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DEMOCRATIC PALESTINE





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- Conveying the political line of progressive Palestinian and Arab forces;
- Providing current information and analysis pertinent to the Palestinian liberation struggle, as well as developments on the Arab and international levels;
- Serving as a forum for building relations of mutual solidarity between the Palestinian revolution and progressive organizations, parties, national liberation movements and countries around the world.

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Letters

We received the following letter in Arabic from a Soviet girl:

Hello,

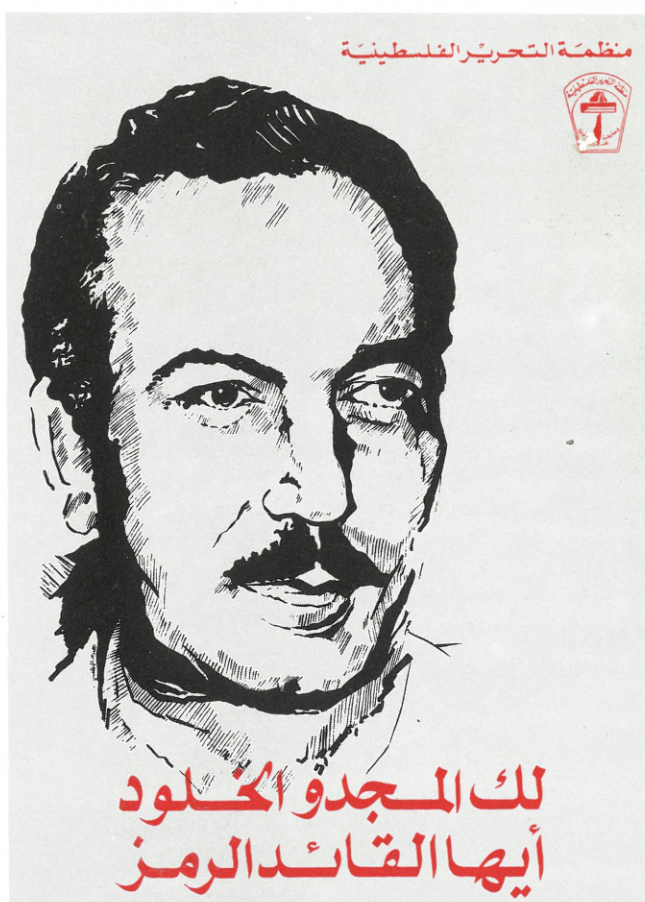
My name is Natasha; I speak Arabic. I live in Odessa, USSR. I am sixteen years old and a member of the Che Guevara Club. Among my friends and colleagues are people from many countries, such as East Germany, Latin America, India and many Arab countries.

We stand in solidarity with the heroic struggle of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories to gain their freedom. The day will come when your land will be liberated and your deprived children will be able to sing songs calling for childhood.

I wish you success in your just struggle and you have a lot of friends in my country. Peace to the children of Palestine,
Freedom to Palestine, Natasha

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Editorial

JUNE 1967 AND JUNE 1988

Every year June 5th is an occasion for Palestinian and Arab progressives to reevaluate the reasons for the Arab defeat in the 1967 war launched by the Zionist state, which resulted in the occupation of the rest of Palestine. A major lesson drawn by revolutionaries is that classical warfare cannot stand up to Zionist military superiority which is constantly being bolstered by imperialist support. Only a popular liberation war can do so, by mobilizing the full potentials of the masses in a variety of struggle forms.

This year, 21 years after the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, this lesson is not being evaluated solely on the basis of timeworn historical evidence. The Palestinian uprising has put a whole new impetus into this discussion. Daily mass struggle, unbroken for over half a year, has created new facts which challenge the Zionist occupation as never before. As noted by Israeli historian Shlomo Avineri in the *New York Times* on February 24th: «In 1967 the Israeli Army needed fewer than five days to gain control over the West Bank and Gaza. In 1987 to 1988 the same army - much stronger - cannot restore order when faced with stone-throwing turbulent youths. A Greater Israel is not more secure but less secure for Israeli Jews.»

On June 7, 1967, Rabin is reported to have queried: «How do we control a million Arabs?» (*International Herald Tribune*, June 10th). Today, as Defense Minister, Rabin is daily confronted with the full implications of his question. His prescribed remedy of systematic killing, beating, detention and deportation has yet to stop the uprising. Instead, new atrocities are daily being added to the Zionists' ugly human rights record: As of mid-June, 275 Palestinians had been murdered by the Zionist forces since the uprising began. Thousands more have been injured. Among the recent casualties was the three-year-old boy who died in Gaza on May 27th, after his home was tear-gassed as Zionist forces tried to quell demonstrations. This was one of 40 deaths due to the Israelis' vicious use of tear gas in closed areas. In the same week, two nine-month-old baby girls suffered eye injuries from rubber bullets shot at the people of Jabalia camp.

Despite all the sacrifices they have already borne, the Palestinian masses of the West Bank and Gaza Strip marked 21 years of occupation with three days of general strike and confrontation of Zionist troops, simultaneously protesting Schultz's fourth shuttle to the Middle East. The Zionist authorities are moreover faced with signs that the uprising is spreading into «Israel» itself. This year's annual May 1st demonstration in Nazareth was dedicated to the uprising. Throughout the month of May, fires raged on forest and pasture land reserved for exclusive Jewish use in the Galilee, burning about 40,000 acres. Five Palestinians from the 1948 occupied land were subsequently arrested on suspicion of arson. In the same period, the United National Leadership of the Uprising had issued a call for «destroying and burning all the enemies' agricultural and industrial resources.» Fires have also occurred in the occupied Golan Heights and the Jerusalem area.

The uprising has created new conditions in the Arab world, which if developed could impact on the overall struggle. The most recent result of the uprising's impact was the position adopted at the Arab summit in Algiers (see article in this issue). Prior to that, it spurred the reconciliation between the PLO and the Syrian leadership. For several years, efforts had been exerted by Palestinian and Arab nationalists and their allies, especially the Soviet Union, to facilitate such a reconciliation. With the beginning of the Palestinian uprising, contacts increased between the two sides, knowing that the uprising marked a turning point in the Palestinian and Arab struggle. After years of the Zionist state and its backer, the USA, being on the offensive, the uprising opened the horizon for a counteroffensive.

On this background, the martyrdom of Abu Jihad presented the opportunity. A high-ranking Fatah delegation came to Damascus for the funeral, and held talks with the Syrian leadership. The subsequent visit of PLO Chairman and Fatah leader, Yasir Arafat, and his April 25th meeting with Syrian President Assad, made the reconciliation a reality. Differences do remain (see Press Conference in this issue). However, the two sides agreed on three basics: (1) confronting the US plans, primarily the Schultz plan; (2) supporting the Palestinian uprising; and (3) a joint position on a fully empowered international conference under UN auspices with the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council and of the PLO on an equal and independent footing, with the aim of fulfilling Palestinian rights to return, self-determination and an independent state.

By holding to these points and working to resolve differences, PLO-Syrian relations can be developed into the axis for other tasks. One of these is the return of all Palestinian organizations to the PLO. Another is restoration of the Palestinian-Lebanese nationalist-Syrian alliance that was previously on the forefront of the struggle against the US-Zionist plans. This in turn could pave the way for reorganizing the alliance between the Arab nationalist regimes. It would also enhance coordination with international allies in the efforts to convene a genuine international conference.

The Palestinians under occupation have shown the way to reversing the 1967 defeat and subsequent decline in the Arab position. The Arab nationalist and progressive forces should seize this historic chance. The Arab national liberation movement is called upon not only to support the uprising in Palestine, but to mobilize the masses in each country, to reverse the capitulationist trend that has pervaded the area. Today we stand at the threshold of a new phase begun by the restoration of the PLO's unity, crystallized by the uprising and furthered by the PLO-Syrian reconciliation and the Algiers summit. All nationalist and progressive Palestinian and Arab forces are called upon to struggle for enforcing radical change in the balance of forces in the area. This is the prerequisite for fulfilling the Palestinian people's rights, and simultaneously bringing democracy and progress to the Arab masses.

The Assassination of Abu Jihad

In an attempt to put down the uprising in occupied Palestine, the Zionist state committed a horrendous new crime, murdering Khalil Al Wazir (Abu Jihad), deputy commander of the PLO's armed forces and head of the PLO committee for the affairs of the occupied homeland.

In the early morning of April 16th, a group of thirty Mossad agents surrounded Abu Jihad's house near Tunis. Eight of the Israeli secret service squad entered the house, murdered three bodyguards and emptied their magazines into the body of the great Palestinian leader. In the spirit of the heroic Palestinian people, Abu Jihad, upon hearing the disturbance, had taken his pistol to confront the enemy forces. The Mossad operatives riddled his body with about 80 bullets, in the presence of his wife and son.

Hours after the murder, international news reports revealed that the operation was carried out by the Mossad, having been approved by the Israeli inner cabinet, including Yitzhak Shamir and Shimon Peres. It was also clear, as pointed out by PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat, that the Israeli leaders' decision was taken with the support of the Reagan Administration. While the State Department later issued a general condemnation of the assassination, 'Israel' as the perpetrator was not named. The US subsequently blocked the attempt to name 'Israel' in the Security Council's condemnation of the killing and the violation of Tunisian territory.

This new crime punctuates a long list of crimes committed by the Zionist state against the Palestinian people over the years, inside and outside of Palestine. This crime cannot but remind of the brutal assassinations of other Palestinian nationalist leaders like Ghassan Kanafani, Basil Kubaisi, Kamal Nasser, Kamal Adwan, Abu Yusef Najjar, Walid Zaiter, Khaled Nazzal and others.

Having been forced to realize the important role of the PLO and of Abu Jihad in particular, in directing the Palestinian uprising, the Israeli leadership thought that the murder of a leader could halt the uprising. This attests to the atmosphere of hysteria prevailing in the Israeli cabinet, blinding it to the

fact that the uprising is sustained by one and a half million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and a well-organized, clandestine leadership in the territories. True the murder of Abu Jihad is a great loss to the Palestinian people, due to the historical role he played in the Palestinian revolution. However, the murder only made the Palestinian people reaffirm that their will to continue the struggle will not be broken.

The most immediate result of the murder was three days of the most militant demonstrations witnessed in the course of the current uprising. Twenty-three Palestinians were shot dead by the Zionist troops in these days, and over 500 injured. The United National Leadership called for «turning the days of mourning for Abu Jihad into days of fire, rage and hell against the Zionist enemy.» Throughout occupied Palestine, thousands confronted the Zionist soldiers, displaying Palestinian flags and T-shirts with Abu Jihad's picture.

ZIONIST PLAN BACKFIRES

In a development not anticipated by the Israeli cabinet, the murder of Abu Jihad provided the setting for a recon-

ciliation between the PLO and Syria. For several years now, progressive forces on the Palestinian, Arab and international level have been calling for repairing the relations between the PLO, the vanguard of the Palestinian people, and Syria, the sole Arab frontline state opposing the imperialist plans. In a positive gesture, Syrian President Hafez Al Assad allowed Abu Jihad to be buried in Syria where over half a million people accompanied the martyr's body to the grave, in an overwhelming demonstration of Palestinian national unity and determination to continue the struggle.

A high-ranking PLO and Fatah delegation came to Syria for the funeral and began discussions with the Syrian leadership. A few days later, PLO Chairman Arafat visited Syria for the first time since 1983. This opened the door for restoring relations.

The murder of Abu Jihad elicited worldwide condemnation of the Zionist state with a few notable exceptions such as the Reagan Administration and the South African regime. The murder of Abu Jihad took place less than a month after the apartheid regime's murder of Dulcie September, ANC representative in France, Switzerland and Luxembourg. Both these murders give new proof as to who the real terrorists are.

In a communique addressed to the Palestinian people upon the murder of Abu Jihad, Comrade George Habash, General Secretary of the PFLP, stated, «By killing Abu Jihad, 'Israel' wanted to transfer the battle outside Palestine, thinking that they could defeat the uprising and the revolution. But they

Abu Jihad's family at his funeral





Abu Jihad's funeral procession, Yarmouk camp

didn't realize that with this act, they are admitting their inability to confront the children fighting with stones... Despite murdering a number of leaders, the enemy will not be able to destroy the uprising. Our answer to this deplorable crime is continuing and escalating the uprising until accomplishing the aims of freedom and independence, and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, led by the PLO, the sole, legitimate representative of our people.»

While in Damascus for his father's funeral, Basel Al Wazir told reporters, «My father's martyrdom means a new beginning, a new start, readiness and will to fight for the freedom of Palestine... We will take revenge. There is fighting now (referring to the uprising) and we will always fight. We will never stop no matter what the price is.»

Portrait of a Martyr

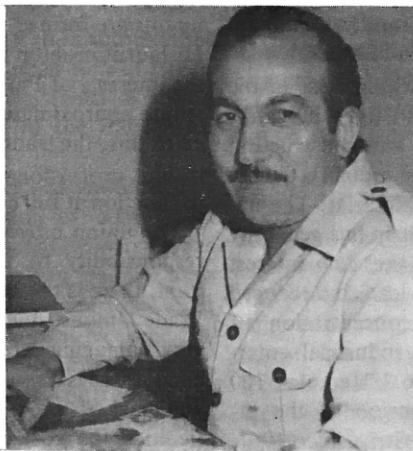
Abu Jihad was born in Ramleh, Palestine, on October 10, 1935. After the occupation of Palestine in 1948, his family was forced to emigrate to the Gaza Strip where he completed high school. While studying, he was leading some of the fedayeen cells then active against the Zionist enemy. The most prominent operation he carried out in his youth was the destruction of a water reservoir in the occupied parts of Gaza (Beit Hanoun), after which the Zionists raided the Gaza Strip on February 28, 1955.

In 1954, he was elected secretary of the Palestinian Student Union in Gaza. The next year he met Yasir Arafat who was visiting Gaza in his capacity as head of the Palestinian Student Union in Egypt. In the same year, Abu Jihad was arrested by the Egyptian authorities for his political and military activities. He was expelled from Egypt in 1957, whereafter he went to Saudi Arabia and later Kuwait.

Abu Jihad remained in Kuwait until 1963. During this period, he was involved in the formation of Fatah, along with Arafat, Salah Khalaf (Abu Iyad), Khaled Al Hassan and the martyr Abu Ali Iyad (martyred in the 1971 battles with the Jordanian regime at Jerash) and others.

In 1966, Abu Jihad, on behalf of Fatah, developed close relations with the Algerian National Liberation

Khalil Al Wazir



Front. This resulted in the opening of Fatah's first office in Algiers, and military training camps as well. Abu Jihad was prominent in developing the Palestinian revolution's early contacts with several socialist countries. In 1966, Abu Jihad accompanied Arafat on a visit to China where they met Chairman Mao Tse Tung. Later, Abu Jihad visited the Democratic Republics of Vietnam and Korea.

After the beginning of the Palestinian armed struggle in 1965, Abu Jihad was based in Damascus. In his work, he stressed the importance of armed struggle in occupied Palestine. After the Israeli occupation of the rest of Palestine in 1967, he was put in charge

of military operations against the Zionist enemy launched from Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. During the September 1970 massacres against the Palestinian people in Jordan, Abu Jihad participated in defending the revolution against the Jordanian regime's forces.

