli military elite, being 'how' decision-makers, made a crucial contribution to the overturning of the process (of civilian-military decision-making). However, Benjamini also notes that some in the political leadership advocated the military advance that was implemented, so his other conclusion is more to the point: «A narrowing of the structural differentiation between the political institutions and the military elite nucleus, usually



in wartime and in times of national crisis, has an influence on the constitution of ad hoc coalitions between political and military authorities» (*Israeli Society and its Defense Establishment*).

This observation is highly relevant to 'Israel' which has engaged in more wars than any other state since World War II. If one looks closely, disagreements in the Israeli leadership do not usually go between the politicians and the generals, but between factions with representatives in both sectors, who have differing tactics for achieving shared Zionist goals. According to Benjamini, neither was there any decision in 1967 to take the West Bank or the Golan Heights, but subsequent developments show a high degree of unity on exploiting the facts created in the field. It took over a decade for the question of territorial compromise to become a controversy in Israeli politics, and the dispute is not between politicians and generals. Labor which contemplates territorial compromise is the same political force that commands the political allegiance of most of the army elite, in 1967 and today.

What Benjamini terms «ad hoc coalitions between political and military authorities» are not so very ad hoc in 'Israel', but a consequence of how the state was organized in the first place. When the state was formed, Ben Gurion dissolved the Palmach which was dominated by Mapam, in order to concentrate power in the hands of Mapai (later the Labor Party); meanwhile, the Haganah became the army. His slogan was separating the military from politics, but the real effects of his reorganization was to concentrate power in the cabinet, and actually the inner cabinet. Although 'Israel' is formally a parliamentary democracy, in practice the cabinet leads the Knesset and has a wide range of military and security prerogatives. Control over the military, in fact all contact between the military and the Knesset, goes through the defense and prime ministers who in at least three periods have been the same person. Though the defense minister is formally part of the political leadership, most of them have considered themselves as representing the military before the cabinet. The result is that though the military is subordinate to the political leadership according to law, there exists a de facto partnership.

This system is reinforced on the level of personnel. «Extensive reasearch has been conducted on the subject of the representation of the professional military in Israel's political elite. Peri, for example, has indicated that between the 1948 War of Independence and 1977, one-third of all retired generals have become involved in a full-time political career. Since the 1967 Six-Day War, there has been a marked increase in the number of senior reserve officers in key policy-making bodies, such as the Cabinet and the Knesset (up to 1967, there had never been more than two reserve officers in the Cabinet, whereas since then, the range increased to 3-5; parallel figures for the Knesset for the pre- and post-1967 periods are 0-5 and 4-10, respectively). Even more relevant to our study is the transition of senior officers to positions of direct responsibility for Israel's security... Up to 1967, the office of Defense Minister had never been filled by a senior army officer,

whereas three such officers have assumed the position since then (Rabin's current term as Defense Minister raises this figure to four - our note). A similar trend was noted among Deputy and Assistant Defense Ministers (only one senior reserve officer had held this post prior to 1967, while four have assumed it since then... The transition of senior IDF officers to other parts of the complex should also be noted. The heads of the Mossad, Border Police, Civil Guard, Civilian Administration, Airports Administration and the like are nearly always senior officers. A similar situation prevails in government concerns considered essential to security (e.g. the Electric Company, the oil refineries and El Al), while a more recent trend is the 'parachuting' of generals into the defense industry - primarily the state-owned defense industries and other key manufacturing plants supplying the IDF...» (Alex Mintz, «The Military-Industrial Complex: The Israeli Case,» in *Israeli Society and its Defense Establishment*).

With this set-up, who needs a military coup?

As a footnote about the allegiances of the Israeli elite, we add a single fact which appeared in the *Jewish Telegraph Agency* on June 10, 1986: According to US immigration authorities, in the past twenty years, 402 Israeli government officials have been naturalized as US citizens.

## CORPORATE STATE

Heavy state control of the Israeli economy has not precluded the free development of private capital. In fact, Pinhas Sapir, Finance Minister in several governments led by the Labor Party, the main proponent of the state sector, created several new millionaires by lending capital at low rates and granting production monopolies and tax concessions to private investors who were often not Labor supporters. This was done to encourage private Jewish capital investment in 'Israel', especially from abroad, and to cement political alliances between Mapai and its coalition partners - the General Zionists (forerunner of the Liberal Party and junior partner in the preceding Likud government) and the religious parties. «Since 1948, there has been increasingly more interpenetration between collective and private capital, although collective capital... remains the dominant element...» (Joel Beinin, *MERIP*, September-October 1986).

Added to the overlap between the political and military leadership, then, is the increasingly unified interests of the Israeli bourgeoisie, which cut across the tactical contradictions which divide the two major political blocks (Labor and Likud). This tendency can only increase in view of the rise of hightech industry in 'Israel'. In 1984 alone, nearly 700 new hightech companies were started in 'Israel', many of them based on joint Israeli-US capital. This phenomenon in turn links up with the military industry where the state is dominant.

In view of the factors we have reviewed above, 'Israel' can be categorized as a corporate state with the military playing a role in all spheres of life. It is this internal make-up that qualifies it to be US imperialism's no. 1 ally in the strategic Middle East. ●

## US Aggression on Libya

### Different Excuse, Same Reason

For the fourth time since Reagan's coming to power, beginning in August 1981 and recently just weeks before the end of his eight-year term, US aggression against the sovereign state of Libya reared its ugly head. It is ironic that upon the accusation that the Libyans were building «the world's largest chemical warfare factory at Rabta» (*Guardian*, January 5th), the US attacked Libyan planes, while its own Federal Laboratories in Saltzberg, Pennsylvania, up until a year ago were shipping off CS and many other types of poisonous gas bombs to Israel to use against the intifada, causing tens of deaths, spontaneous abortions and side effects.