In June 1970, at Fatah's national congress in Damascus, Abu Jihad was elected to Fatah's Central Committee and deputy commander of Al Assifa (Fatah's armed forces). In this capacity, he played a very prominent role in the Palestinian armed revolution. He was directly involved in escalating armed struggle in Palestine. He played an important role in the heroic defense of Beirut during the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

Abu Jihad was deeply involved in the unification talks that took place between the main Palestinian organizations prior to the unification session of the PNC in Algiers in April 1987. After this, he was very active in the PLO's committee for the affairs of the occupied homeland. As head of this committee, he played an important role in supporting and directing the current uprising until his martyrdom. Abu Jihad was married to Intisar Al Wazir, who has headed the PLO department for the injured, the martyrs and the prisoners, since 1962. They had four children.

May 1st

Workers, Peasants and Merchants in the Uprising

May 1st is International Workers' Day, and this year there is truly cause to celebrate the leading role of the Palestinian working class. A powerful component of the current uprising is the general strike when Palestinian workers boycott their jobs in the Zionist state. However, the overriding characteristic of the uprising is the united action by all Palestinian classes against the occupation, as a logical consequence of the national oppression imposed on the Palestinian people as a whole. In addition to the role of the working class, this article examines the role of the Palestinian national bourgeoisie and petit bourgeoisie in the uprising, specifically the role of the merchants and peasantry.

THE PALESTINIAN WORKING CLASS— A NEW CHALLENGE

The expansion of the Palestinian working class in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is a direct result of the policies of economic subordination enforced by the Israeli authorities since the beginning of the occupation. Contrary to Zionist aims, these policies contributed to the expansion of the Palestinian working class and its role in the struggle. In urban areas, the economic subordination policies affected mainly the craftsmen and small businessmen, and forced the majority of them to become day laborers. In the countryside, these policies had similar damaging effects on the peasantry. Thousands of small landowners, and consequently their family members, were turned into laborers in Israeli factories and farms.

The bulk of the expanded Palestinian working class in the occupied territories has been channeled into light industry, such as the manufacture of glass, furniture and construction materials, rather than into automated, heavy industry, where the workers constitute the nucleus of the proletariat. The national industry in the West Bank and Gaza Strip has generally been deteriorating due to the high tariffs, taxes and interest rates imposed by the Israeli authorities. This led to a reduced number of large factories, limiting the concentration of Palestinian workers; 93.3% of Palestinian industrial enterprises employ 1 to 9 workers, whereas only 6.3% employ 100 workers or more. Despite horizontal expansion of the industrial sector in the West Bank and Gaza Strip since 1967, there was no significant rise in production. Industrial production was restricted to processing raw materials (such as tobacco and textiles) rather than turning out finished products, and other light industries that absorb the largest share of the laborers. The dispersion of the Palestinian labor force in small production units, spread in different areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, has had negative effects on the development of the working class, and on the maneuverability of trade unions.

According to Israeli statistics, in 1981 there were 247,000 workers in the occupied territories, of which 70,000 worked for Israeli enterprises, in addition to over 40,000 unregistered Palestinian workers. These figures reflect the extent of the deterioration of the Palestinian national economy and the decrease of the number of workers in the national industry, parallel to the increase in the number of Palestinian workers in the Israeli economy. This situation is a result of systematic Zionist efforts to provide for the Israeli economy's need for a low-paid reserve labor force and to fill the vacancies left by

drafted settlers. Hereby the Zionist authorities also aim to weaken the Palestinian farmers' adherence to the land.

THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

After 1967, despite the continuous expansion of the Palestinian working class and the formation of many trade unions, the trade union movement has suffered due to several factors. Prime among these is the continuous harassment and repression of the Zionist authorities, such as periodic storming of union headquarters and the arrest of union leaders and activists. The Zionist authorities also issued decree no. 83 that constitutes interference in how the leading bodies of the trade unions are formed. Moreover, the military government and the Histadrut prohibit the Palestinian trade unions from defending the interests of Palestinians working in 'Israel', who now constitute approximately half the Palestinian working class. Added to this, the trade unions under occupation lack the finances to hire professional trade unionists or to rent offices needed to function at full capacity.

The union movement faces other difficulties which are the responsibility of the different Palestinian political forces. First, there is the split in the West Bank General Federation of Trade Unions, due to political disagreements which have had very damaging effects on the unity of the working class. Second, there is a separation of the trade unions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. As a result of the objective and subjective difficulties, the workers' movement has not in the past played the vanguard political role it should play.

A prerequisite for advancing the awareness and consequently the role of the Palestinian working class, and for improving the conditions of the trade union movement, is the unity of all the nationalist and democratic forces, in order to maintain the unity of the working class. There is an urgent need to restore the unity of the General Federation of Trade Unions in the West Bank, to unite the trade union movement in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and to consolidate the democratic spirit in the trade unions. It is the role of the political forces to advance the political role of the trade unions, and to motivate the working class to play its vanguard role in confronting the occupation.

THE WORKING CLASS UNDER OCCUPATION

Over fifty percent of Palestinian laborers in the 1967 occupied territories work beyond the green line and fall prey to a

loathed double oppression; national and class oppression. The Palestinian worker is exposed to daily humiliation, before he even gets to his place of work, during the morning search on the borders to 'Israel'. The Palestinian worker gets only one-third of a Jewish worker's wages. He enjoys no rights whatsoever, no medical or social insurance, although at least one-third of his wages are automatically deducted by the Histadrut and the Ministry of Labor. Moreover, he is forced to work long hours and liable to be fired at any time. The surplus value of the Palestinian workers' production does not benefit the Palestinian national economy. On the contrary, it accumulates to the direct benefit of the Israeli economy. Even the surplus value produced by workers in small workshops in the occupied territories indirectly accumulates as Israeli capital, because most of these workshops function as subcontractors to Israeli industry.

All of these conditions contribute to making the Palestinian working class the class most exploited by the occupation and its repressive policies. It is thus most compelled to assume its historical role in the struggle for freedom and liberation.

WORKERS IN THE FOREFRONT OF THE UPRISING

Despite all the fetters noted above, Palestinian workers in the occupied territories showed their will and ability to resist the occupation collectively by going on strike. Due to Israeli dependence on their labor power, especially in the construction and service sectors, and other manual labor, these workers played a major role in the uprising by boycotting work in 'Israel'.

A study by the Israeli Industrialists' Federation showed that the uprising has had damaging effects on almost 50% of Israeli factories. Some economic reports said that 'Israel' is losing almost \$70 million a month as a result of the Palestinian workers' strikes.

The workers' participation in the uprising was not limited to strikes. They were active in the reopening of many local Palestinian factories, while the United National Leadership has called on factory owners not to fire workers, reduce their wages or deduct for absence. Workers also formed blacksmith committees to repair the iron shutters of shops forced open by the Israeli soldiers' attempts to break the commercial strike. These committees are part of the strike force confronting the occupation troops. Workers are also involved in the food supply committees, medical relief committees and other popular committees. Hundreds of workers and dozens of trade unionists have been arrested, in addition to those martyred and injured. The United National Leadership's calls address the workers, urging them to consolidate their role as vanguards in the struggle.

THE ROLE OF THE PEASANTRY

It is true that the uprising was sparked in the refugee camps, most particularly in Jabalia, in the Gaza Strip. The first bloody confrontations occurred mainly in the camps and towns, due to the population concentration in these places. Moreover, the camps and towns have always been the centers of the Palestinian national movement. Since the 1967 occupation, many new mass organizations, trade unions, popular committees, clubs and societies have been formed. These contributed to a higher degree of organization.

However, it is equally true that the countryside joined in the uprising on a large scale from the first days. This greatly con-

tributed to its continuation and expansion, and confused the Zionist forces. Daily demonstrations in hundreds of villages confused the Zionist authorities, and forced them to deploy their forces over wide areas, instead of concentrating on the camps that have always been considered the centers of unrest. The large-scale participation of villagers in the uprising disturbed the Zionists' carefully calculated plans.

ATTEMPTED ISOLATION OF THE COUNTRYSIDE

Before the original Zionist occupation, the British Mandate worked to keep the Palestinian countryside backward and isolated. A sharp gap was created between the rural and urban areas, economically, socially and culturally. The British exploited this gap into a political contradiction. They allowed the urban bourgeoisie and the feudalists to assume leadership, such as the Husseini, Nashashibi and Abdul Hadi families, and used them to repress the revolts of the peasants. After 1948, the Jordanian regime continued this policy. After 1967, the Israelis also planned to keep the countryside isolated and inaccessible to the Palestinian nationalist organizations. Later on, the occupation authorities established the Village Leagues, staffed with collaborators who were given weapons and administrative authority, in order to force the villagers to deal with them. These leagues were able to function in certain of the most backward areas of the West Bank, such as around Hebron.

At that time, the activities of the Palestinian national movement were concentrated in the towns and camps. The Palestinian resistance did not devote enough attention to mobilizing the peasants. Its action was limited to armed cells. The resistance did not realize the great potentials of the peasants and did not direct its work towards the rural areas until the mid-seventies.

SEMI-PROLETARIANIZATION

Since the 1967 occupation, the Israeli authorities have employed old laws and enacted new ones for the purpose of usurping Palestinian land and water resources. As a result of extensive land confiscation and heavy restrictions on the cultivation and marketing of agricultural products, the Palestinian peasantry has been partially destroyed. As of December 1987, 53% of the West Bank and 38% of the Gaza Strip had been confiscated. While in 1966, 36% of West Bank land was cultivated, only 27% was farmed in 1985. In the Gaza Strip, the area of cultivated land decreased from 55% in 1966, to 28% in 1985. The number of farmers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip decreased from 70,000 in 1967 to 38,000 in 1987.

Many peasants were either totally deprived of their land or forced to neglect it. They were subsequently forced to emigrate or to seek work in the towns or in 'Israel'. Of those who commute for work, most retain residence in their villages and



their ties to the remnants of their land. This can best be described as the semiproletarianization of the peasantry. The peasants who have continued to farm are obviously involved in a daily struggle to maintain their cultivation in the face of the occupation authorities' restrictions and the ever-present threat of expropriation.

In addition to these objective factors motivating the Palestinian peasantry to confront the occupation, subjective factors played a role as well. Many of the peasants who migrated to urban areas for work, were influenced by the political atmosphere and national organizations. Also, children of peasant families have gone on to study at universities in the towns and abroad. Those who return after graduation have played an important role in raising the political consciousness in the rural areas. Moreover, the Palestinian resistance has directed more attention to the countryside. Committees were formed to aid the peasantry, such as voluntary work committees, literacy committees and farmers aid committees.

VILLAGERS IN REVOLT

Due to the media black-out imposed by the Israeli authorities, and the difficulties of journalists reaching the rural areas, there was initially little information about the Palestinian villagers' participation in the uprising. Their role has, however, been substantial.

Of the first 100 martyrs of the uprising, 29 were from the countryside, as were 693 of the first 1,000 injured, all from 62 villages. These figures rose as the uprising went on. The largest percentage of martyrs in the second 100 martyrs was among the peasants (54%), as compared to 27% in the towns and 19% in the camps; 29% of the second 1,000 injuries occurred in the countryside, as compared to 28.4% in the towns and 43.1% in the camps. Casualties rose in the countryside, especially in the third and fourth months of the uprising, as villagers took a more active part in confronting the Israeli troops, while their brothers in towns and camps suffered under almost continuous curfews, closed military areas and massive arrests. In the first three weeks of the uprising, 20 villages participated. By the end of January, 86 villages were involved. By the end of February, nearly 200 villages were participating. As of late March, this number rose to 232.

The names of some villages were frequently repeated in the media. These were the scene of daily mass demonstrations and bloody confrontations.

All the villages of the West Bank participated in the Day of Rage called on February 16th by the United National Leadership. On April 4th, clashes between villagers and the occupation troops took place simultaneously in Qabatya, Arrabah and Yaabad. The general strike protesting Schultz's visit, called by the United National Leadership, was observed throughout the countryside.

The Israeli authorities reacted viciously, employing the most fascist methods against the villagers. In Anabta, for example, Israeli troops killed three and injured 32 in single day, while confronting a demonstration. In Salem village, the Israelis buried four young men alive. In the village of Beita, over 50 homes were demolished and the school was transformed into a prison in «retaliation» for the death of an Israeli girl who was shot by a settler. In the villages of Batear and Al Khada, soldiers completely destroyed the water lines. Both Al Yamoun and Seelet Al Harthyeh villages were closed off for over a month, and many homes were destroyed. In Al Izereyeh

village, the Zionist authorities sealed the headquarters of the Muslim Youth. In all of these villages, fierce battles had taken place between the villagers and the occupation troops.

Villagers have shown great courage in confronting the Israelis. In Dhahriah, for example, the inhabitants were able to prevent soldiers from entering the village; they destroyed 15 military vehicles during a confrontation. Many villages have been declared liberated areas for several days after fierce battles with the occupiers.

CONFRONTING TRAITORS/COORDINATED ACTION

Palestinian villagers have implemented the calls of the United National Leadership with great precision. Late in February, following Call No. 7, villagers in Qabatya hung the collaborator, Mohammad Al Ayad, and burned his house. In Kafr Al Deek, villagers attacked the homes of several collaborators. In Al Aseera, the homes of Village League collaborators were attacked by the people. On March 25th, four collaborators in the village of Alas announced their repentance in the mosque and turned over their weapons to the village council. Such disciplinary actions scared other collaborators into recanting, as happened with the infamous Zuhair Mahmoud in Silwad.

Workers from the villages joined in the workers' strike. Villagers also participated in the strike by burning buses that transport Palestinians to work in 'Israel', as happened in Izbat Al Jarad. Following the directions of Call No. 10, a military bus was burned in Beit Ommas.

Villages near camps that were constantly under curfew sent food supplies to these camps. The residents of Tamoun village, for example, sent a convoy of three trucks to the besieged Balata camp. Following Call No. 11 of the United National Leadership, residents of several villages forced the appointed village councils, mayors and mukhtars to resign. On March 29th, the date set by Call No. 11, 80% of town and village councils in the Gaza Strip had resigned.

Peasants constitute a major force in the Palestinian liberation struggle. To elevate their contribution to the struggle against the occupation, more attention should be devoted to organizing them in the existing political organizations. Organizations, especially for peasants should also be formed in all villages, in order to eventually establish the union of Palestinian peasants in the occupied territories. The peasants should be given material aid to enable them to adhere to and cultivate their land. This is especially needed at this stage of the uprising, since the move to civil disobedience depends to a great extent on the Palestinian people's ability to attain a greater level of self-sufficiency. Palestinian agriculture and the peasants' role are crucial in providing the material base for steadfastness.

THE MERCHANTS' ROLE

Probably the most dramatic proof of the unity of the whole Palestinian people in the current uprising is the role of the merchants. Though all Palestinian classes have suffered under the occupation, the merchant strata is the one least harmed. The merchants of the 1967 occupied territories are part of the Palestinian bourgeoisie and petit bourgeoisie. They can be divided into two strata: brokers and shopkeepers. The brokers function mainly as middlemen, marketing Israeli goods in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Historically, this strata has benefited from the occupation in economic terms, and the end

of the occupation would spell its economic doom. The small shopkeepers, on the other hand, market mainly local products, and profit much less than the agents of Israeli goods.

In view of the Israeli policy of economic subordination of the 1967 occupied territories, some merchant strata have suffered under the occupation which has restricted local industry and trade. Particularly onerous are high, arbitrary taxes on the merchants' sales. In the early eighties, with the Israeli economic crisis, this became more obvious. Taxes were collected from West Bank merchants in stable Jordanian dinars, to the advantage of the Israeli treasury at a time when the shekel was suffering heavy devaluation. The 1984 report of the 'civil' administration said that the occupied territories were paying for themselves with taxes collected from the local population. The report added that taxes increased by 39% in real terms in 1984. This situation led to a series of protests by merchants in recent years.

The merchants' interests are also harmed by restrictions and high tariffs on imports and exports. Goods cannot be exported or imported without a special permit from the military government. All imports must be via the Israeli Trade and Industry Ministry. Trade between the West Bank and Gaza Strip is prohibited, as is marketing the goods of the occupied territories in 'Israel'.

The commercial strike, which has been one of the most constant factors of the uprising, since it began in December, showed that the Palestinian merchants can no longer bear the national oppression of the occupation. They have become more aware of the fact that economic conditions will continue to deteriorate as long as the occupation persists, especially with the Israeli policy of dumping the burden of its own economic crises on the 1967 occupied territories. In the long run, it is in the interests of this strata, or at least part of it, to join in the struggle for an independent Palestinian state, for this is a prerequisite for a national market. Under the impact of the uprising, Palestinian merchants displayed their readiness to forgo immediate economic gains to join in the popular struggle. Their decision was a blow not only to the Israeli occupiers, but also to the Jordanian regime which has counted on big merchants as the class base for its own plans to absorb the West Bank or administer it jointly with the Israelis.

Though closing shops has often been a part of popular protest over the twenty years of occupation, such strikes have been of a few days duration and largely a symbolic protest. In the current uprising, however, the commercial strike has been pivotal. It concretely demonstrates that the situation is not normal, there is no business as usual, the people won't deal with the occupation.

The occupation forces quite rightly took the commercial strike as a major challenge. In the initial period, great efforts were expended by Israeli troops to force shops to reopen. Meanwhile, pro-Israeli media insinuated that the merchants only stayed closed under threat from «radical forces». The continuation of the uprising changed all this. It became clear that the merchants closed because this was their contribution to the uprising. In some periods, the soldiers stopped trying to enforce reopening because this was simply impossible. Meanwhile, the strike began to effect the Israeli economy by lost sales and taxes. It became intertwined with the popular decision to boycott Israeli goods whenever possible. Israeli Minister of Trade and Industry Ariel Sharon has said that there was a huge decrease in the level of trade due to the Palestinian boycott of Israeli goods. This boycott has at the same time

harmed the interests of those brokers who lived exclusively off peddling Israeli goods, perhaps signalling a reshuffling within the merchant class itself, in favor of smaller merchants whose interests lie with the local Palestinian market.

The commercial strike has also served as a focal point of the institutionalized uprising - the new routine of daily life followed by the Palestinians under occupation in their effort to move towards total civil disobedience. In line with the directives of the United National Leadership, the Palestinians began to decide when the shops would open in order that the people could get necessities. In Gaza, the merchants formed a committee to set the price of goods and prevent anyone from raising prices.

Phyllis Bennis, Middle East correspondent for the progressive US biweekly *Frontline*, described the situation after visiting occupied Palestine the first week of April: «The commercial strike has become a systematic way of life throughout the West Bank, Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem - everywhere. Shops are open from 9 to 12 noon, and then they close. You don't hear shopkeepers speculating about losing money, or consumers wanting to do their shopping in the afternoon. People have made the necessary adjustments... This shows that the calls issued by the United National Leadership of the Uprising are grounded in the needs and aspirations of the masses. The leadership has a level of maturity whereby it doesn't ask people to make an unbearable level of sacrifice forever. When there are general strikes, everything shuts down, but in the main, there are exemptions that were worked out collectively - bakeries, since bread is the basic staple; pharmacies, because of the urgent need for medicine; and taxi drivers are allowed to work. In some villages, stores might be open all day, but these are very small villages where people need to get goods at a different time than the one designated, because they are working in the fields...

«Then there is the Israeli response - for example, in Ramallah, the army announced that the shops would not be allowed to open in the morning and must open in the afternoon. The merchants said no, they would not open in the afternoon. So the soldiers said, fine, but you will not open in the morning. So the merchants said they would not open at all... So from 9 to 12, the time the shops would be open, the streets are filled with people, talking and passing the word about what's going on, and the stores stay shut. At 12 noon when, under the conditions of the strike, the shops would close, the people go home, the way they do in the rest of the territories.»

The Israeli determination to break the strike has been exhibited time and time again. According to Israeli radio on April 27th, 22 orders governing commercial operations have been issued to this end. In the last week of April, the occupation forces mounted a major offensive in Jerusalem to reopen the shops. Fourteen Palestinian merchants who refused were detained and are now facing trial and extended imprisonment. Still, the commercial strike reigns.

On May 1st this year, the Palestinian working class is waging a battle in defense of Palestinian national rights, alongside all the classes and strata that have interests in ending the occupation and achieving liberation. The uprising has showed the breadth of the class alliance involved in the Palestinian struggle, as merchants and peasants have taken an active role. Also landlords have displayed their national solidarity by refraining from collecting rents. All sectors are involved: Women and students are also on the forefront, along with all the youth, ►

leading the Zionist authorities to ban the entire Palestinian Youth Movement in the territories.

In the face of this popular unity, pro-Jordanian forces have been effectively silenced. The uprising has shifted the internal balance of power overwhelmingly in favor of those forces with

interests in ending the occupation. The development and continuation of the uprising shows that, with negligible exceptions, virtually the entire population of the West Bank and Gaza Strip are ready to fight for their rights to self-determination and statehood. ●

The Call of Al Qastal

Call no. 12 issued by the PLO/United National Leadership of the Uprising, April 2, 1988. Al Qastal was a battle where Palestinians resisted the Zionist forces in 1948.

People of heroism and great sacrifices, you who are writing the history of the Arab nation with your blood: Your blood has become like candles bringing light to the Arabs and dispersing the darkness prevailing in the Arab world... Daily your uprising is being stepped up, fed by your precious blood which waters the soil of the homeland. Your uprising is scoring significant victories and growing greater and greater. The victories attained each day are accumulating to pave the way for fulfilling the greater anticipated victories, first and foremost the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

In spite of the brutality and repression, you are courageously defying all the Zionists' military orders issued to suppress the uprising of the entire Palestinian people - children, women, elderly, and youth, who are using only their sacred stones and their growing anger at the occupation and its hirelings.

To our fighting people, the people of Al Qassam¹ and Abdul Qader Al Hussein², the people of struggle and the offerers of great sacrifices: Your glorious uprising, your popular revolution has entered its fifth month. The Palestinian masses are confronting more than two-thirds of the Israeli occupation troops, backed by all the Zionist settlers who have been sent into the streets of our camps, villages and towns, to attack unarmed people. This powerful revolution cannot be uprooted or liquidated by the brutal policies of bone-breaking, mass killing, fascist acts of terror, mass detentions or economic siege, because hundreds of thousands of Palestinians all over the occupied homeland today announce that there will be no step backward; the revolution of the stones will not stop unless a Palestinian state is established.

Just as happened on Land Day, when two million Palestinians expressed their belonging to one united people, today they rise up united under the banner of the PLO, the banner of the United National Leadership, the banner of liberation and an independent state. In order to raise this banner over the hills of Jerusalem, the Palestinians of every town, village and camp rise up together to liberate their homeland.

You great people of Palestine, people of the PLO, people of the United National Leadership: Failing to extinguish the uprising by brutal acts of suppression and terror, the occupation authorities now resort to new methods. They spread false rumors and misleading statements, allegedly signed by the United National Leadership, in an attempt to undermine the uprising. Yet the United National Leadership is fully confident that our people are able to counter all these fabrications. Meanwhile, the United National Leadership stresses that it is an integral part of those who make the uprising, of the rebellious Palestinian people, of the martyrs who have lost their lives in the uprising, and of those who are ready to give their lives for the national aspiration of liberation. The United Leader-

ship stands for the youth and children who throw stones and molotovs, for the thousands of mothers whose pregnancies were aborted by the poisonous gas, or whose children and husbands were sent to the Nazi-like, Israeli jails, and for the thousands of peasants and workers who stopped working at Israeli settlements and instead stood firm to defend their villages, camps and towns against the brutality of the Zionist settlers and troops.

You masses of our sacrificing people; you mothers of martyrs, injured and detainees; to all Palestinian mothers: The rulers of the Zionist entity believe themselves able to abort the uprising and undermine our faith in victory by mass arrests and storming our houses by night. They do not know that our people are an inexhaustible spring of revolutionary struggle and that they are accustomed to tolerate jails for the sake of the homeland. No matter how much the oppression and fascist measures are escalated, no matter how many of the uprising's children and men are arrested, the Zionist authorities will not be able to put an end to this uprising. Today, our people stand together as a giant overcoming all Zionist brutality and claims, increasing the occupiers' dilemma and crises, and driving the Zionist soldiers to neurosis and shame. So, give as much as you can to your glorious uprising, for the dawn of liberation is breaking through the darkness of jails and torture, promising the achievement of an independent national state.

On the threshold of the fifth month of our glorious uprising, that coincides with the 40th anniversary of Al Qastal battle, the battle of heroism and sacrifice, and the anniversary of the death of Abdul Qader Al Hussein, the United National Leadership asserts the following:

- The United National Leadership denounces all attempts to block the holding of the Arab summit in the first half of April and calls for its convening as soon as possible in order to ensure support to the uprising in occupied Palestine. The United National Leadership affirms to the Arab kings and presidents that the Palestinian people do not seek money; they are ready to suffer hunger and poverty, but never to surrender. They are willing to die as martyrs, but not to give up their rights. They are determined to march forward to the glorious victory. Yet, the Palestinians demand the summit to show concrete adherence to its previous resolutions, namely the emphasis on the Palestinian people's right to establish their independent state, under the leadership of their sole legitimate representative, the PLO. The summit is also requested to adhere to the call for an international peace conference with full authority and the participation of all concerned parties, including the PLO, on an independent and equal footing. The summit is also called upon to close all Arab doors against the Schultz conspiracy which aims at liquidating the uprising. Such a step can

be taken by announcing a total rejection of this conspiracy, by closing the Arab airports to the shuttles of Schultz and all other US envoys. Schultz and all the Arab hirelings would then understand that the PLO is the only force to approach, because it is the concerned party and the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

- The United National Leadership and the rebelling people strongly denounce the recent suppressive measures, the sealing off of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the imposition of curfew on the entire Gaza Strip for three whole days, the isolation of the West Bank by declaring it a closed area to the movement of residents and journalists, in a desperate attempt to prevent the people from marking Land Day. We are confident that all these desperate attempts are bound to fail, because the will of the uprising will overcome all fascist measures.

- The United National Leadership denounces the occupation authorities' decision to ban the Youth Movement and to dissolve several trade unions and institutions. These measures violate the most basic human rights and all international conventions and norms. The United National Leadership affirms that such measures will only make us more determined to continue the struggle for liberation.

- The United National Leadership highly appreciates the united stand adopted by the merchants of Ramallah, who swore in a general meeting attended by 300 merchants not to pay taxes and committed themselves to this in practice. This is an example for all the merchants in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to follow.

- The United National Leadership and the makers of the uprising salute the position of those who resigned from village and municipal councils in compliance with the calls. At the same time, the United National Leadership warns those who have not yet resigned that they expose themselves and their property to danger. In addition, we tell them that the masses of the uprising will clamp down on everybody who deviates from the national consensus and fails to comply with the calls of the uprising.

- The United National Leadership and the masses of the uprising highly appreciate the collective resignations of the tax and customs collectors in the Gaza Strip. The United National Leadership calls upon the workers of the same departments in the West Bank to follow the step taken by their colleagues in the Gaza Strip. The United National Leadership also appreciates the mass resignation of the policemen who abided by the call of the uprising, and demands the rest to resign immediately. The United National Leadership appeals to all of the national and popular committees to continue the establishment of the guarding, protection and general order committees, so as to stop enemy forces from trying to spread an atmosphere of destruction and chaos. The United National Leadership also calls upon local industry to cooperate with the national and popular committees to absorb the policemen and the tax and customs collectors (who have resigned).

- The United National Leadership urges the agricultural engineers and experts and orchard owners to offer support and instruction to farmers, peasants and striking workers, so as to achieve maximum self-sufficiency for confronting the economic pressures exerted by the occupiers. Let us improve and plant the land to meet our needs and to support the besieged areas. Let us all realize that it is the duty of all the masses of the uprising to increase production during our long war. Let us also realize that striking doesn't mean refraining from planting our land.

- The United National Leadership, as it persists in the long and hard struggle to expell the occupation and establish our independent state, calls upon the masses of the uprising to carry out the following activities:

1. Declaration of Monday, April 4th, as a day of total strike, expressing the masses' rejection of the conspiracy of US imperialism's secretary of state, George Schultz. The United National Leadership reasserts the position of the rebelling masses to boycott any meetings with Schultz or any other US envoy.

2. Declaration of Monday-Wednesday, April 4-6th, as days of mass activities by the different committees and the strike forces, to confront Schultz's visit, and to stand in solidarity with those detained and injured, by conducting sit-ins and popular demonstrations.

3. Tuesday, April 5th, is declared a day of national work where all national establishments and factories should function at full capacity. The income from this day should be dedicated to those who have suffered from the uprising, namely, the families of martyrs, wounded and arrested, besieged areas, the workers who have boycotted their jobs in Zionist settlements and establishments, and those who resigned in accordance with the calls of the uprising. The distribution of this income will take effect through the popular committees in every city, village and camp.

4. On the occasion of the International Health Day, April 4th, the United National Leadership greets all the physicians, pharmacists and nurses who have carried out their duties by offering popular care and aid to those injured in the uprising. The United National Leadership calls upon all of those working in this field to provide more medical aid.

5. Declaration of Thursday, the commemoration of Al Qastal battle and of the martyrdom of the Palestinian leader, Abdul Qader al-Huseini, as a day of fierce confrontation against the occupation forces and their cowardly settlers. Let us conduct mass demonstrations in the streets, and transform our camps, villages and cities into strongholds for the revolution and uprising.

6. Declaration of Saturday, April 9th, the commemoration of the first martyrs of the uprising and of the Deir Yassin massacre and of the uprising entering its fifth month, as a day of popular rule. The masses will head towards the martyrs' graves, and sit-ins will be held in municipalities and other establishments. This is a day of vehement anger against the occupiers and their repression. Let us turn the ground into a flaming volcano under their feet.

7. Observing Friday and Sunday, April 8th and 10th, as days of prayer for the souls of the martyrs of the uprising. Let us continue the demonstrations, marches and sit-ins in the mosques and churches.

8. Declaration of Monday, April 11th, as a total strike day where the masses should head towards voluntary work on their land in order to cultivate it, develop the Palestinian countryside and develop home economy.

Oh masses of the uprising, go forward

Stone-throwers, go forward

The uprising shall be victorious!

¹ Sheikh Izz Al Din Al Qassam organized armed cells in Palestine in the 1930s. Although he himself was martyred on November 12th, 1935, in an encounter with the British colonial troops, the armed groups he began are generally recognized as having sparked the 1936-39 Palestinian revolt against the British Mandate and the Zionist invasion.

² Abdul Qader Al Huseini led Palestinians fighting the Zionist forces in the battle at Al Qastal in 1948, and was martyred there.

Civil Disobedience

Civil disobedience is the key element in making the Palestinian uprising a permanent phenomenon which will undercut the basis of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The heroic uprising of the Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip has achieved great victories on the Palestinian, Arab and international levels. Its continuation heralds the possibilities of more victories. The persistence of the uprising has challenged the Israeli occupiers as never before, and has opened a new chapter of the Palestinian struggle. The leadership of the uprising, with maturity and realism, has set forth a number of tactical slogans that lead to the main slogan of this stage, namely freedom and independence. One of the main issues at the present time is developing the uprising into a state of total civil disobedience. Thus, it is vital to understand this concept.