#### NOTHING NEW

The attack which took place on January 4th came as no surprise. In

August of 1981, F-14 Tomcats of the US Sixth Fleet shot down two Libyan planes over the Gulf of Sidra on the pretext of a territorial waters dispute. The US forces purposely went within the Gulf to prove that they basically have the right to go anywhere they want and to do military exercises with total disrespect for the sovereignty of others. Then, in March 1986, US naval units deliberately crossed the northern border of the gulf. When Libyan gunboats sailed out to challenge the Sixth Fleet, two were sunk and a shore radar installation was destroyed. The following month, after accusations that Libya was behind a bomb in a West Berlin disco, which killed one American and injured 60 others, 18 US F-111 and A-6 bombers attacked Tripoli and Benghazi. Most recently, two Libyan MiG-23 fighters were shot down within 12 minutes 70 miles off of Tobruk by

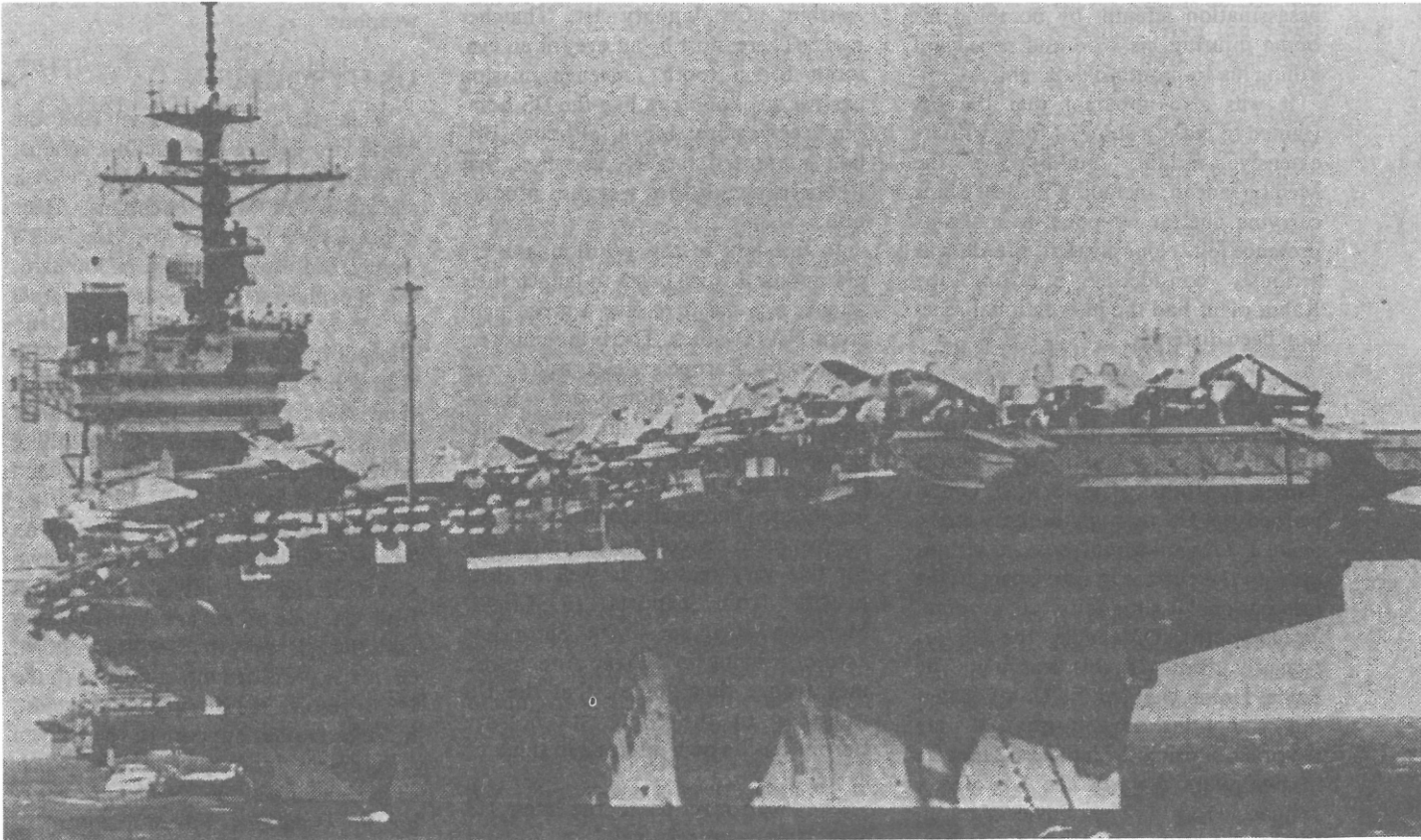
Sparrow and Sidewinder missiles fired by two US F-14 fighters from the decks of the super carrier USS John F. Kennedy.

Although the excuses have changed over the past eight years, the basic reasons are the same. The US claimed that the plant was intended to produce poisonous gases which could be used in chemical warfare, such as mustard gas and chemical nerve agents, citing Imhausen-Chemie AG, a West German firm, for playing a central role in supplying the Libyan plant.

#### THE TRUTH

Obviously one cannot take at face value the US excuses given. There are several objective and tangible reasons why the US has continued an aggressive policy towards Libya. First and foremost, Libya opposes US imperialist designs in the region. Qaddafi is well-▶

USS John F. Kennedy in the Mediterranean









Nabih Berri for the Amal movement, Abbas Mousawi for Hezbollah, and the foreign ministers of Syria and Iran. The essence of this agreement was ending the state of war, providing for a cease-fire and the return of residents who fled their homes during the fighting. Amal and Hezbollah agreed to form a joint coordination committee and a joint operations room to coordinate resistance against the Israeli occupation. They also agreed not to endanger the lives of the UN troops or the personnel of international organizations present in the South. According to the agreement, Amal is in charge of security in the South, but each party has the right to its own political and cultural activities.

Once again, the «no winner, no loser» formula prevailed as has so often been the case in resolving clashes in Lebanon. Amal's conditions were met as were those of Hezbollah. The alleged killers of three Amal leaders last autumn will be turned over to Amal that also gained charge of security in the South and Hezbollah's withdrawal from the areas they moved into in the latest round of fighting. On the other hand, Hezbollah will have their detained members released, the siege lifted from their positions, and the right to resist the Zionist occupation from the South.

If implemented, this agreement would enable the two parties to unite efforts against the Zionist occupation and its agents in the South. This would also open the possibility for better cooperation with the Palestinian resistance in the struggle against occupation, and provide more security for the residents of the South. On the other hand, failure to abide by this agreement will lead to the continuation of unjustified bloodshed and prolong the sufferings of the masses.

## CONFLICT IN EAST BEIRUT

In view of the Arab League efforts to find a solution in Lebanon, General Aoun has been especially intent on presenting himself and his part of the Lebanese Army, as the sole authority in East Beirut and the surrounding area controlled by the rightist Christian militias. Thus, he hoped to improve his chances of becoming president of all of

Lebanon. In the process of trying to impose his control over the militias, Aoun involved himself in a power struggle with the most powerful of these, the rightist Lebanese Forces, led by Samir Geagea. This triggered a new intersectarian battle in East Beirut in the second week of February. In bloody clashes that left 76 dead and 200 wounded, Aoun's army gained the upper hand; the general accepted a cease-fire on the condition that the Lebanese Forces withdraw from East Beirut's streets and government facilities. In late February, the Lebanese Forces were reportedly replaced by Aoun's troops in the 5th basin of Beirut's port from which the Lebanese Forces had derived their main income by collecting customs duties in lieu of the Lebanese state; a number of checkpoints where the Forces had collected illegal taxes were also withdrawn from.

This enables Aoun to claim that he has reinstated state control in a «militia-free» East Beirut, in order to enter into an administrative reunification of Beirut, whereby he would aim at disarming the Lebanese nationalist movement and the Palestinian resistance in West Beirut and other patriotic areas.

This scenario does not, however, mean that there has been a decisive break between Aoun and Geagea. Both need the other in their common campaign against Syrian presence in Lebanon, which is really just another expression for their aim to eliminate the Lebanese nationalist and progressive force, and block any real reform of the sectarian system from which the Maronite bourgeoisie draws its privileges. The joint committee formed between Aoun and Geagea actually accords the Lebanese Forces a recognized status, alongside Aoun's Lebanese Army units. This impression was reinforced by Geagea's declarations in early March, that the Lebanese Forces will not withdraw from East Beirut. There are moreover reports that Aoun has given the Lebanese Forces alternative income sources to compensate for their loss of the port.

## RENEWED CIVIL WAR

Subsequent events made it quite clear that Aoun, in concert with the Lebanese

forces, was ready to ignite a new war in Lebanon, rather than accept political reforms. In early March, Walid Jumblatt, president of the Progressive Socialist Party, a main force in the Lebanese national movement, correctly surmised that Aoun and Geagea were only working to maintain their privileged position in the sectarian system. Jumblatt thus declared his intention not to attend the meetings in Kuwait, urging the Hoss government and other nationalist forces to beware of making concessions on the need for political reform. Amal leader Nabih Berri also expressed reservations about the prospects of the talks.

On March 6th, ten days before the talks in Kuwait were to convene, Aoun ordered a blockade of all ports in Lebanon except the one in East Beirut, which he controls. The nationalist forces quite rightly regarded this as tantamount to a declaration of war, for it meant a de facto economic siege of other parts of Lebanon, as all incoming goods would be detoured to the East Beirut harbor. In the following days, the coast guard of Aoun's government impounded two tankers carrying fuel to ports south of Beirut. At the same time, artillery battles broke out between the nationalist forces and Aoun's Lebanese Army on the frontlines at Souq Al Gharb, in the mountains southeast of Beirut. **This fighting continued, and in the following days, Aoun imposed the closure of Beirut airport, further escalating the crisis.**

On March 14th, major artillery battles erupted between East and West Beirut, judged to be the heaviest such fighting in two years. Aoun confirmed the seriousness of the situation by proclaiming the beginning of the battle to drive the Syrian forces out of Lebanon. As we go to press, the Arab League initiative appears eclipsed by this new round of war. However reasonable this initiative may have been, events have shown that resolving the conflict in Lebanon will, in the last analysis, always depend on the attitudes of the conflicting Lebanese parties. If any one of them says *no*, things will return to point zero. It is now obvious that the rightist forces in East Beirut have again said *no* to political reform which is the key to any solution of the crisis. ●

*Democratic Palestine, March 1989*

# Namibia's Chance for Independence

On December 22, 1988, South Africa, Angola and Cuba signed, at the United Nations in New York, two agreements: one for the withdrawal from Angola of 50,000 Cuban troops between April 1, 1989 and July 1, 1991, and the other for Namibia's independence in 1990, after the holding of free elections under UN supervision. The agreement was signed after several rounds of negotiations in which the US participated as «mediator.»

## 100 YEARS OF COLONIAL OCCUPATION

Namibians were robbed of their land for the first time in 1884, when the German imperial flag was hoisted over it, and South West Africa became a «colonial possession of Germany.» After World War I, Germany was dispossessed of its colonies, and the administrative mandate over South West Africa was given to a British dominion, the South African Union. In 1946, all territories under mandate were to be placed under UN supervision, a decision ignored by South Africa which managed, for the following 20 years, to keep the administrative mandate over Namibia with diplomatic maneuvers and tricks.

On October 27, 1966, the General Assembly of the UN ended the South African mandate over Namibia, reaffirming the inalienable rights of the Namibian people to independence and self-determination. South Africa refused to recognize this decision and sent troops into Namibia, which meant a de facto annexation. Namibians were robbed of their land for the third time.

## SWAPO AND THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE

The Namibian people never accepted the occupation of their country and have a long tradition of resistance against colonialism. A turning point was reached with the establishment of SWAPO on April 19, 1960. In its political program, which was adopted in 1976, SWAPO defines the stages of its development as follows: In the second half of the 1950s, the major task

*Democratic Palestine, March 1989*

became the establishment of a political organization able to assume the leadership of the masses and to give an organized character to the spontaneous and uncoordinated resistance acts which characterized this period. This aim was reached with the establishment of SWAPO in 1960.

The second stage consisted of making out of SWAPO an organization deeply rooted in the Namibian society, dealing with concrete problems concerning people's lives as well as, in a larger context, the question of national independence. This process took place in the first half of the 1960s.

In 1966, the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) was created to confront the repression of the South African occupiers against the liberation movement. Armed struggle began.

In the fourth stage, in the beginning of the 1970s, armed struggle became the main form of resistance against the South African racist regime.

## A CHANGING BALANCE OF POWER

A combination of events in the 1970s led to a shift in the balance of power in the region. In June 1971, the International Court of Justice ruled that South Africa's occupation of Namibia was illegal. In December 1973, the UN General Assembly recognized SWAPO as the sole authentic representative of the Namibian people. With the fall of fascism in Portugal and the end of Portuguese colonialism, which brought about the independence of Mozambique (1974) and Angola (1975), the power equation in Southern Africa was

transformed. South Africa, continuing its policy of deception, tried to install a credible puppet government and to push forward the Bantustan policy in Namibia.

In 1977 Canada, West Germany, France, the UK and the US formed the so-called contact group. They felt that their interests in Namibia were threatened as the armed struggle intensified, and realized that South Africa's occupation of Namibia was no longer guaranteeing their strategic interests and the activities of their companies. In the following process of negotiations, the «contact group» turned out to be only interested in preserving the interests of the West and of South Africa, while putting pressure on SWAPO. The negotiations failed.

Finally, as South Africa's isolation grew and world condemnation became louder, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 435 on September 29, 1978. South Africa formally accepted Resolution 435, but in the years that followed Pretoria has repeatedly stalled on implementing the plan. The Reagan administration's policy of «constructive engagement» gave South Africa a powerful protection for obstructing the independence of Namibia. Meanwhile, the US and Pretoria linked Namibia's independence with Cuban troop withdrawal from Angola. This accentuated the ties between Namibia and Angola which had long existed, not only due to geographic proximity, but more importantly due to the common aspirations and cooperation which link SWAPO and the MPLA.