Civil disobedience is a form of popular struggle that can be enacted under certain objective and subjective conditions. Civil disobedience means popular rejection of the prevailing status quo, in this case, the Israeli occupation. Based on refusal to recognize the legality of the occupation, civil disobedience means refusal to deal with the occupation and its institutions. It means refusal to obey its orders. Total civil disobedience is thus equivalent to a total boycott of the occupation, as a step towards abolishing it.

Civil disobedience is, in essence, the backbone of the popular struggle to establish dual power. It is a struggle between the old authority that is unable to control the masses and maintain the status quo, and the newly emerging authority created by the masses in struggle, who are building new political, economic and social structures. Specifically, in the case of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, civil disobedience is a struggle between the authority of the occupation and the authority of the Palestinians led by the PLO and its political wing in the occupied territories, the United National Leadership of the Uprising. Call No. 9, issued on March 2nd, states this clearly:

«To the sons of the independent state,

The United Leadership, the Com-

mand of the PLO, as it greets your struggle, pledges to escalate the struggle with you until the occupation ends, and our state is established under the leadership of the PLO.»

CONDITIONS FOR CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

Six months of continual uprising have clarified without a doubt that the uprising is based on comprehensive mass support and a strong organization. Actually, the current uprising is a qualitative leap achieved as a result of the accumulation of quantitative increments in the Palestinian struggle during the years of occupation. For the uprising to continue and achieve total civil disobedience, certain objective and subjective conditions must prevail. This does not mean that each and every of these conditions must be ripe from the first day; rather civil disobedience is a process. Some of the conditions must be ready from the start, while others will be built in the course of continuing daily struggle.

The foremost prerequisite for civil disobedience in the occupied territories exists: That is the people's total awareness of the oppression and subordination enforced on them by the racist Israeli occupation forces. In addition, the masses must be convinced that challenging and eventually expelling the occupiers is worth all the sacrifices this struggle requires. In reality, this consciousness has existed since the beginning of the 1967 occupation, but this alone is not enough to expell the occupiers. There must be a precise plan for the civil disobedience campaign and organizational structures to sustain it, in order that such a campaign can lead to achieving the masses' goals of expelling the occupiers and building an independent state led by the PLO. Accordingly, the United National Leadership of the Uprising has embarked on a step-by-step plan that will gradually raise the level of struggle to that of total civil disobedience.

Parallel to this, alternative structures

are being created, for this is another condition for civil disobedience. If the masses are to totally boycott the occupation, an alternative administrative apparatus must be built for organizing all aspects of life and leading the people in implementing the United National Leadership's directives. This is the reason for the popular committees and the related special task committees which have sprung up throughout the occupied territories, based on the leadership's directives and the masses' initiative in meeting the contingencies of the uprising and countering the occupation forces' repression. This popular apparatus constitutes the organ of civil disobedience and the means for leading the masses on a daily basis.

A third condition for practicing total civil disobedience is achieving a greater degree of self-sufficiency. Knowing the economic dependency of the West Bank and Gaza Strip on the Israeli economy, both for job opportunities and consumer products, the decision to boycott work in 'Israel' and Israeli goods means that the people must have alternative means of survival. From this stems the calls of the United National Leadership for developing self-sufficiency, refraining from buying unnecessary goods, increasing cultivation of the land, establishing more peasant cooperatives, and increasing local production.

A fourth condition for the success of civil disobedience is related to the position of the PLO. The masses under occupation have demonstrated their unity in struggle, as well as their undivided support to the PLO, and rejection of all attempts to abort or divert their uprising. This must be backed up by consolidation of the PLO's unity and clear rejection of the US and reactionary plans. Until now, the PLO has projected a united stand; although there were minor differences on the issue of a government-in-exile and initially on boycotting Schultz, these have been resolved. The PLO must now make concrete decisions for promoting civil disobedience, and draw up programs for supporting the masses' steadfastness in this situation.

A fifth condition which would enhance civil disobedience is a supportive Arab environment. Since the Zionist state threatens not only the Palestinians, but the entire Arab world, it is the duty of the Arab regimes and masses to support the uprising as the flashpoint of the anti-Zionist struggle in

the region. Arab material and political support could greatly boost the masses' potential for escalating the uprising to a state of total civil disobedience. This support must be based on a position which unequivocally recognizes the PLO as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and their right to statehood. Obviously, such support requires definitive rejection of the Schultz plan and other anti-Palestinian initiatives. A key to creating the needed supportive Arab environment is the newly begun PLO—Syrian reconciliation, and the convening of an Arab summit devoted exclusively to supporting the uprising.

STEPS TOWARDS CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

From the initial period, the uprising has contained the seeds of civil disobedience. This is seen in the workers' strikes and commercial strikes which intermittently merge into days of general strike. The commercial strike has been a constant feature and is now organized to a degree that constitutes a major element in civil disobedience. Total, continuous boycott of work in 'Israel' is a more difficult task due to the large number of families that are dependent on the income this brings. Thus, constant general strike is a process that must be gradually worked up to, in line with the success of the self-sufficiency efforts, the expansion of local production and work opportunities and a Palestinian-administered social security network.

Still, despite the difficulties involved, the days of general strike are on the increase. In March, the United National Leadership called five days of general strike. In April, there were six general strike days. In the first half of May, there were four general strikes. This is in addition to the special Days of Rage when large numbers of Palestinians stay away from work in 'Israel', and a number of workers (estimated at about 40%) who have stayed away since the beginning of the uprising.

By March, major new elements of civil disobedience had been introduced with the United National Leadership's call to the people not to pay taxes, and the mass resignations of tax collectors, the Palestinian police force and the Israeli-appointed village and town councils. All these moves, like the days of general strike, are rehearsals for total civil disobedience.

Concurrently, more and varied mass organizations have been formed, anchored in the popular committees that now exist in all towns, most camps and many villages. The original task-specific committees, related to the popular committees, concentrate on fields related to the immediate needs of sustaining the uprising: medical relief committees, food supply committees, the strike forces and guarding committees. As the uprising has continued, these have become more institutionalized, forming the basis for organizing daily life in all its aspects. They have also been supplemented by committees with new functions.

For example, in Call No.15 issued in late April, the United National Leadership emphasized that workers should form united committees to increase their role in the uprising, and to work for unification of the trade union movement. Palestinians were called on to boycott all work in Zionist settlements in the 1967 occupied territories. Instead, they should concentrate on cultivating the land to enhance self-sufficiency. A total boycott of work in 'Israel' was not called for. Rather the call specified «that the uprising not lose any opportunity for action beyond the green line.»

Call No. 15 also urged the formation of more popular committees, including educational committees, information committees and solidarity committees (for aiding the families of martyrs). The education committees should provide for better organization of the uprising's efforts to break the Zionist policy of enforcing ignorance, following up on previous actions. In Call No. 11, the United National Leadership had designated March 24th as Palestinian Challenge Day, against the Israeli policy of transforming schools into detention centers. Teachers, students and parents staged sit-ins and demonstrations at academic institutions to challenge this attempt to enforce ignorance. In mid-April, in accordance with Call No. 13, there was a day in solidarity with the academic institutions against the occupiers' decision to close them. In early May, Call No. 15 designated a day for breaking the occupiers' decree closing academic institutions, by everyone studying from 9 to 12 noon.

Call No. 15 also directed the popular committees to rename streets and main buildings in their area after the martyrs of the uprising. In Jabalia, the largest

camp in occupied Palestine, this was done on May 12th.

IMPACT OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

Civil disobedience has been chosen as the major form of the uprising at the current stage, because it most directly challenges the Israeli occupiers' ability to rule, while simultaneously creating new popular structures that insure the continuation of the uprising, and lay the basis for realizing its goal: Palestinian statehood. While depriving the occupiers of substantial revenues and making the occupation less profitable, civil disobedience exposes before the world that the Zionist occupation is not only illegal, but also unworkable in the long and short run. The more total the civil disobedience, the more obvious these effects will become. For all these reasons, the Zionist authorities fear the civil disobedience campaign, and have instituted new measures in an attempt to abort it.

In addition to shooting and beating, the Zionist authorities have mounted a broad campaign of economic and administrative measures to undercut the Palestinians' survival means. In the face of the boycott of Israeli products, Zionist soldiers have simply destroyed locally grown vegetable in the markets of the occupied territories, as occurred in Nablus on May 12th. The occupation troops also destroy attempts to provide social services to the masses, as when they attacked the UNRWA social services center in Jabalia camp on May 15th; they tried to tear down the fence around the center and install a watchtower, to be able to control the center.

In a general attack, the occupation troops are trying to collect taxes by force, using various measures such as revoking drivers and other licenses which are only returned on payment of back taxes. This has so far been most systematic in the occupied Gaza Strip where the identification cards of thousands of residents have been revoked. In mid-May, the Israeli authorities declared that all Gazans will have to obtain new ID cards. Besides trying to involve people in waiting in offices all day to get a new card, this is a method for forcing tax payment, exercising social and political control, making arrests, etc. Each new measure, however, elicits a new Palestinian response. A campaign is being mounted to refuse the new cards.

Other prongs of this repressive campaign are cutting the water and electricity supply to many camps, imposing food blockades, and trying to force merchants to reopen their shops at the time designated.

Despite mounting repression, the momentum towards total civil disobedience remains unbroken. This was obvious in Call No. 15 which gave a final warning to those policemen and village and town councillors who have yet to resign. In this call, the United National Leadership said that the moves so far against those who defy the will of the uprising are only warnings. There are more severe actions to come. ●



Friday demonstration at the mosque

Eyewitness Report

Phyllis Bennis, Middle East correspondent for the progressive US biweekly, *Frontline*, visited occupied Palestine in the first week of April. Below we record some of her observations about the uprising, concentrating on two topics: the role of women and self-sufficiency.

My strongest impression after a fairly short visit to Palestine is that the uprising has changed things in a way that nothing since 1948, has done...

The role of women in the uprising has been extraordinary to see. Women were leading the demonstration from Al Aqsa mosque when I finally got to see it from the Temple Mount. They were the ones chanting and carrying the Palestinian flags. The young men are more vulnerable to immediate arrest and beating, though it should be noted that as of this last week, the first women administrative detainees have been taken. There are about a dozen, and they are anticipating more.

Women have played an extraordinary role in several ways. One is that in the actual confrontations with soldiers in the demonstrations, women have consistently played a leading role - organizing, mobilizing and participating. Second, and in a certain way more important, the women's committees which

existed before have grown in the course of the political mobilization brought about by the uprising. These committees have been a key part in institutionalizing the uprising. They play a major role in organizing the popular committees, the medical relief committees, child-care cooperatives, production cooperatives, etc.

In the village of Deir Amar in the West Bank, there is a women's cooperative which we visited. It now employs 19 women in preserving food - pickles, hot peppers, egg plant, etc. It serves as a major source of employment for women in the village. It provides a major market for crops which would ordinarily not be able to get to market, especially now. Part of the Israeli economic strategy in the territories is to prevent the land from being cultivated and preventing people from making a living from agriculture; part of that means not allowing produce to be trucked from town to town or village to village.

Women's demonstration, Beit Sahour





By purchasing the produce directly from the local farmers, the cooperative allows these products to be used. When providing employment and playing a major role in dealing with the social integration of women into the production process, into the work force, and taking on the questions of women's oppression that exist within Palestinian society in the context of challenging the occupation.

It's very exciting to see how the women are responding and how they are leading this struggle. Of course, there are different women's organizations with different views of the role they play. But there is a very high degree of unity on the importance of integrating the social needs of the women's movement (kindergartens, child-care centers, literacy classes, etc.) with confronting the occupation. So the political and social character of the women's work have become very integrated. That is a very exciting development.

Another example of women's participation, and of cooperative and committee work is the community project in Jerusalem's Old City, that has been going on for the last year. It began as a means of developing collective protection for people living in the Old City who were faced with massive settler encroachment. The area abuts the quarter that Jewish settlers are renovating. There was a serious problem of settlers buying up the top apartments in a bunch of buildings and physically attacking the Palestinians living below them with rocks, fire bombs, molotov cocktails, etc. The project began as a sort of community guard duty and protection group, but has since expanded into a much broader committee to take on community development. What they have done is to buy a couple of abandoned buildings. They have built a very big, modern clinic. They are opening a dental clinic in the next few months as soon as they get the money for the equipment. They have a full-time staff of doctors, nurses and a pharmacist. They are now working on a community center with a library, a meeting hall, a lecture room. Women are very much in the forefront of this committee.

THE INSTITUTIONALIZED CHARACTER OF THE UPRISING

The institutionalized, organized character of the uprising is deeper than ever. For example, the question of self-sufficiency, which has been part of the call of the leadership, has resulted in a massive move towards community gardens. In Ramallah, we saw everybody digging gardens. Of course, part of this is symbolic, but everywhere there are huge plots where people are picking up the stones, clearing the land, digging it up and planting tomatoes and cucumbers and potatoes. In

small gardens in apartment buildings, gardens are shooting up. There are gardens everywhere now. It is springtime - the spring of the uprising and everyone is growing things.

I think the leadership has a mature understanding of the boycott issue, so the call is to boycott Israeli goods when there is a national product available to substitute for it. No one is saying, «Don't use medicines made in Israel,» if the medicine is needed. It is not that kind of ultraleft moralism. That's one thing that has been very impressive. There is no hint of moralism - it is very political, very grounded. The various calls are rooted not in moralism or eliciting guilt, but on the basis of what can be accomplished by doing or not doing various things.

The few, small-scale Palestinian factories that exist in the territories are trying to expand their production to 24-hour shifts, to hire more people and produce more so there will be more products to compete with the Israeli products... meanwhile providing employment.

Looking at the next stage which is likely to be an increase of the civil disobedience - opting out of the occupation administration, there are some very interesting examples of popular organization. For example, the medical relief committee is rooted in the medical association that existed in all the towns and villages before the uprising. With the uprising, there was more need for emergency services as the result of the widespread casualties. Then later, the health effects began to be felt in the camps in particular when curfews were imposed for long periods of time; kids were getting sick from bad water; there was lots of diarrhea; people got skin diseases because there was not enough water for washing, etc. The medical resources were stretched pretty thin. Many new people, paramedics, had to be trained to take responsibility. We met a second-year nursing student, who was in training at Al Ali hospital in Gaza city (private hospital), who lives in Khan Younis with his family. He described his work in Khan Younis during a six-day curfew, when a number of people had been shot. He had to do minor surgery. Though a second-year nursing student, he was the best equipped there to do the job, and he did it.

Responding to the needs creates a stronger bond between the medical personnel and the community; it strengthens their sense of responsibility. A doctor we met in Ramallah was describing the phenomenon of a number of doctors who ordinarily work in clinics in Jerusalem and just come home for weekends, who now suddenly feel that they have a responsibility to stay in their home town or village, because that is where they are needed. So the uprising has a cyclical effect where more people take responsibility to build these committees to ensure that the work gets done. In the process, they develop a stronger commitment to their people; they consolidate their own political role in the uprising.

On the local level, food distribution is handled by the popular committees during curfews, to insure everyone gets a fair share of what is available. In the cities it is not the same. There is what appears to be a self-imposed tax on the factories that are trying to expand, stay open longer, hire more workers and lower their prices, because they will still be making a profit, presumably a higher one with the expansion. They are expected to pay a tax to the uprising, matching the call for them to stop paying Israeli taxes. Those exempted from the commercial strike - the bakeries, pharmacies and taxi drivers - are also expected to pay a tax to the uprising. I think this is fairly informal now but how it develops is of course an internal matter for the Palestinians to determine

The Uprising's Effects on the Israeli Economy

The heroic uprising of the Palestinian masses that erupted on December 9, 1987, and which is now entering its sixth month, has undoubtedly opened a new chapter in the Palestinian struggle against Israeli occupation. In addition to the political success of the uprising in moving towards civil disobedience, the masses have waged another very daring war against the Israeli occupation forces in accordance with the guidelines of the United National Leadership of the Uprising. This other war is the economic battle. In mid-May, Israeli Economy Minister Gad Yacobi announced that the uprising had already cost 'Israel' at least \$650 million.