## ANGOLA, CONFRONTING THE AGGRESSION

Since its independence in 1975, Angola has been subjected to massive military destabilization, with dramatic social and economic consequences. Besides direct intervention and aggression by South African troops, one of the tools used against Angola is UNITA. Having failed to install a counterrevolutionary government in 1975-76, South Africa and its allies, among them Israel and the US, con-





Windhoek: Protest against Botha's visit to Namibia, April 1988

## UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 435

The Security Council...

2. Reiterates that its objective is the withdrawal of South Africa's illegal administration from Namibia and the transfer of power to the people of Namibia with the assistance of the United Nations...
3. Decides to establish under its authority a United Nations Transitional Assistance Group in accordance with the above-mentioned report of the Secretary-General for a period of up to 12 months in order to assist his Special Representative to carry out the mandate conferred upon him by the Security Council... to insure the early independence of Namibia through free elections under the supervision and control of the United Nations;
4. Welcomes the preparedness of the South West Africa People's Organization to cooperate in the implementation of the Secretary-General's report, including its expressed readiness to sign and observe the cease-fire provisions as manifested in the letter from its president of 8, September 1978;
5. Calls upon South Africa forthwith to cooperate with the Secretary-General in the implementation of the present resolution;
6. Decides that all unilateral measures taken by the illegal administration in relation to the electoral process, including unilateral registration of voters, or transfer of power, in contravention of resolution 385 (1976), 431 (1978) and the present resolution are null and void...

continued to support UNITA, providing it with extensive funds, weapons, training and direct troop support.

With the coming to power of the Reagan administration, support for UNITA became open. The Clark amendment, adopted by Congress in 1976 and forbidding open or covert support for UNITA and other counter-revolutionary groups, was suppressed in 1985, and interference in Angola's affairs became the «legal» policy of the US administration. J. Savimbi, UNITA's leader, visited the US, and was welcomed there as a head of state and granted extensive financial support and modern armament.

Nevertheless, the initiative for a negotiated settlement was taken by Angola. In the middle of 1987, the Angolan government went into a military and diplomatic counteroffensive. Angolan troops launched an offensive against UNITA in the southeastern part of the country. As happened before, South African troops intervened to help their puppet. At the same time, in July 1987, the MPLA resumed talks with the US, which had previously been stopped because of the US support for UNITA. The Angolan government remained firm on its position that the condition for Cuban withdrawal from Angola was the independence of Namibia, because only an independent Namibia could guarantee Angola's security and peace; yet Angola was flexible concerning the timing of such a withdrawal.

While certain progress was made in the US-Angolan discussion, South Africa proved to be the biggest obstacle to a peaceful solution. An Angolan-Cuban proposal for a peaceful settlement, presented in March 1988, was rejected by South Africa. The Pretoria regime declared it was not ready to implement resolution 435 and demanded UNITA participation in the government of Angola. Some weeks later however, it changed its position, making possible the first round of negotiations that took place between South Africa, Angola, Cuba and the US on May 3-4, 1988 in London.

Finally, after several months of negotiations during which South Africa repeatedly tried to link the timing of its withdrawal from Namibia with that of the Cubans from Angola, and to include UNITA participation in the Angolan government in the settlement, an agreement was reached in December 1988.

South Africa's sudden willingness to negotiate and to make compromises stems from both internal and external factors. The heavy military losses it suffered in Angola in 1988 forced South Africa to agree to a cease-fire and withdraw its invasion troops. At the same time, the half-hearted sanctions of the Western countries, and the costs of war and occupation, were harder to cope with economically. Internal resistance against the policy of occupation, expressed by the growing number of draft resisters, has increas-

ed. Finally, the atmosphere prevailing in world politics, the trend of replacing military confrontations by negotiated political settlements, certainly played a role.

## PERSPECTIVES

According to the timetable set by the UN, South Africa is supposed to withdraw all but 1,500 of its troops from Namibia by June. Their place will be taken by an international UN peacekeeping force in charge of overseeing the direct vote to a constituent assembly, due to take place on

November 1st. A free vote is sure to give SWAPO a majority.

Namibia has never been so close to independence, but the mood prevailing among Namibians is one of cautious optimism. South Africa still has enough power to disrupt the independence process. Fearing the encouragement for the liberation movement in South Africa, that an overwhelming SWAPO victory would represent, the Pretoria regime has launched a new anti-SWAPO campaign. It is also suspected of giving UNITA members Namibian identity cards, of hiding guns and ammunition and of training people who might be used in the future as *contras* against the legitimate government.

Even if the transition to independence goes peacefully, Namibia

will have to face the major problem of its complete economic dependence on South Africa. Realizing this, SWAPO is realistic about the immediate prospects of a free Namibia. Anton Lubowski, a prominent member of SWAPO, expressed this as follows (in an interview with *Cikaden*, Arhus, Denmark): «SWAPO wants a socialist state built on democratic principles. But this is not something we can reach from today to tomorrow. After liberation we will still be completely dependent on South Africa... Even if we wished to, it will not be possible for a SWAPO government to break ties with South Africa. Don't forget that we import over 90% of our food from South Africa. The two countries are completely economically integrated;

they even have the same currency. But we will try to reduce the dependence... We will negotiate with the foreign companies operating in Namibia. We want the exploitation of the mines to be to the advantage of both sides. The country must enjoy part of the income of the mines, which is not the case now. But it is also clear that the companies must have some profit.»

UNITA seems to be the big loser of the peace process. Since the withdrawal of South African troops from Angola in August 1988, UNITA suffered heavy losses and was expelled from several towns in central Angola. Even though UNITA is still given a role to play by South Africa and the US, as expressed by the transfer of big contingents of its forces to Namibia in November '88 and the building up of its infrastructure in Zaire, US support will not be a compensation for South African troops. In an interview to *Le Monde*, on August 27, 1988, President Dos Santos of Angola described the situation as follows: «It is sure that the puppets will not disappear with the partial or complete stop of foreign support. Their neutralization will demand a last sacrifice from our people and armed forces.» With a new amnesty law for UNITA members giving up their arms and returning to civilian life, and a call for a cease-fire, the MPLA government hopes to deal a final blow to UNITA and to give Angola the peace it has been struggling for since 1975.

Following the failure of the Botha government to modernize apartheid, the settlement now reached is a victory and might be a sign that the racist regime is increasingly fighting with its back against the wall. ●

## Terms of Agreement

These are the main points of the agreement signed on December 22, 1988, at the UN in New York.

1. The parties to the agreement request the Secretary General of the UN to attain authority from the Security Council to begin with the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 435/78 on April 1, 1989.
2. All military units of the Republic of South Africa leave Namibia in accordance with UN Security Council resolution 435/78.
3. According to the regulations of UN Security Council Resolution 435/78, the Republic of South Africa and the People's Republic of Angola collaborate with the Secretary General in order to guarantee the independence of Namibia through free and fair elections and abstain from any action which might hinder the implementation of resolution 435/78. The parties to the agreement respect the territorial integrity and the inviolability of the borders of Namibia and give assurances that their territory will not be used by any state, organization or person in relation with acts of war, aggression or violence against the territorial integrity or the inviolability of the borders of Namibia, or any action that might pre-

vent the implementation of resolution 435/78.

4. The People's Republic of Angola and the Republic of Cuba will implement the bilateral agreement signed the same day as this agreement, which provides for the withdrawal of Cuban troops to the north and for their gradual and complete withdrawal from Angolan territory. They will also implement the agreement made with the UN Security Council concerning the monitoring of this withdrawal.

5. Corresponding to their obligations according to the Charter of the UN, the parties to the agreement will abstain from the threat or the use of force and make sure that their respective territories will not be used by any state, organization or person in relation with acts of war, aggression or violence directed against the territorial integrity or inviolability of borders or the independence of any state in Southwestern Africa.

6. The parties will respect the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of the states in Southwestern Africa.

7. The parties to the agreement will honestly fulfill all the obligations they entered and solve all disputes concerning the interpretation and implementation of the agreement through negotiations and in the spirit of understanding.

8. This agreement comes into force upon being signed.



# Solidarity Conference in Athens

On February 5th and 6th, the International Committee of Artists and Intellectuals for the Support of the Uprising and the Struggle of the Palestinian People in the Occupied Territories held an international working meeting of lawyers and women in Athens, Greece. Over 45 invited participants spoke and offered concrete suggestions on ways and means of support for the intifada. The speakers, who were primarily from the Arab world and Europe, included actresses, writers, professors, artists, cultural workers, journalists, lawyers and representatives from women's organizations.

The focus of the conference was the legal aspect of the occupation and international violations by Israel, while the second day concentrated on women and children in the intifada. Participants provided statistics and some first-hand descriptions of life under the occupation. Five Palestinians from the 1967 occupied territories and four from the territories occupied in 1948 attended the conference.

Among the prominent speakers were

Um Jihad (Intissar Al Wazir); Issam Abdel Hadi, President of the Union of Palestinian Women; Yahya Yakhlef, PLO Cultural Director; Fuad Bitar, PLO Representative in Greece; Mirjam Vire-Tuomien, General Secretary of the Women's International Democratic Federation; Naziha Mazhoud, President of the Union of Tunisian Women; Omar El Hamdi, president of the National Council of Arab Culture; and Jean-Marie Lambert, the Executive Director of the International Coordinating Committee of NGO's on the Question of Palestine.

The first session was opened by K. Kazokas, the president of the Panhellenic Cultural Movement, a main organizer of the conference. A telegram from Yasir Arafat, greeting the conference, was read by the Head of the Diplomatic Mission of the PLO in Athens. The lawyers spoke about the fact that legally occupation is a temporary state and that it is essential that people be independent and have the right to self-determination. They called the intifada a heroic revolution and not terrorist. They said, «The present con-

ditions in the occupied territories represent a violation of all human rights prevailing in civilized societies. Their final statement listed seven suggestions:

(1) publicizing the Israeli violations of Palestinian human rights in terms of violations of life, expulsions, house demolitions, curfews, collective punishment, administrative detention, the closure of schools, imposing taxation, and cutting off electricity, water and communications.

(2) pressuring Israel to stop these violations and recognize the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and an independent state on Palestinian land under the PLO, the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

(3) an appeal to the international community to support the Palestinian intifada on all possible levels.

(4) to call for temporary UN supervision in the occupied territories to facilitate the withdrawal of the occupation troops and to protect the Palestinian masses.

(5) to appeal to the international com-

Speakers panel at opening session





# Book Review

## *American Jewish Organizations and Israel*

munity to recognize the independent Palestinian state as declared at the PNC in Algeria in 1988.

(6) to form a committee of international lawyers' unions and to coordinate with the organizers of this conference to visit the occupied territories and Israeli prisons, especially Ansar III, and to give a report on the conditions.

(7) to proclaim an international day of solidarity with the intifada on which all the world's lawyers stop working for a certain period of time to support the intifada and to protest Israeli violations against the Palestinian people.

The second day's program, dealing with women and children in the intifada, was opened by Roula Kaklamanakis, a PASOK member of parliament and a writer. Rounds of speeches and discussions emerged with tens of suggestions made by Palestinian, Arab and European women. Among them were ideas of concerts, art exhibitions and literature with all proceeds going to the intifada. They also suggested women's delegations, medical treatment grants and tangible political support. March 8th, International Women's Day, was suggested as a day of international solidarity with Palestinian women and June 1st, International Children's Day, was suggested as an international day of solidarity with Palestinian children. Later in the day, a reception was held in honor of Um Jihad, sponsored by the Athens PLO office.

The conference was an overall success, producing three resolutions, tens of suggestions of tangible support for the intifada and an accusation against the Israeli occupation forces. The resolutions were all addressed to UN Secretary General Xavier Perez De Cuellar and dealt with (1) expulsions of Palestinians, (2) the protection of the Palestinian population, and (3) recognition of the independent Palestinian state. The accusation was (1) that the Israeli occupation forces are in South Lebanon in violation of international conventions, and protesting their expulsion of 31 Lebanese from South Lebanon, and (2) protesting the arrest, detention and torture of Suha Beshara and calling for UN intervention. ●

Lee O'Brien's book, *American Jewish Organizations and Israel*, published in 1986 by the Institute for Palestine Studies, is important for three main reasons:

Firstly, to our knowledge, it is the first really inclusive, objective and documented book on this subject, covering not only the Zionist lobby, but the full range of major pro-Israel political, community, fundraising and special focus organizations. (This is not to discount the pioneering works of anti-Zionist American Jews, like Elmer Berger and Alfred M. Lilienthal, who addressed the subject in terms of the major political and moral questions involved, with less emphasis on the institutional aspect of the pro-Israel network.)

Secondly, Lee O'Brien's book dispels some commonplace myths. Though not heavily analytical, it rests on a clear understanding of class questions and imperialist policy. Thus, the influence of the pro-Israel lobby is ascribed first and foremost to the prevailing convergence of interests between Israel and US policy: «The main source of the Israel lobby's strength lies in the fact that support for Israel is an inherent component of U.S. strategy... such policies face no significant challenge from forces within the U.S. political mainstream at this time» (page 154). This dispels simplistic ideas such as that Jews control US policy by virtue of their numbers or wealth - ideas which not only border on anti-Semitism, but also serve to whitewash US imperialist policy.