To realize the full effects of the uprising on the Israeli economy, one should trace the course of the 21-year old occupation and the benefits gained by the Israeli economy through subordinating the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and holding back their development to achieve the Zionist dream of «A land without a people for a people without a land.»

Israeli control of the West Bank and Gaza Strip has definite colonialist characteristics.

The trade balance between the occupied territories and 'Israel' reveals this colonialist relationship. For the period of 1984/85, the occupied territories exported \$100 million worth of goods to 'Israel' while importing \$363 million from 'Israel'. Fifty-five percent of the occupied territories' exports were to 'Israel' while 90% of their imports were from 'Israel'. On the other hand, 10.6% of Israeli exports were to the occupied territories. However, Dr. Hisham Ortani of Najah University in Nablus, points out that this percentage reaches 25% if Israeli military exports are excluded. Thus, the West Bank and Gaza Strip are the second largest importer of Israeli goods, after the United States.

EFFECTS OF THE UPRISING

It is difficult to get exact figures on the damage done to the Israeli economy by the uprising. One, the Israelis are very secretive about revealing statistics on this subject, because they want to avoid damaging their reputation with their international trading partners. Two, the real effects of the uprising are of a long-term nature which cannot be immediately assessed in numbers. This is because the uprising challenges the continuation of the occupation itself, by having raised the slogan of «freedom and independence.» Never-

theless, symptoms of recession have been discernable since the beginning of the uprising. These symptoms can be summarized in four categories:

1. Palestinian workers from the occupied territories boycotting their jobs in Israeli establishments, and resulting losses to Israeli enterprise.
2. Reduction of consumption in the occupied territories, and hence a decline in sale and production of Israeli goods.
3. Increase in military expenditures at the expense of other productive sectors.
4. International economic pressure on 'Israel' due to its vicious repression of the popular uprising.

1. PALESTINIAN WORKERS' BOYCOTT

According to Moshe Ketsav, the Israeli labor minister, 105,000 Palestinians from the occupied territories work in 'Israel' - 51,000 in construction; 8,000 in agriculture; 20,000 in industry; 26,000 in general services and 20,000 in unspecified sectors. Palestinians from the occupied territories constitute 7-10% of the labor force in 'Israel'. This might give the initial impression that the absence of these workers would not create any problems for the Israeli economy, but in fact the opposite is true. In mid-January, the Israeli newspaper *Yediot Aharnot* reported that the absence of Gaza workers from 28 Israeli factories alone had cost employers \$40-50 million; and this is only a partial, provisional figure.

There are structural reasons why the absence of Palestinian workers from the occupied territories has a particular impact on the Israeli economy. The Palestinian labor force from the territories is concentrated in unskilled, low paid sectors where Israeli Jewish workers avoid to work. In an article in

the Israeli daily *Haaretz*, January 22nd, Jonathan Sherman says, «For years, a strata of jobs has been established where the majority (of workers) are from the occupied territories. Their abstention from working would create a problem, because the Israeli economy has not created a substitute labor force that would be able to fill their jobs. Although this will not threaten economic stability, a cut in 100,000 jobs at the base of the economic pyramid has to shake the pyramid to some degree.» According to Economy Minister Gad Yacobi, there was a 10-20% monthly drop in overall production, especially in the construction field, during the last three months. This resulted in a loss of at least \$75million (Associated Press, March 24th).

Knowing that a Palestinian worker earns 30% of an Israeli Jewish worker's wage, the abstention of Palestinians from work in Israeli establishments reduces the savings that 'Israel' accumulates from wage differentials. In the period 1968-85, 'Israel' saved over \$3 billion due to the difference in wages paid to Palestinian and Jewish workers. In addition, 'Israel' saved \$7.5 billion in the same period, in the benefits and insurance that Palestinian workers don't receive, but which would have been paid to Jewish workers. A special report prepared by the Israeli Department of Labor Services, and published March 3rd, indicated that 30-40% of Palestinian workers from the occupied territories were boycotting their jobs in 'Israel'.

2. SALES AND PRODUCTION

Israeli factories that depend on the occupied territories for disposing of their products are suffering huge losses due to the Palestinian boycott of their products. For instance, food-

processing and textile factories have suffered a 10-25% decline in sales due to the uprising. In Jerusalem alone, in March, there was a 97% decline in the sale of dresses and shoes. Israeli Economy Minister Gad Yacobi has said that the Israeli losses in trade with the occupied territories, due to the uprising, were \$200 million in the first three months of the uprising. This figure can be compared to the value of last year's Israeli exports to the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which totalled \$1.5 billion (Associated Press, March 24th). The Israeli agricultural products export company suffered losses amounting to \$600,000 from the beginning of the uprising until early March.

The manager of Shnova dairy company in Tel Aviv, Menachem Reintes, has stated that their sales decreased by 15% in Nablus and Tulkarem, and by 5% in Qalqilia. Mel'oot food company in the Western Galilee is suffering huge losses due to the trade boycott by West Bank and Gaza merchants, estimated at thousands of shekels monthly. The Meloram Company is unable to dispose of half of its production and is looking into laying off 20% of its employees, which would affect Jewish employees too. The United Textile Company has decided to stop production at its Peta Tikva branch because of the Palestinian workers' strikes. The decline in the textile sector is estimated at 30% and some agents are taking the distinctly Israeli labels off clothing so that it can be sold in the occupied territories. A study by the Israeli industrialists' federation showed that 51% of Israeli factories have reduced their production by 20% due to the Palestinian boycott.

3. MILITARY EXPENDITURES

Israeli military expenditures have increased vastly since the beginning of the uprising. Currently there are more than 3,000 Israeli policemen, 2,000 border guards and 110,000 soldiers in the occupied territories. 'Israel' has moreover had the expense of building six new detention centers in occupied Palestine, in addition to transforming more than twenty schools in the occupied territories into detention centers and army barracks. The Defense Ministry has stated that the military budget was 30 million shekels short because of the uprising. According to *Yediot Aharanot*, equipment needed by each soldier for dispersing

demonstrators costs \$552. Israeli Minister of Economy Yacobi stated that the cost of extra security by police and security forces was \$60 million (Associated Press, March 24th). As early as late February, estimates appeared in the international press that the Zionist state had so far used \$330 million in its attempt to put down the Palestinian uprising.

4. INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE

Overseas trade is an essential factor in the Israeli economy because of the Arab boycott, except for Egypt, of Israeli products. Thus far, Israeli acts of terror aimed at quelling the Palestinian uprising have drawn international condemnation as was expressed in UN resolutions 605, 607 and 608. This international outcry has to some extent been reflected in economic pressure that we hope will increase to stop the Israeli crimes against humanity.

The European Economic Community decided to delay approval of a contract that would enable 'Israel' to trade \$3 billion worth of goods in these countries annually. In Denmark, consumers boycotted Israeli agricultural products. In late February, the biggest Danish supermarket chain decided to stop importing Israeli fruits and vegetables after sale of these products dropped by 30%. A spokesperson for Irma supermarkets said, «Danes simply don't want to buy Israeli goods under present circumstances» (*International Herald Tribune*, March 1st).

MORE ISRAELI LOSSES

In addition to calling on the Palestinian masses to boycott Israeli goods and work in Israeli enterprises as much as possible, the United National Leadership of the Uprising has called for refusal to pay taxes. A member of the Knesset from the Citizens Rights Movement estimated the losses incurred by the Israeli treasury as follows: 20 million shekels in tax deductions from the wages of Palestinian workers boycotting their jobs, 40 million in direct taxes, and 9 million in value added tax. On May 2nd, Israeli radio reported a decline in taxes collected from import and export duties in the month of April.

Tourism is also beginning to be affected by the uprising. The attendance at Easter festivities in Jerusalem was only half that of last year, as reported

on Israeli radio April 3rd. In April, there was a 35% drop in tourism as compared with April 1987 (*Radio Israel*, May 6th).

The popular uprising in the occupied territories has planted the seeds of economic confrontation with 'Israel'. It has created new subjective factors in the Palestinian population to sustain the continuation of the struggle to enact total civil disobedience, which heralds more economic repercussions for the Zionist state. Among the subjective factors created by the uprising are: First, the uprising has mobilized all the masses under the banner of fighting the occupation; workers, students, merchants, peasants and civil employees have been united in a unique determination to end the occupation and its exploitation of the Palestinian land and people. Second, the uprising has motivated an increase in local production in the occupied territories, which will enable the Palestinian population under occupation to be more self-reliant. Call no.9 emphasized the need for operating local factories at full capacity and hiring Palestinians who are boycotting their jobs in 'Israel'. Third, the uprising has urged the people to abstain from buying Israeli goods whenever possible and to turn to locally produced substitutes. The people have also been urged to reduce their consumption to essentials, so as to continue the boycott of Israeli products. Fourth, the uprising has created a stronger sense of economic cooperation among the people. For example, merchants have abstained from raising prices, despite the economic pressure they experience, so as not to increase the burden on the people. Landlords have not demanded rent from their tenants since the beginning of the uprising. Fifth, the uprising has motivated the population at large to cultivate their land and plant vegetables, etc., to achieve self-sufficiency.

As the uprising enters its sixth month, the ongoing struggle attests to the maturity of the United National Leadership and the popular committees. While the continuation of the uprising signals added economic damage to the Israeli economy, it is at the same time in the process of building the basis for an independent Palestinian state, through the campaign for civil disobedience and economic self-sufficiency. ●

Armed Struggle and the Uprising

Interview with Comrade Abu Ahmed Fuad

What can the revolution outside Palestine learn from the uprising?

The Palestinian people's heroic uprising came as a result of the accumulation of militant sacrifices, beginning when the first Zionists arrived in Palestine. The uprising is a qualitative product of this long militant experience. It is the result of the experience gained by the Palestinian revolutionary forces, whether in the armed struggle cells in Palestine or through military operations across the border to Palestine. In addition, the uprising is the product of other forms of struggle developed by the revolutionary leadership inside occupied Palestine. This leadership has set work programs aimed at fusing all the potentials of the masses to confront the occupation, using different means relevant to the nature of each stage and particular political situation. The organization of the PFLP inside the occupied homeland played an important role in organizing the masses in different social, trade union and cultural organizations which have become the base and initiator of the uprising. These have made it possible for the uprising to continue and develop.

This experience is full of lessons in struggle that could be used on a daily basis. This causes us to face up to these lessons and the importance of their influencing the structure of the PLO and all the contingents of the Palestinian revolution. The most important lessons to be learned by every leader and cadre of the Palestinian revolution are as follows:

One: The united national front (national unity). One of the main reasons for the continuation of the uprising in occupied Palestine is that real unity has been practiced, based on a clear and militant political line. This line was shared by all the Palestinian organizations and by all sectors of the population in the occupied territories. Therefore, what is happening in terms of a united leadership and plan is the basic factor in escalating the uprising. This lesson must be absorbed by all **Palestinian organizations. This should motivate all Palestinian organizations to consolidate national unity on the political and organizational levels, and in terms of daily conduct. This would raise the level of the participation of the Palestinian masses in exile. It would also lead to developing the activities of the PLO's institutions, politically and militarily.**

Two: The importance of eliminating all forms of corruption that have penetrated the ranks of the contingents of the revolution, especially the PLO institutions. The PFLP has submitted its point of view on this question more than once, particularly in the PNC and in the Executive Committee. Till now, the minimal democratic reforms called for by the democratic forces have not been made. In our opinion, this is an important subject which demands priority and continuous struggle within the framework of the PLO.

Three: The importance of collective work and adherence to the decisions of national consensus and of the PLO's central

bodies; the importance of ridding ourselves of the diseases of one-party domination and organizational sectarianism.

What are the possibilities of elevating the military aspect of the uprising - introducing more advanced weapons and methods?

No popular uprising against occupation can accomplish all of the people's aims (freedom and independence), unless it develops towards civil disobedience and then becomes an armed popular revolution. The experience of the peoples all over the world, like the experience of the Palestinian people, shows that occupiers will not withdraw one inch without being forced to do so. Therefore, we in the PFLP and in the PLO military institutions are studying how to move to the stage of using arms. We are working to facilitate the conditions needed to extend the armed revolution inside the occupied territories. We have accomplished positive steps in this direction, and the effects of this will be felt in the near future. We will use this method at the appropriate time and place, in accordance with our military plan.

How can the revolution outside Palestine support the uprising inside? What is being done to this end in military terms?

First I would like to point out that there is a clear deficiency in military activity against the Zionist enemy from across the borders, on the part of all Palestinian contingents. Therefore, I think that it is necessary for the contingents of the Palestinian revolution to increase their military activity to be proportionate to this glorious uprising of our people in occupied Palestine. This would impact positively on the morale of the Palestinian people. Conversely, it would impact negatively on the morale of the Zionist troops who would be forced into confrontations on several fronts, confusing them and making them spread their resources and manpower. True, some organizations have carried out high-quality operations. The PFLP has carried out several operations against the Zionist enemy in occupied Palestine. However, the human and material resources available to the Palestinian revolution outside allow for the development and escalation of activities. This applies despite all the well-known barriers and difficulties that confront the movement of the combatants, whether in South Lebanon, or in Jordan where the Jordanian puppet regime's forces serve as a security belt for the Zionist enemy, or in Egypt where the Camp David regime plays the same role.

Therefore, it is incumbent on the PLO's Supreme Military Council to intensify its work and draw up a detailed plan for uniting the military potentials of the Palestinian resistance, and providing the prerequisites for more military operations against the Zionist enemy. All Palestinian organizations, and specifically their military leaderships, must expend all efforts

to develop the military activities against the Zionist enemy on all fronts and across all the borders adjacent to Palestine.

How do you view the inter-Palestinian fighting between the forces of Yasir Arafat and Abu Musa, that erupted in the Beirut camps in May?

Inter-Palestinian fighting is a crime and those who start it are criminals. The PFLP considers that any use of weapons to resolve internal contradictions weakens national unity, serves enemy aims and weakens the trust of the masses in the revolution and its leadership. In the light of our understanding of this danger, the PFLP defined a scientific revolutionary understanding of this issue, which can be summarized as follows:

1. Condemnation of infighting and declaring those who call for or start such fighting as criminals.
2. Freedom of political affiliation within the national camp for all Palestinians.
3. Solving all differences, whether within one organization or between different organizations, through democratic dialogue.
4. The right of every organization to conduct political and ideological work among the masses.

The recent inter-Palestinian fighting in the camps of Beirut was a stab in the back to the uprising in occupied Palestine.