Thirdly, the book has political relevance for pro-Palestinian and peace activists. Knowing where the pro-Israel lobby's strength lies is a prerequisite for serious anti-Zionist work that goes beyond slogans, and for efforts to attain a just peace in the Middle East. Moreover, evaluating the chances for breaks in the pro-Israel consensus, whether in the Jewish community or the American public at large, presupposes such knowledge. This is highly relevant in the context of the ongoing Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories, which has opened new perspectives for making such inroads.

The book, in fact, covers historical and current differences within the American Jewish community, but the author finds no evidence of these leading, at that time, to more just consideration of the Palestinian question. O'Brien notes that despite conflicts between the traditionally liberal/Democratic American Jewish establishment and the rise of the extreme right in Israel itself, virtually all mainstream organizations have given at least tacit support to Israeli policies like increasing settlements, the 1982 invasion of Lebanon, arms sales to dictatorships, etc. (It is to be noted that the author does not in this book deal with anti-Zionist groups or those which have expressed radical criticism of Israeli policy, such as the New Jewish Agenda. Her analysis applies to the mainstream organizations alone.)

### «ISRAELIZATION»

Over 30 major pro-Israel organizations are examined in detail in terms of their stated positions; their structures and activities for organizing the Jewish community, garnering support for Israel, and influencing the US government and public opinion; and their origins and changes over the years. From this emerges the following basic picture of the relationship between the American Jewish organizations and Israel:

While American Jews have never been a monolithic community in social, political or religious terms, they have united to an unprecedented degree in support of Israel. There are over 200 national Jewish organizations, making Jews the most institutionally organized minority group in the US. Originally, almost all Jewish community organizations were non-Zionist; the Zionist parties, while active, enjoyed little mass support. Yet virtually all supported the Israeli state after it was created, beginning the process of «Israelization» whereby any real distinction between the positions of the avowedly Zionist and nominally non-Zionist organizations has disappeared over time. Today, the most important organizations in Israel support work



are those which grew out of the non-Zionist organizations rather than the Zionist movement itself. They have the advantage of involvement in the overall American agenda, while at the same time functioning as a single-issue bloc.

It was the 1967 war that did most to reinforce «Israelization.» Israel support work became the no.1 item on the agenda of all these organizations. A variety of reasons are cited for this, ranging from the need to fill the vacuum caused by the weakening of traditional religious values, to the war itself with its early evocation of holocaust memories and later boosting of Jewish self-confidence. According to the author, this was further reinforced by the perceived danger to Israel in the 1973 war, and the international support gained by the Palestinians in the ensuing years. The book also presents the permise of Steven Cohen that pro-Israelism emerged as «the politics of ethnic survival... a mass-based movement supplanting liberalism as the centerpiece of activity for most major Jewish organizations.»<sup>1</sup>

Today, it appears somewhat paradoxical that it is the Zionist war of conquest in 1967 that did most to cement the American Jewish community's ties to Israel. Even before the Palestinian uprising broke out to pose the question of the 1967 occupied territories with unavoidable urgency, there were signs that American Jews were not unilaterally comfortable with all the consequences of that war, though public criticism was non-existent or muted. For example, a survey done by Steven Cohen in 1983 showed that only 21% of Jewish community leaders felt that Israel should maintain permanent control over the West Bank. Rather, 74% contemplated territorial compromise in return for peace guarantees; 73% thought Israel should talk to the PLO if it recognizes Israel and renounces terrorism; and 51% thought the Palestinians have a right to a homeland in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, if this doesn't threaten Israel.<sup>2</sup> No comparable percentages have yet been registered by surveys of Israeli opinion. However, surveys done during the 1982 invasion of Lebanon showed that the percentage of Americans Jews rejecting territorial compromise increased at a time when Israel was subject to criticism. All in all, the relation between American Jewish organiza-

tions and Israel is a complex matter. O'Brien's book has provided a wealth of useful information and observations, but important questions still remain.

## THE EROSION OF LIBERALISM

The most interesting sections of the book deal with the dichotomy between the liberal traditions of the American Jewish community, and the demands of Israel support work which lead to increasingly reactionary positions and alliances. Here one best sees the colossal disservice done to Jews by Zionism, and the resulting distortion of a number of organizations. A prime example is the evolution of the B'nai B'rith's Anti-Defamation League which for over 50 years struggled against anti-Semitism and for civil liberties for all, opposing the extreme right (the American Nazi Party, KKK, John Birch Society, etc.). In 1967, the ADL hailed the June War as «The Miracle Victory» and by the mid-1970s, its main thrust was fighting what it considered the «new, more dangerous anti-Semitism» - critics of Israeli policy, including dovish Jews and others advocating Palestinian rights. Today, the ADL is aligned with the New Right and its «vigilance» is actually surveillance of solidarity and peace activists, with information being turned over to the US and Israeli intelligence services.

O'Brien notes that while the position of Jewish community organizations continues to be liberal on most social issues, major pro-Israel organizations supported Reagan's inflated military budgets and increased US military presence in the Middle East. This corresponds to the rise of the extreme right in Israel and of the New Right in the US, in a period also characterized by the erosion of American liberalism generally, with leading liberal advocates switching to the neoconservative camp. In this context, *Commentary* magazine, funded by the American Jewish Congress, has transformed from a liberal literary journal into a main mouthpiece for neoconservatism in all fields. This began with the 1967 war, when *Commentary* argued that only a «strong America» could guarantee Israel. Thus, *Commentary* added its sophistication to the thrust of AIPAC (American Israel Public Af-

fairs Committee), the official Zionist lobby, which works for Israel becoming a staging base for the RDF, and advocates US interventionism generally. The shift to more clearly militaristic positions has also led to the establishment of new organizations such as the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs, founded in 1977, to promote Israel as a «strategic asset» in close cooperation with the Pentagon, surpassing the traditional reliance on political lobbying alone.

The alliance of Jewish establishment organizations with the New Right has elicited criticism from other voices in the establishment. One example was when Rabbi Alexander Schindler, president of the United American Hebrew Congregations, termed it «madness - and suicide» when in 1982, the ADL invited as a speaker Pat Robertson, the New Right's favorite Christian fundamentalist. In 1983, another respected rabbi, Balfour Brickner, publicly criticized the Conference of Major American Jewish Presidents for stifling dissent. He led a delegation of 18 rabbis to Washington to explain to congressmen that there were Jews who disagreed with Israeli policies in the West Bank.

Developments in the coming period will show if this long-standing dichotomy in the American Jewish establishment will serve as the axis for cracks in the pro-Israel consensus, under the impact of the ongoing Palestinian uprising, the PLO's peace offensive and the US decision to open a dialogue with the PLO. It is noteworthy that US Jewish leaders were cautious, but not vehemently critical of the US decision to talk to the PLO, in stark contrast to the reaction of Israeli political leaders. In fact, Rabbi Schindler called it a «step in the right direction» when a Jewish delegation met with PLO Chairman Arafat in Stockholm in December. In any event, *American Jewish Organizations and Israel* should be required reading for all those following these developments. ●

<sup>1</sup>Steven M. Cohen, *American Modernity and Jewish Identity*, 1983.