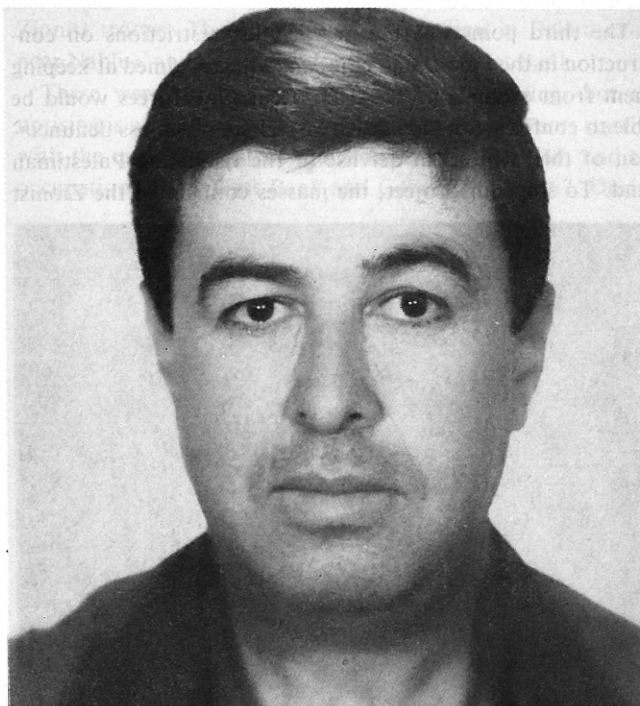
This infighting became the number one news item, relegating the news of the uprising to second or third place on the Arab and international levels. It caused the dispersion of the energies of the Palestinian contingents, and preoccupied most of the leadership with resolving this problem at the expense of efforts to support and develop the uprising.

The PFLP played a prominent role in stopping this tragedy and bloodshed by participating in the central follow-up committee and in the branch committees established by the Palestinian resistance to enforce the agreement concluded in the joint Palestinian-Lebanese nationalist meeting of May 9th.

Stopping the inter-Palestinian fighting is not enough; it must be permanently banned. We will push for having the Palestinian masses play a greater role in forbidding such fighting. We will submit ideas that aim at educating all the fighters against such infighting, so that every fighter will know why he carries arms and against whom he should use them. All should reach the conclusion that using arms against other nationalists or the masses is tabu. I cannot say that we have reached a final solution between the two sides to this fighting, but we were able to defuse the situation at least for the time being, as the first step to enforcing a permanent solution to this problem through the central bodies of the Palestinian organizations and the PLO. (Editor's note: After this interview was made, inter-Palestinian fighting unfortunately broke out once more in the Beirut camps on June 9th).

A Deportee Speaks of the Uprising

In late May, *Democratic Palestine* had the opportunity to interview Beshir Khairi, one of four Palestinians deported by the Zionist authorities in January. Most of the interview deals with the uprising, but we asked Beshir to begin by telling his own story:



I was born in Ramleh in 1942. My family, together with many other Palestinian families, was expelled from Ramleh after the 1948 defeat. First we moved to Ramallah where we stayed for 5 months. Afterwards, we moved to Gaza city where we lived until 1957. We lived through the 1956 Israeli occupation of the Gaza Strip, which lasted 4 months and 3 days. During this period, I finished elementary school and the first year of high school. In 1957, we moved back to the West Bank and lived in Ramallah, and I finished high school in Jerusalem. In 1964, I graduated from the law school at Cairo University. We were in Ramallah during the 1967 catastrophe. We witnessed, as did all other Palestinians, a war where the balance of power was in favor of the enemy. We can't call it a war really as much as a scenario where one side advances while the other side escapes as fast as possible.

Forced migration, living in poverty in the camps, and Zionist oppression were the first seeds for the growth of my national consciousness. I started to feel that we have the right, as do all other people in the world, to have a country, flag and national anthem. Why are we deprived of these basic rights that all other people enjoy? I, being a citizen of a divided country loved my land. After the West Bank was occupied, I saw that even this small part, which isn't more than one-third of Palestine, was exposed to Zionist terror. At that time I found that it is

important to work for our cause. This was the start of my commitment to my country and people, to fighting the occupation. My engagement in the national struggle led the occupation authorities to arrest me several times. I was first arrested on September 17, 1967, and detained for a hundred days. I was arrested again on February 26, 1969, and jailed for 15 years. Then I was put under administrative detention in January 1987, for 5 months, and arrested once more on December 27, 1987, then deported on January 13, 1988.

In fact, what one can conclude after the years of occupation is that there is no possibility for coexistence between us, the Palestinian people and liberation movement, and the Zionist entity. The conflict is one of existence, not borders. Being a lawyer, I joined the majority of Palestinian lawyers in boycotting the Zionist courts after the 1967 occupation. Our boycott had many reasons, chiefly denouncing the occupation, the annexation of East Jerusalem and forming what they called «unified Jerusalem,» the transfer of the appeal court from its headquarters in Jerusalem to Ramallah, the alteration of laws by implementing Zionist military laws and a number of other illegal acts. We considered that all of these acts violate the 4th Geneva Convention of 1949. The Palestinian lawyers' strike continued until my deportation in 1988. There are still about 350 Palestinian lawyers who do not appear before Zionist courts.

I was deported after my arrest on December 27, 1987, under brutal conditions. They raided and searched my house. They took me outside and searched me. Afterwards they chained my hands and feet, covered my eyes and put me in a truck. I was taken to the military command center. There I saw a line of the Zionist army's executioners waiting for me. They started hitting, kicking and swearing at me. After about six hours of this savage torture, they transferred me to Atlit military prison. This prison could easily be equated with a death camp. Every day from 4 or 5 o'clock in the morning until 12 midnight, we were under constant torture. Living conditions were so bad that even animals wouldn't be able to survive. After 6 days I was transferred to Jnaid prison in Nablus, together with other nationalist prisoners, such as Husam Khadr, Jebriel Rojub and Jamal Jbara. There an officer came to us, presenting himself as the representative of the general commander in the West Bank. He read an order to deport us from Palestine, and demanded that we sign it. Of course, we refused. We all considered this order as a death sentence. He said that we could appear before a military consultative committee which would look into this order and approve it.

We contacted a number of lawyers, and after three days a team of lawyers came to defend us. Initially, we appeared before the court. The accusations consisted of two parts, stated and secret. The stated part didn't contain any accusation, but was rather a document of occurrences: that I was arrested in 1967; imprisoned in 1969 for 15 years and administratively detained for 5 months; that in 1970, the PFLP had demanded my release, along with others, when highjacking planes that had Zionists among the passengers. They considered this also as an accusation against me. They also said that in 1986 I was under town arrest, but I proved that they were lying. They also said that I was called to the military governor's office in Ramallah, and warned to stop my political activities. All this was false also. The rest of the file was secret, and they refused to reveal any part of it to me or the lawyers. I demanded that either they reveal the secret file, and if there were any accusations, I be

tried; or I would refuse to give them the honor of trying me, or of appearing before this military committee which doesn't have any power but certifying the decisions of the higher bodies. After they refused to reveal the secret file, I dismissed the 'defense lawyers' team and said that the committee had no legal basis and I wouldn't recognize it or its decisions. I assured them that we would come back to our land, either by hang-gliders or other operations. I had the opportunity to appeal, but I refused it, since I consider the Zionist court illegal and based on an illegal authority. I was not ready to give it legality by appearing.

What were the events that led up to the uprising?

The uprising was a result of a series of preceding events which can be summed up under one title, namely, the Zionist conspiracy against our people and the PLO. I want to name a few of these developments. One was the Zionist aggression against Islamic and Christian holy places under the pretext of searching for ancient Hebrew remains. The real reason was to empty Jerusalem in particular of its Arab inhabitants. In the process of searching for these remains, tools were used whose vibration cracked the surrounding buildings, especially in the Old City in Jerusalem. Thus, the real inhabitants of the area would be forced to evacuate, leaving it empty for the hoards of settlers to move in. Our people reacted sharply and started to confront these diggings in great numbers.

Another development concerned the appointed municipal councils. Before, there were elected mayors who represented the line of the PLO. The Zionist forces resorted to eliminating them and appointing collaborator-types to these posts. There was of course a political meaning behind such actions. The Zionists aimed at liquidating the pro-PLO trend and building an alternative in the occupied territories, so that they could use these people in conspiratorial projects in the future. Our people confronted this by mass demonstrations, particularly in the spring of 1982, when 23 Palestinians were martyred, hundreds injured and hundreds more arrested.

The third point was the new Zionist restrictions on construction in the Palestinian cities and villages aimed at keeping them from expanding. Thus the occupation forces would be able to confiscate the unused areas. There was mass denunciation of this project, in defense of the remaining Palestinian land. To stop this project, the masses confronted the Zionist



forces and the engineering companies which tried to apply this project.

Fourth, the Jerusalem Electric Company's license was going to expire by the end of 1986. The Zionist regional electricity company wanted to take over its concession and reduce the areas that were served by the Jerusalem Electric Company. This is also a political question about who has authority, the Zionists or the Palestinians, or even the previous authority of the Jordanian regime. The Palestinians refused to let the Jerusalem Electric Company's concession be confiscated or limited. This led to clashes between the workers of the company and the Zionist authorities, which expanded to include the Palestinian masses in more than one place.

These were a number of developments that set the stage for the uprising. Added to them are a number of other actions, such as land confiscation and tax collection. Fifty-four percent of West Bank and Gaza Strip land has been confiscated. The amount of taxes imposed on the people is unbelievable. The Palestinians had to pay more in taxes than the Zionists used during their 1982 invasion of Lebanon. The Palestinian began to feel that all of his work went towards paying for the occupation. He is not able to secure his land or even his life. For instance, the Palestinian started to plant the land he inherited from his father and grandfather, and the next day a gang of settlers would enter his land and take it from him. In this situation, where a person is deprived of basic necessities as well as values and heritage, it becomes essential to confront the occupation.

Here, some specific events that lead to the outbreak of the uprising in the Gaza Strip come to my mind. Prior to the uprising a number of Palestinian nationalists managed to escape from the Nafha and Gaza prisons. They clashed with the Zionist army and four of them were martyred. Two days after this, an Israeli truck intentionally hit two Palestinian cars at Arez barricade. Four of the Palestinian passengers were killed and six wounded. The residents of Jabalia camp protested this murder, and a number of Palestinians were killed by Zionist troops. There was a strong reaction in Balata camp near Nablus, and the uprising spread to the West Bank.

These were the events that ignited the uprising, but the uprising is a result of the accumulation of many events starting with the establishment of the Zionist entity in 1948, and the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967. During



these years, there were a number of Palestinian uprisings. The current uprising is qualitatively unique in terms of its organization, expanse, the participation of all of the masses, the readiness of our people to sacrifice and the methods used to confront the occupiers.

How has the uprising managed to continue despite unprecedented Zionist repression?

The uprising is an objective answer to the occupation and its acts. The masses had reached a point where they could take no more. The main Palestinian organizations, their affiliated mass organizations and their cohesion with the masses, created through experience the popular committees, strike forces, aid committees, family solidarity committees, etc. These committees constitute the backbone of the uprising. These are the factors for insuring the continuation of the uprising and the steadfastness of the masses, and for increasing the intensity of the uprising. The uprising will continue so long as the reasons for it are there. The masses, of all sectors and ages, started to participate in one way or another in confronting the Zionist violence. The masses are strongly unified under a conscious leadership in terms of organization, slogans and achievements.

In fact, the uprising wasn't a random event. On the contrary, the masses continue the uprising in accordance with the decisions taken by the United National Leadership which is strong and closely related to the overall leader of the Palestinian people, the PLO. By the slogans they raise, the masses everyday assert that their leadership is the PLO. The PLO is not only the political expression of the aspirations of the Palestinian people. It is the daily practical leadership of the masses in the occupied territories. It is the spiritual homeland of our people. There is a strong coordination between the creative leadership of the United National Leadership in the occupied territories and its leader, the PLO.

What led the Islamic forces to be so active in this uprising in the Gaza Strip?

For the first time in the history of the religious trend in the occupied territories, an Islamic organization, the Jihad, deviates from that trend and works within the nationalist framework, under the leadership of the United National Leadership and therefore the PLO. The Islamic Jihad is respected by all the other Palestinian nationalist organizations and by the Palestinian masses, for its role in the uprising. The Jihad participates on equal basis with the other organizations under the nationalist program and the banner of the PLO. The Islamic Jihad participates in the United National Leadership in Gaza; its followers participate actively in the nationalist activities in the West Bank as well.

Islamic Jihad is the most aware organization within the Islamic trend. They have reached the conclusion that the occupation threatens all the Palestinians. The occupation doesn't distinguish between Muslims, Marxists and nationalists. After reaching this conclusion, Islamic Jihad saw it essential to engage in the resistance, at least to defend themselves. The Zionist occupation forces have committed many acts of terror against the Islamic holy places and leaders in Palestine. About two months ago, the Mufti of Jerusalem, the highest Islamic

post in the occupied territories, was beaten by the occupation forces as he was stepping out of Al Aqsa mosque. Everyday gas bombs are thrown and shots are fired in the holy places. Almost everyday, the Zionist troops enter mosques to intimidate worshipers and suppress sit-ins. This should make all other Islamic trends face up to their nationalist conscience and follow the path of Islamic Jihad by deciding to participate in the uprising. It is sorrowful that the other religious organizations haven't taken such a decision yet, although their honest members have joined the uprising in practice.

What developments have you observed in the uprising since its beginning?

Actually, the uprising is a qualitatively new school within the realm of Palestinian struggle. While studying the school of the uprising, one could remember other great lessons from history: the Paris Commune, the Russian revolution of 1905, the Palestinian-Lebanese national coalition that expelled the Zionists from Lebanon... Also this uprising is a new school. The Palestinian masses are confronting the Zionist expansionist entity with their determination, with stones and the slogan of freedom.

During the first month of the uprising, before I was deported, I witnessed the great revolutionary capacity among the masses. I personally couldn't imagine that the masses would rise up this fast, under such a strong organization and with such precision and readiness to sacrifice. Daily, the uprising has been able to intensify and develop new methods of resistance. The gradual development in the relationship of the merchant to the consumer, the landlord to the tenant, and the process of developing home economy are all building the basis to assure the continuation of the uprising. Now we see the creation of dual power: the authority of the Palestinian masses and the authority of the occupation forces. The authority that is on the daily offensive now is the authority of the masses. On the other hand, the authority of the occupation is retreating.

I have had the opportunity to meet with some of the people who were deported from Palestine after I was. They started to talk about the unbelievable increase in the morale, consciousness, cooperation and sense of solidarity among the people. For instance, when the aid committees go to distribute food, milk and medicine to some families, the reply is: «We have supplies, go and give to other people.» When there is a siege on a village, the surrounding villages rise in support and offer whatever they have to save it.

There are basic prerequisites to insure achieving victory, i.e., organization, mass support and the realistic outlook of the leadership. One might think that the continuation of certain points of action in the calls issued by the United National Leadership, such as demonstrations, rallies, planting the land, medical aid, etc, are merely repetitions. In fact, the process of repetition means rooting the authority of the masses more deeply. The uprising is going in the right direction and is expanding the scope of its authority each day. When the United National Leadership calls for a rally, everybody runs to join.

Our people, by achieving national unity, by learning from many international experiences, by being steadfast in Sabra and Shatila for 3 years, have created the children of stones in

the occupied territories. In the womb of all of the miseries that our people have faced grew this great uprising.

How have the so-called Palestinian moderates reacted to the uprising?

You are surely referring to people like Shawwa, Freij, Siniora, Abu Rahmeh and Neseiba (respectively mayor of Gaza, mayor of Bethlehem, editor of *Al Fajr*, Gaza lawyer, professor at Bir Zeit University - all of whom have been named as possible 'acceptable' negotiating partners rather than the PLO - editor's note). These people are parasites who want to harvest the fruits of the uprising. This trend intends to divert the uprising from its nationalist aims. These people changed their position from one extreme to the other. Previously, they thought that the PLO doesn't represent the Palestinian people. Since the uprising, they moved to a position of considering the PLO the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Previously, they considered the masses who are making the uprising as a bunch of troublemakers. Now they speak of the uprising as a revolutionary way to implement changes.

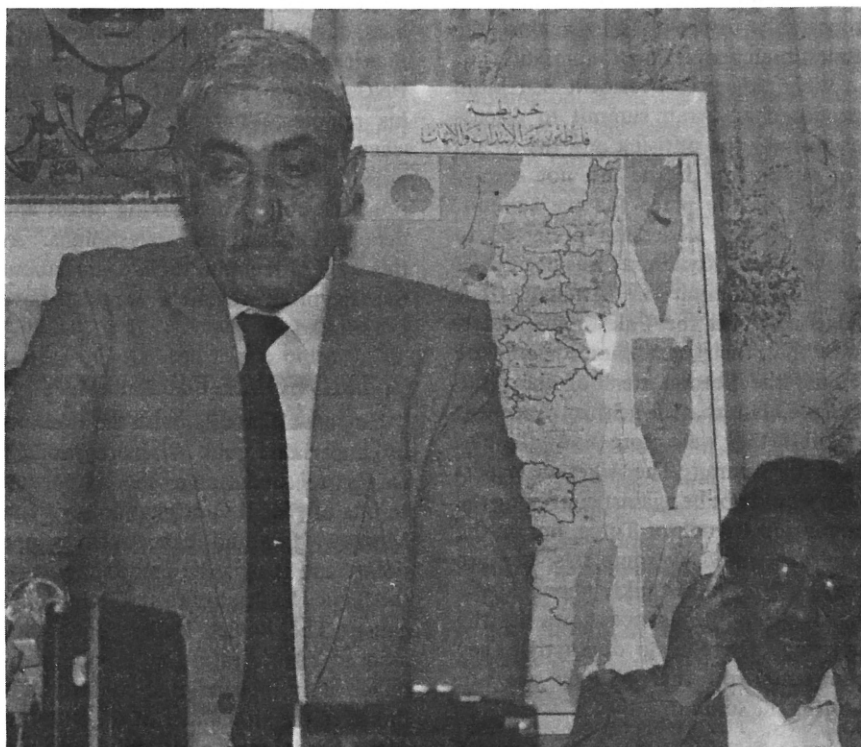
Siniora, for instance, was going to run in the municipal elections in «unified» Jerusalem, entering the slate of candidates along with Teddy Kolleck (the Israeli mayor of Jerusalem). He called on the Palestinians to participate in these elections. Now somehow this person has become a defender of the uprising and also calls for civil disobedience. The same change occurred in the position of Sari Neseiba. Approximately a year ago, Neseiba considered using knives to attack the occupiers, which our people consider a form of struggle, as being contrary to the Palestinian heritage. He considered the people who used this tool as outcasts and troublemakers. This person, after the uprising, calls for civil disobedience. Simply put, these people are strangers to the uprising. The masses of the uprising are not theirs. The contents of the uprising are not theirs. Frankly, these people do not represent the uprising or even themselves. Our masses have confronted them since the beginning of the uprising, considered them as outcasts from the national line and warned them that committing any actions against the uprising would cost them dearly.

Would you comment on the Ship of Return?

I was one of the people who were deported from Palestine and who were supposed to be on the Ship of Return. I actually went to Greece in order to join this trip. I consider this project as an attempt to practice our right of repatriation and return to our homeland. With all sorrow, the Zionists had a better understanding of this project than the Palestinians. The Zionists consider that the right of return is limited to Jews. Thus they would prevent the return of the Palestinians by any means. Eventually this led the Zionists to abort the project by blowing up the ship. I don't consider that the project has failed, because for the first time in 40 years we worked to practice our right of return by renting the ship, gathering where the ship was supposed to embark and preparing for the trip. These were all basic steps towards practicing the right of return. As a result of the Zionist conspiracy together with the help of international imperialism, the ship was blown up; thus there was a decision to postpone the project but not to cancel it. The PLO is going to resume this project in the future by all means.

PFLP Press Conference

On April 27th, Comrade George Habash, General Secretary of the PFLP, held a press conference in Damascus, right after the beginning of the reconciliation between the Syrian government and the Fatah Central Committee. A number of other current topics were addressed as well.



1. OUR DUTIES TOWARDS THE UPRISING

In this uprising that has now been going on for four months, our masses are expressing, by all means at their disposal, their determination to achieve the national goals of freedom and independence, specifically an independent Palestinian state.

Concerning the position of the enemy camp, 'Israel' is still insisting on trying to suppress the uprising, using all methods: administrative detention, imprisonment, curfews, the breaking of bones, burying people alive, economic sanctions, deportation and others. The US administration, on the other hand, claims that it is seeking a solution, but still it ignores the PLO and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. The Arab puppet regimes, particularly in Egypt and Jordan, are trying to market the US initiative by convincing the PLO to consent to the US

plan without itself really participating, and without mention of the Palestinian people's national rights.

In the light of all this, the PLO leadership should take a clear, decisive political stand that would contribute to continuation of the uprising and prevent its being aborted. The PLO leadership should not take any position that would elicit confusion in the ranks of the Palestinian people. The PLO should aim first and foremost at ending the occupation. To this end, international forces should enter the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as part of preparations for a fully empowered international conference that would fulfill the national rights of the Palestinian people to repatriation, self-determination and an independent Palestinian state.

Just like his other visits, the fourth trip of Schultz to the area aims at creating confusion among the Palestinian people, and foiling the uprising.

The PLO should confront these aims with a clear, firm position.

On the Palestinian level, the PLO leadership is called upon to seriously discuss the convening of the PNC in the coming period. This for several reasons: First, the PNC's internal rules and regulations specify that it should convene annually, and it has been more than a year since the last PNC in Algiers. Second, the convening of the PNC would consolidate Palestinian national unity, by giving those organizations that are now outside the PLO the chance to reenter. Third, and most important, the convening of the PNC would give a serious opportunity for reforming and revolutionizing the PLO's condition, so that it becomes the real instrument for mobilizing all the Palestinian masses. In this way, the PLO could function at the same level as the uprising, and meet its requirements.

The most appropriate place to convene the PNC is Damascus, but the issue of time and place is usually decided by the PLO's leading bodies, specifically the Executive Committee and the PNC Presidium, in addition to the general secretaries of the Palestinian resistance organizations.

After Yasir Arafat met with Syrian President Assad, the Palestinian leadership met to discuss the steps to be taken to reopen the inter-Palestinian dialogue (aimed at the remaining Palestinian organizations rejoining the PLO). The Palestinian leadership will initiate a meeting with Al Saïqa, PFLP—General Command and the Popular Struggle Front. Second, a PLO delegation will meet with a delegation of these organizations. I call attention to the fact that the PLO had previously formed a committee, headed by the martyr Abu Jihad, to follow up the issue of all organizations that did not attend the last PNC rejoining the PLO. (This committee is now headed by PLO Executive Committee member Farouk Qaddoumi.)

2. PALESTINIAN—SYRIAN RELATIONS

The PLO, Syria and all the Arab nationalist forces, regimes and movements should notice the reaction of the enemy camp to the Palestinian-Syrian reconciliation. This is not a minor event; rather it is the first step in rehabilitating the Arab chain of support to our masses in the occupied territories and the uprising. Both the Jor-►

danian and Egyptian regimes have officially welcomed the reconciliation. In reality, their welcome is a facade; the reactionary forces will exert all efforts to foil the reconciliation, to prevent it from being completed and having an impact on the Arab situation. It is therefore our duty to complete this beginning reconciliation, by activating the joint Palestinian—Syrian committees that were formed in view of the Palestinian—Syrian summit. We must commit ourselves to implementing the points agreed upon, such as supporting the uprising, affording it political protection and thwarting the Schultz plan.

The normalization of Palestinian—Syrian relations is not a coincidence. It was a necessity imposed by the Palestinian uprising - a requirement for confronting the US—Israeli schemes that aim at suppressing the uprising.

We must be aware that besides the important issues that were agreed upon, there are points of disagreement. It is our duty to continue the dialogue in order to consolidate this alliance. What was achieved must be followed up by many other steps. The PFLP specified after the last PNC, that our main struggle on the Arab level was to restore the PLO-Syrian alliance. We feel that this step will be the prelude to other tasks on the Arab level, first and foremost restoring the Palestinian - Syrian - Lebanese national alliance, and coordinating among Syria, the PLO and all the nationalist regimes (Libya, Algeria, and Democratic Yemen).

There are still five points of disagreement with Syria. First is the PLO's relations with the Camp David regime in Egypt. Second is the PLO's relations with some Israeli forces (that are not anti-Zionist). Third is disagreement about Lebanon. While there is Palestinian—Syrian agreement on the necessity of Palestinian (armed) presence in Lebanon, this issue is complicated and needs more discussion. Fourth is some of the PLO's tactics in the Arab—Israeli conflict. Fifth is about the reentry into the PLO of the Palestinian organizations that did not participate in the last PNC.

3. THE ARAB SUMMIT

The Arab regimes that have worked to postpone the summit were hoping that the uprising would be over after the month of Ramadan. But, to their

disappointment, the uprising continues to escalate and it will continue until achieving its goals. These regimes will now try to muddle the summit by raising the issue of Egypt's rejoining the Arab League. They will try to prevent the summit from taking clear political decisions concerning the Palestinian people's national goals, such as the establishment of an independent state. They will try to prevent it from passing any resolution that would counter the US administration's arrogance in repeatedly using its veto against the Palestinian people's national rights.

When Algeria's President Ben Jadid proposed an Arab summit to discuss exclusively the uprising and the means for supporting it, he did not specify Algeria as the place for the summit. The Algerian leadership preferred to convene it in Riyadh, as was decided at the last summit in Amman. The Algerians told the Palestinian leadership that their next choice would be Tunis, the headquarters of the Arab League, but that if neither place was possible, they were more than willing to host the summit. The Algerian leadership would not be against convening the summit in Riyadh or Tunis, but on the contrary would welcome this, because they want to talk frankly about the official Arab negligence towards the uprising. There is no doubt that they can better do that if they are not hosting the summit.

4. PLO RELATIONS WITH EGYPT

In our view, the decision taken at the last PNC on the PLO's relations with the Egyptian regime was very clear. The PFLP considers that the contacts with the Egyptian regime that took place after the PNC are deviations from this resolution. Now that the reconciliation with Syria has begun, I have great hopes that this resolution on boycotting relations with the Egyptian regime, unless it abrogates the Camp David accords, will be renewed. I am hopeful for two reasons: First, in the past, the trend that leaned towards relations with Egypt justified this by saying that they must go anywhere the door was open to them, since the door to Syria was closed to them. This excuse is no longer valid. Second, some had illusions about the PLO's relations with Egypt, and about the possibility of the Egyptian regime supporting the Palestinian cause. They said that after implementation of the

part of the Camp David accords concerning Egypt, the Egyptians will not forget about the Palestinian section. They felt that Mubarak could possibly be a force on the Palestinian side concerning the interim program of repatriation, self - determination and an independent Palestinian state.

The uprising has, however, exposed the reality. It has been going on for four months, and still Mubarak did not even dare to dismiss the Israeli ambassador or recall the Egyptian ambassador from Tel Aviv. Mubarak felt that it was a blow to his pride when the PNC decided to boycott relations with his regime. Where is his pride now when he hears about the Israelis using poisonous gas, administrative detention, the policy of breaking bones and deportations against Palestinians. At this stage, I feel that the illusions about the Egyptian regime's support have evaporated.

5. THE SOVIET POSITION

You are all familiar with the attempts of imperialist and Arab reactionary forces to undermine the important results of the PLO delegation's visit to Moscow. I would like to stress one point, and that is the great support of the Soviet leadership to the Palestinian cause. The Soviet leader Gorbachev assured Yasir Arafat that Soviet attendance at an international conference is linked to the attendance of the PLO. In other words, the Soviet Union will not attend an international conference on the Middle East if the PLO does not attend, because the Soviet leadership considers that the Palestinian question is the central issue in the Middle East.

Concerning the talk that the Soviet Union asked the PLO to recognize 'Israel', this has been denied by Farouk Qaddoumi and other members of the Palestinian delegation. Their statements were published in Soviet newspapers.

The Soviet leadership has a new policy which is based on a change in tactics only, while adhering to essential principles. The principled Soviet position is based on the fact that there can be no solution to the Palestinian question without giving the Palestinian people their right to self-determination; that the PLO is the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people; and that only the PLO decides how the Palestinian people want to exercise this right.

The Algiers Summit

Under the impact of the Palestinian uprising, twenty Arab leaders convened in Algiers on June 7-9th, for the best attended Arab summit in many years. Although differences between the nationalist and reactionary regimes were certainly not erased, a spirit of Arab solidarity prevailed. The resolutions adopted in Algiers put a brake on the decline in official Arab policy, and restored a number of positions favorable to the PLO and the Palestinian cause.

It is not without significance that the summit was finally convened in Algiers. Independent Algeria has a long history of support to the Palestinian revolution. The Algerian leadership has always proved itself an honest ally, considering that Algeria's own independence remains incomplete until the independence of Palestine is achieved. The Palestinian National Council has convened a number of times in Algiers, without any interference or attempt to impose political tutelage. Most recently, the PLO restored its unity there in April 1987 - creating one of the prerequisites for the ignition of the Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories in December of the same year.

In fact, the original proposal for an extraordinary summit devoted exclusively to the Palestinian uprising came from Algerian President Shadli Ben Jedid in February. The Algerian leadership worked to have the summit convened in early April, to provide Arab support to the uprising, and to precede the schedule set by US Secretary of State Schultz's plan for a truncated international conference in mid-April, to abort the uprising. By early March, a majority of Arab states had agreed to attend. Further preparations were made by the seven-state committee formed at the Arab foreign ministers' meeting in January. This committee visited all Arab capitals in the second half of March, to further support for the uprising. It visited the capitals of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, concerning the possibility of UN forces moving to protect the Palestinian people in the occupied territories from the fascist Israeli repression, and pressuring 'Israel' to abide by international conventions on human rights. The seven-state delegation was warmly received in

Moscow and Peking. There were some points of agreement with the French government, but in London and Washington D.C., the delegation met rejection of the idea of a fully empowered international conference with PLO participation on an equal footing.

Meanwhile, the Arab reactionary regimes were busy putting obstacles in the way of the summit, citing a variety of reservations and conditions. The pro-US Arab kings, especially Hussein of Jordan, Fahd of Saudi Arabia and Hassan II of Morocco, were wagering on the end of the uprising. In this, their position paralleled that of US imperialism which wanted to give the Israelis more time to beat down the uprising, and simultaneously hinder the Arab summit from providing support to the Palestinians. This would clear the way for implementing the Schultz plan which had not been rejected by the reactionary Arab rulers.

Yet the uprising continued; this fact, combined with the Algerian leadership's insistence, finally led to the convention of the summit. Due to the delay imposed by the reactionary regimes' attempted sabotage, the Algiers summit was held under the shadow of Schultz's fourth Middle East shuttle, where he reiterated the US stand against a Palestinian state and a fully empowered international conference. However, the vitality of the Palestinian uprising and its impact proved to be stronger in the ensuing inter-Arab contest.

TWO OPPOSITE POLES: SCHULTZ VS. THE UPRISING

Officially, the summit began in the evening of June 7th, but it actually started earlier. Many questions scheduled on the agenda were decided beforehand. The PLO compiled a paper which included its stance on all the

proposed subjects, and sought broad Arab support for this. On the opposite side, America's Arabs, first and foremost the Saudi and Jordanian monarchs, were waging their war against the Palestinian cause on the pretext of containing «extremism.» These heads-of-state did their best to avoid explicit rejection of the Schultz plan in the summit's final statement. King Fahd even put this as a condition for his participation in the summit, having previously planned to visit Cairo on June 7th, the date of the summit's convention. It took a meeting with the presidents of Algeria and Tunis, to convince the monarch to attend the summit in Algiers. It seems that King Fahd, who considers himself the guardian of the two holy places (Mecca and Al Medina), had forgotten the existence of the third holy place in Jerusalem under the abominable Zionist occupation.