<sup>2</sup>Steven M. Cohen, *Attitudes of American Jews Toward Israel and Israelis: The New National Survey of American Jews and Jewish Communal Leaders*, Institute on American Jewish-Israeli Relations, American Jewish Committee, 1983. (This survey is included as an appendix in Lee O'Brien's book.)



# The Uprising and Folklore

## Visiting Firqat Al Fanoun Al Shabiya

In October 1988, a group of solidarity activists visited the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In February 1989, they published a book based on their experiences, entitled «*No Way Back! Everyday Life in the Palestinian Popular Uprising - A Collection of Short Stories* (in German). The article below is an excerpt from one of these stories which tells of their discussion with *Firqat Al Fanoun Al Shabiya* (Popular Arts Ensemble), and of their attending an intifada folklore evening in *Al Hakawati* theater in Jerusalem.

Two hands rapidly beat a drum. The rhythm steadies and the sweet sound of a flute mingles with laughter. Hands clap to the beat. Running shoes and boots join in, stamping in time. The room shakes as they leave the floor and land again. Melting together, steps glide in unison through the room.

Suddenly something slams into the roof with a loud bang—once, then again. Shots? Settlers or soldiers? A shiver runs down my spine. Is *Al Hakawati* being raided again? The music is silenced and within a second, the dancers and musicians are on their way outside, fists clenched, their running shoes skimming the floor. One moment caught up in the joyous fever of the dance and the next motionless, then they tense up, off to fight. Moving slowly, I just make it to the door as they return laughing and shaking their heads in amusement.

«Shebab,» they explain. «They're throwing stones with our roof as a target. They say they're practicing for the intifada—six or seven year olds!»

Bewildered I return to my seat. How quickly people react to the unexpected here! How fast a situation can change! The dancers are back in line, fingers close around the flute, the drummer is sitting with hands poised. This is all part of the struggle. From the first drum beat on, the struggle never stops. It just changes form.

Dance rehearsals are two hours, twice a week. The musicians hold additional sessions to concentrate on the finer points of every song. Rehearsals are usually at 4 p.m. so that the members can come right after work. Occasionally they are cancelled, like last Friday, when the group participated in the National Volunteer Program for the olive harvest.

*Stay here my friend and hear the melody,  
so that all nations will hear the melody of our songs...*

A strong voice begins an intifada song.

*We tell the story of a people,  
a people fighting against all enemies...*

*Firqat Al Fanoun Al Shabiya* was formed on March 9, 1979. Having started with eight members, they are now fifty musicians and dancers. After a rehearsal, we spoke with some of the group's founding members about their goals and hopes, and about the culture of the Palestinian resistance:

“The Zionist assault on the Palestinian people is not only a political-economic one; it is also directed at our culture. We consider the arts a part of our struggle. The occupation is attempting to rob us of our culture, traditions, costumes and folklore. The Zionists lack a unified folklore, because they come from different parts of the world, from different cultures and backgrounds. Therefore, part of their strategy is destroying our folkloric heritage.

*Intruders have come to our land  
and planted themselves on its soil.  
They have driven our children away  
and massacred our elders.  
Destroying the roots of our trees  
and burning the branches.  
They have not left one flower  
blooming in our homeland.*

“The necessity of preserving our culture and folklore led to the idea of forming a dance group. Many of us danced as a hobby, and we wanted to come together and work collectively in order to be more productive. Moreover, cultural activities open up new doors enabling us to reach out to the people. Speaking to them in a language they understand is extremely important, as is relating to their everyday life and the suffering they experience, as an expressional medium.

“Our work developed in different stages. In the beginning we would go to the villages and regions where these songs and dances originated. We watched how the people danced, learned the lyrics and the steps, and then performed them on stage.

“This beginning stage concluded in 1981, and was followed by a more advanced level of work. The membership increased as did the qualitative participation of female members. Before we had to go to the girls' families and convince them to let their daughters dance. This is no longer necessary, and their participation has led to the development of a more overall picture of folklore. During this stage, we also introduced new instruments, including the *oud*. Previously we had worked basically with drums and the flute. At the same time, our style developed, as did our lyrics; also the people underwent a transformation. They were no longer people who simply had a knack for it, but people who devoted themselves to developing

their musical talent to the fullest. Our stage performances were no longer limited to short artistic sketches, but told a complete story, using the *taba*, a special kind of song, really a narrative which draws its content from concrete things that people can relate to, including expressions of the national struggle. Such performances are not limited to mere entertainment.

“*Wadi Tuffah (Valley of Apples)* is one such work which we began performing. *Wadi Tuffah* is located near Nablus, and many of the fierce battles took place there, from 1936 when Palestine was still under British Mandate. This piece traces the different stages of Palestinian history from 1917 until the time of occupation. In addition to arranging the dances, *dubka* (folkdance), and the lyrics, we began to use lighting to show the passage from one historical period to another.

“The introduction of the chorus also represented a change. Before we had used solo singers, but in the more advanced stages of our work we introduced the element of a chorus.

“In the third stage, we began to work more independently. Previously, we had used only the traditional lyrics and tunes. Then our own members began composing new lyrics in the folkloric spirit; now our musicians are composing new melodies for these lyrics. We used to take a song from a village and perform it exactly as it was. Now we give them a different touch - different lyrics, music and arrangement, but all in the essence of Palestinian folklore. We want to add our own ideas; that is how progress takes place. We think that in the future this will be regarded as Palestinian folklore, because we are not adding foreign elements; it is derived from the folklore of this country.

“This is the stage we are now in. Most of the songs in our new show are words that people have not heard before and new tunes and musical arrangements. We are introducing some new instruments not usually used in folklore. We are also creating new dance steps to go with the new music. It is still Palestinian, but a new type of dance.

“The people have been responding to our work very enthusiastically. We don’t want people to say that we are trying to change Palestinian folklore. We think that folklore reflects the situation people are living in. Folklore is not something old, collecting dust, that no one sees or feels. When you give people something born out of their situation, that’s folklore, and eventually it will become traditional. We are attempting to give the people what we feel as Palestinians. If we are living in a revolutionary period, our dances must reflect this, as with the uprising.

*My dignity is dearer than my life,  
Than the blood I have lost.  
The voice of the intifada is louder  
than the occupation...  
It will not be silenced.*

“We want to stay close to the people. We don’t want to be so advanced that they say: It is a very good group, but we don’t understand what they are doing. Other groups have attempted to do the same, but failed because they modernized the folklore

too much, to the extent that no one could relate to it. It became sort of Western, too far removed from the people. When people come to our shows, they often come up and say: We feel like we are the ones dancing up there, we are the ones singing these songs; they reflect exactly what we feel. We are trying to connect the past to the present. We don’t want people to live in the past or the future. The past and the present should melt together into what we are experiencing now.

“In their attempt to liquidate the Palestinian identity, the Zionists have put many obstacles in our way. Every group is required to have a permit. We don’t have one. The use of national songs and patriotic lyrics is forbidden. Normally, the script of every performance must be submitted. We don’t do this. We are against this and they wouldn’t approve it anyway. Many times they have forbidden us to perform in the territories occupied in 1948. Here in the West Bank and in Gaza, they have closed the theaters we were scheduled to perform in; they have also raided the places we performed. They have arrested our members the night before a performance to prevent us from appearing. At the moment, the person who writes our songs is in prison, as is our music composer and many of our dancers. Some were just released; others were just thrown in. Some have been in prison since the beginning of the uprising, but this did not start with the uprising. We have been arrested many times in the past. Five of us were arrested upon returning from a tour in the US, charged with membership in *Firgat Al Fanoun Al Shabiya*. We have been invited to other places, but we are not issued travel permits.

“Nonetheless, we do perform in the 1948 occupied territories quite often. We were in Nur Al Shams, Sakhnin, Akka, Haifa and Taibeh. We even performed for Palestinian students at the Hebrew University in Tel Aviv. The audience’s response was incredible, as if they were thirsty for their traditions. When we started a song, they would sing along. They have memorized our songs. Whenever we perform in the North, for example in Um Al Fahm, people request songs; they come on stage and dance with us. These are clear signs that there has been a renaissance of Palestinian culture.

«Traditional folklore constitutes one part of the civilization of a people. One says, if you want to find the roots of a people, look at their dances, their folklore, because every dance represents a way of living, a way of thinking and the aspirations of a people. As do all other nations, we also have our traditions, culture and history. We are very interested in reaching people everywhere, including the Palestinian people in the diaspora, in communicating every aspect of our situation and our life.»

*There is no room for patience.  
There is no longer room for patience here.  
Either a human life or death.*

*Firgat Al Fanoun Al Shabiya* has intensified its work during the uprising. In 1987, they produced an underground recording of intifada songs which describe how the suffering of the people has been transformed into the immense power of the upri-

sing. They express the determination and will of the people and the present forms of struggle.

*The stone of our land is holy.*

*The stone of our land is legendary.*

*We build on our will and we are proud.*

*Towards national liberation, comrade,  
national disobedience will shorten the way.*

*There is no alternative but expelling the occupiers!*

*The road is long and will need endurance.*

*The struggle of our people is the spirit of joy.*

*Our whole people is filled with determination...*

*We eat spinach and thyme*

*and sweeter than honey is the bread from our ovens.*

The intifada is reflected in every sphere of social life. We were able to experience the immediate connection between the intifada and the arts a few days later at a folklore gathering at *Al Hakawati* theater in Jerusalem. The intifada in a theater hall - not a seat was empty. People of all ages have come together from various villages and towns. The lights dim, conversations are broken off, laughter and greetings die down. A deep silence fills the room as all turn their thoughts to the martyrs of the intifada. An oath, that their sacrifices will not be in vain, marks the beginning of every performance.

Suddenly the stage is bathed in light. A tableau of the intifada presents itself: a young boy throwing a stone, kofias, women in confrontation, in traditional dress and in jeans, a prisoner, a martyr, the victory sign.

For a moment silence prevails. Then cheers, slogans and thrills burst the stillness. Each and every one here has found their likeness in the tableau. Everyone is on their feet, clapping, stamping and cheering with pride. The lights are cut and the stage is engulfed in darkness.

The group of 15 to 20 youth are performing for the first time, but appear to be known to all. People constantly shout greetings to the lead dancer who was recently released from prison. Tonight's performance is a mixture of theater, song and dubka. Each element harbours an aspect of the intifada, revealing it in a unique way. The ensemble culminates in a precise expression of the character of the uprising. There are neither actors nor spectators - everyone is involved. The first sketch is only five minutes long; few lines are spoken, yet much is said about the character of the people's confrontation.

A Palestinian youth runs onto the stage, followed by a heavily armed Zionist soldier who captures him and ties his hands behind his back. The soldier gags and blindfolds him with his own kofia, all the while calling for reinforcements. Increasingly insecure, the soldier calls for his commander, for other soldiers, but no one comes, and the soldier's voice is shaky, fearful, not more than a squeak. Meanwhile, the prisoner sits calmly, while the soldier becomes more and more distraught. Finally, when no one comes, he unties his prisoner and slinks away.

The military, equipped with the most modern weapons, is attempting to suppress an uprising of people armed with stones, *Democratic Palestine, March 1989*



and it's failing. Who is inferior and who is superior in this sketch is clear to all, for the people experience this daily and they are proud. On the stage, the scene has changed and the next sketch begins:

It is early morning and one of the shebab is standing guard outside a liberated village. A villager wanting to pass is asked for his ID card. He pulls out the orange card of the occupation, whereupon he receives a contemptuous look. The guard rips the card from his hand and throws it on the ground. Immediately the villager understands; he takes a stone out of his pocket and is allowed to pass.

The last sketch is particularly popular:

An old man walks with a child, and the child asks, «But where are we going?» The old man pauses. Leaning on his cane, he answers: «To Palestine, my son.» «How do you know the way?» the small boy asks. Setting forth, the old man says: «I see a boy over there throwing a stone.»

Each sketch, a fleeting glimpse of the intifada, gives rise to euphoric cheering. The intifada is everyday life for these people, and we, the only real 'spectators' here tonight, have discovered many of its aspects. Tonight is a celebration, a marvelous celebration of the intifada and of everyday life.

The last notes of the flute waver and fade away as the lights go on again. Some of the artists have already changed. With their traditional dress tucked under their arms, they disappear into the crowd. There are no encores. Everyone hurries along. There is still a lot to do today. A demonstration begins shortly in Ramallah. Others probably have committee meetings, have to feed the chickens, stand guard, teach or study in popular education classes, care for the wounded... Everyday life in the intifada is varied and folklore is just one aspect. Finally, we too set off. The impressions of the intifada continue to dance before our eyes, slogans ring in our ears: Intifada until victory - No way back!

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Parts of this same story were previously published in *Al Karamah* magazine, Postfach 20 20 3550 Marburg/Lahn, West Germany. Our German-speaking readers may want to contact *Al Karamah* for information on how to obtain the book *No Way Back!*