Thus, the conflict escalated between the two opposing poles: that of the uprising and that of the Schultz plan. The first round of this conflict was settled when President Ben Jedid opened the summit. His speech was a clear support to the Palestinian position, reiterating commitment to the PLO, Palestinian statehood and a fully empowered international conference with PLO participation on an equal footing. President Ben Jadid set the tone for the summit's deliberations by asserting *inter alia*: «The Palestinian people's uprising is a decisive historical turning point...a radical development in the methods of the resistance which has been going on for more than half a century... (the) repercussions on the political scene make us face a new situation requiring an approach basically different from the one the region has witnessed in the past... A common Arab action must be under-►

taken to allow the Palestinian revolution to achieve its aims and to guarantee, at the same time, the freeing of the Arab efforts from the constraints of resignation, stagnation and despair.»

At the opposite pole, King Fahd spoke on behalf of the Gulf Cooperation Council, and kings Hassan and Hussein. He called for the return of Egypt to the Arab League, the first time he had ever explicitly called for this. However, the summit did not assent to the kings' demand. On the backdrop of the uprising, it is possible to say «no» to those who have traditionally dominated official Arab politics due to their economic clout. The attempt to accept the Egyptian regime's return was foiled by the position of the Palestinian, Syrian, Algerian, Libyan and Democratic Yemeni delegations. On this point, Syrian President Assad expressed satisfaction to the Palestinian delegation.

In the words of one Arab diplomat at the summit: «Egypt's absence is being felt less and less» (Associated Press, June 10th). This is because of the weight of the uprising. However, the reactionary forces will have another try on this issue at the regular Arab summit scheduled for November in Saudi

Arabia. The legal committee preparing for the summit may recommend a change in the Arab League's charter whereby decisions could be taken by majority rule, rather than having to be unanimous. This would open the way for a vote on the Egyptian regime's readmission.

HUSSEIN VS. THE PLO

After Fahd came the turn of King Hussein who had remained quiet while the summit discussed Egypt's return, hoping to glean support for his upcoming battle against the PLO. The king attacked Palestine and the PLO on three fronts. First, he presented a false reading of the history of Palestinian-Jordanian relations. He claimed that the decision to annex the West Bank to Jordan was not binding, and that the Hashemite monarchy was above suspicion, having sacrificed martyrs for the sake of Palestine (naming King Abdullah as an example).

Second, King Hussein interpreted Schultz's plan in a special way, claiming that it includes an invitation to an international conference with the PLO's participation, in a hopeless attempt to sell the imperialist plan to the summit. Third, King Hussein painted a negative picture of Palestinian options,

aiming for the Palestinians to either accept partnership and confederation with Jordan, or he would absolve himself of all responsibility for the Palestinian cause.

The king's speech was so provocative that it led PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat to depart from the text of his speech to respond to the royal lies. Brother Arafat's speech concentrated on two points. First, he emphasized that what the king had said about the Schultz plan was not what Schultz himself had said about it. Hussein's reading was deliberately slanted in an attempt to secure approval of a plan that had already been rejected by the PLO. Second, brother Arafat straightened the record on the Hashemite monarchy's «martyrs», reminding that King Abdullah had been assassinated for his collusion in the Sykes-Picot agreement (whereby France and Britain divided up the area), and not martyred for the sake of Palestine.

At this point, tension mounted at the summit, and various kings and presidents had to intervene to calm things down. Colonel Qaddafi mocked Hussein's speech, and interrupted him, saying: «Liberate the West Bank and take it, but it is not acceptable that you don't want to liberate it, yet don't want others to do so either.»

This round ended with consensus on putting an Arab yes to counter all the US no's to Palestinian rights. In the end, the final statement included a general condemnation of US policy, but did not mention the Schultz project by name.

SUPPORT TO THE UPRISING

Although the summit agreed in principle to extent full support to the uprising, conflict arose about how to channel material aid. This was related to the two opposing poles on other questions.

Another point of difference concerned the financing states. Here, the Gulf states, especially Saudi Arabia, sought to avoid adoption of a specific resolution on financial support to the uprising, or to specify the amount. There was an attempt to exclude the PLO from the talks on this matter. The Palestinian delegation was surprised to discover it was not invited to this ses-

The following call of the United National Leadership of the Uprising was distributed to the Arab leaders at the Algiers Summit:

1. Seeking international protection for our people in the occupied territories against the Zionist occupation's crimes, to put an end to the occupation and to enforce the Palestinian people's freedom and independence.
2. Cancelling the emergency laws and withdrawal of the Zionist army from the cities, villages and camps.
3. Foiling all the suspected projects which deny the Palestinian people's rights, such as the Camp David accords, «autonomy» and Schultz's initiative.
4. Convening an international conference with full authority and the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council, and of the PLO on an equal footing with the other parties; considering this conference the only way to establish a permanent, just and comprehensive peace.
5. Establishing an independent Palestinian state under the leadership of the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.
6. Making a broad informational campaign to expose the occupation's practices against the Palestinian people, in coordination with the PLO.
7. Releasing Palestinian prisoners from Arab prisons.
8. Allowing the Palestinian people in the Arab countries to establish their institutions and unions for struggling against the Zionist enemy.
9. Establishing a permanent fund for the PLO through which all forms of support should be channeled.
10. Opening the Arab borders for the Palestinian revolution's fighters and establishing training camps for them.

sion. Accordingly, brother Arafat broke into the session, demanding whether they really intended to discuss support to the Palestinian uprising in the absence of the Palestinian people's sole legitimate representative. Arafat threatened to withdraw from the summit if they continued in this way. The atmosphere became tense again, and the final meeting was postponed for long hours until a series of bilateral discussions resulted in a decision to support the uprising in defined forms and amounts.

Concerning how the support should be channeled, the conflict was between the PLO and Jordan. The Jordanian monarchy tried to have a say in this matter, but ultimately a decision was reached to channel the support through the PLO and concerned international institutions. This round of the summit was settled in favor of the Palestinian delegation.

Throughout the entire summit, the Algerian leadership worked hard to see that no questions unrelated to the uprising could be interjected to the detriment of support to the Palestinian people. The Algerians prevented the summit from drowning in side issues by discussing other matters with each Arab delegation alone. Thus, the final statement concentrated on issues that were crucial to supporting the uprising and alluded only briefly to other matters. However, it is noteworthy that for the first time the Arab leaders arrived at a united support to Libya against the US imperialist attacks it has faced.

TAKING STOCK

The extraordinary Arab summit in Algiers culminated in a number of positive resolutions that can truly be considered a victory for the Palestinian people and their just cause and struggle. These results could only have occurred under the impact of the uprising, and in the main the summit was a new victory for the masses struggling against occupation. However, the fact that Schultz's plan was not explicitly rejected means that conflict will continue, despite the successes of this round.

The Palestinian victory in Algiers is most obvious when compared to the preceding summit in Amman, when

King Hussein succeeded in marginalizing the Palestinian cause. In contrast, the PLO played a major role in Algiers in the adoption of the following positive resolutions:

1. Reasserting the Rabat Summit resolution that recognized the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.
2. Helping the Palestinian people to realize their legitimate national rights, first and foremost their rights to repatriation, self-determination and the establishment of an independent state on their national soil, with Jerusalem as its capital and under the PLO's leadership.
3. The necessity of convening an international conference attended by the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, and with the PLO participating on an equal footing with the other parties.
4. Supporting the uprising in the occupied territories by all means.

In Algiers, the PLO scored an undivided success in the conflict between the just Palestinian cause and the so-called Jordanian option. However, one cannot overlook the fact that the pro-US Arab regimes left some marks on the work of the summit, chiefly by blocking explicit rejection of the Schultz plan, despite Palestinian efforts to obtain such a clear rejection. The summit also did not adopt any effective measures to counter US policy. It

would have been fitting for the Arab regimes to close US information bureaus in their countries, in response to the closure of the PLO offices in the US.

Moreover, although there was agreement on the necessity of convening an international conference with full authority, the clause «full authority» was not included in the final statement. This can only be understood as leaving the door open to other suggestions concerning the peace process in the Middle East.

These points will remain the subjects of conflict between the Palestinians and progressive Arabs on the one hand, and the reactionaries on the other. In spite of these shortcomings, however, the summit was predominantly positive, especially when compared to previous summits. It was to the favor of the uprising's demands. The main thing now is to see that these positive resolutions are implemented and don't join the ranks of neglected papers in the Arab League's headquarters.

As the uprising was the essential cause of the positive outcome of this summit, implementing its resolutions and confronting the reactionaries' countermeasures require consolidation of the alliance between the PLO and the Arab nationalist and progressive regimes, to create a supportive environment for the uprising's continuation. ●

Jordan

Why the Regime Fears the Masses

The Jordanian and Palestinian masses in Jordan have repeatedly expressed support to the uprising in the occupied territories, and protested Israeli repression and the US and Arab moves to abort the Palestinian popular revolt. The Jordanian regime, for its part, has done all in its power to stifle the voice of the masses.

The Jordanian regime has mobilized its security forces, police, army and intelligence service to suppress any mass activities that would expose the falsity of its own professed sympathy for the uprising, which the official media attempts to portray. At the end of December, there was a massive arrest

campaign; approximately thirty patriots were detained, including PNC and PFLP Politbureau members, Azmi Al Khawaja and Hamdi Matar. Since then, the Committee for the Defense of Democratic Freedoms in Jordan has reported that, as of mid-April, eleven

Palestinian and Jordanian nationalists, unionists and student activists had been summoned by the intelligence and subsequently detained. One of them is Taysir Al Zubri, DFLP Politbureau member.

The Jordanian authorities have also imposed new restrictions on the press, even affecting foreign press coverage. In early May, the press accreditation of two reporters, Lamis Andoni and Samira Kawar, both of whom work for western news organizations, was cancelled.

In addition, the regime is relying on stooges to repress the mass movement. Most notorious among these is Abu Al Zaim, who led a pro-Jordanian split in Fatah after King Hussein suspended cooperation with the PLO in 1986.

Despite all this, the Jordanian and Palestinian nationalist and democratic forces have organized a series of activities in support of the uprising. For example, on March 6th, declared as the day of the Palestinian flag by the United National Leadership of the Uprising, thousands of Palestinian flags were distributed all over Jordan and hoisted over the rooftops of homes. March 8th being International Women's Day, dozens of Palestinian and Jordanian women held a sit-in at the Red Cross office in Amman, and burned the US flag. The next day, March 9th, was declared Palestinian Martyrs' Day; students of the Jordanian University in Amman rallied and placed hundreds of wreaths on the university's monument to the martyrs. Even more activities occurred around March 30th, the Day of the Land.

LAND DAY DEMONSTRATIONS

One of the biggest demonstrations took place in Al Wehdat, the large Palestinian camp outside Amman. Hundreds of people raised Palestinian flags and chanted slogans in support of the uprising and the PLO. They denounced the Schultz plan and the maneuvers of Abu Zaim. The security forces tried to disperse the three-hour demonstration, but failed.

Also in the Amman area, more than 800 students demonstrated at the Jordanian University, protesting the policy of the US and the Egyptian regime. The demonstrators raised the demand that students in the West Bank and Gaza Strip be exempted from paying tuition, and that they should receive a monthly

allowance to support the continuation of the uprising. The demonstrators sent a telegram to the Jordanian prime minister, demanding that the regime reject the Schultz plan, and give the masses the right to express solidarity with the uprising. They also demanded the release of all political prisoners in Jordan, and that Palestinian armed struggle against the Zionist enemy be allowed from Jordan.

Students at Yarmouk University in Irbid clashed with the security forces that tried to prevent them from demonstrating. The authorities also attempted to have some of their stooges stage a counter-demonstration at the same time, but failed.

A mass rally was held in the trade union headquarters. Speaking at the rally were PNC President Abdul Hamid Al Sayih; the Jordanian parliament deputy, Abd Allah Al Akaila; the head of the Jordanian doctors' union, Mamduh Al Abadi; and a number of other Palestinian and Jordanian nationalists. The speakers saluted the uprising and called for an independent Palestinian state, led by the PLO. They called for struggle to achieve democratic freedoms in Jordan, and the release of all political prisoners. The rally culminated in a demonstration. The security forces surrounded the area, but did not interfere.

Political prisoners in Al Jafr issued a statement condemning the Arab reactionary regimes' silence about the brutal Israeli acts against the Palestinian people. The prisoners urged the convention of an Arab summit to take the required decisions in support of the uprising. They demanded that all the countries surrounding occupied Palestine open their borders to the Palestinian resistance.

The Jordanian National Committee for Support of the Uprising issued a communique condemning the regime's repression of activities supporting the uprising, such as the arrests and the storming of patriots' homes. The committee called on the masses to carry out all forms of activities in support of the uprising, and condemned the regime's suspicious moves.

High school students in Al Nuzha quarter of Amman attempted three times to stage a demonstration, but were attacked by the police; many students were arrested. The intelligence summoned the parents of many of the students and forced them to sign a

pledge to pay 500 dinars if their children participated in demonstrations. To back up this pressure, the passports of some parents were confiscated. Many students of Al Nuzha were forcibly transferred to schools in other quarters; still others were expelled from classes altogether.

THE REGIME'S QUANDRY

The broad mass sympathy for the uprising in Jordan itself accentuates the degree to which the regime feels threatened by the popular revolt in the occupied territories. On this background, one can understand the regime's new verbal position on Middle East peace talks. King Hussein is taking great pains to stress that he will not speak on behalf of the Palestinian people, that only the PLO can do that. In contrast to his notorious ambitions to control the occupied West Bank, the king now insists that he will negotiate only on the subject of Jordanian land occupied by the Israelis (20km² south of the Dead Sea, and 5km² in the north, close to the Syrian border).

The regime's retreat from its historical ambitions to absorb the Palestinian cause is, of course, only tactical. But it appears as the monarchy's only option in a situation where the continuation of the uprising has blocked the Schultz plan, while Likud's intransigence makes the convening of an international conference look remote. Deprived of these diplomatic covers for his moves to replace the PLO, the king has no choice but to change his tactics and demagoguery. This is all the more so since the effects of the uprising are reaching into the regime itself. The monarchy's strategy for absorbing the Palestinian cause has relied on cooptation of a strata of the Palestinian bourgeoisie into the ruling class and regime in Jordan. Some of these Palestinians now find themselves torn by dual loyalty, since the uprising has made it unavoidably clear that the Palestinian people reject the Jordanian regime's plan and insist on their own right to self-determination and statehood. As a result, there has been conflict between Jordanian ministers and those of Palestinian origin. Continuation of the uprising can only compound the Jordanian regime's quandry, while presenting the alternative of popular struggle as the force for democratic change in Palestine and Jordan as well. ●

PLO Delegation to Moscow

On the invitation of the Soviet leadership, a PLO delegation arrived in Moscow on April 7th. The delegation was headed by Yasir Arafat, Chairman of the PLO Executive Committee. It included PLO Executive Committee members Abu Ali Mustafa, Farouk Qaddoumi, Yasir Abed Rabbouh, Suleiman Najjab, Mahmoud Darwish, Jamal Sourani and Abdullah Hourani. There were several discussion sessions with Comrade Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU, and Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, as well as with the secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, the head of the Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee, the head of the Oriental Studies Institute and the dean of the Soviet Diplomatic Academy. The talks focused on the developments in the occupied territories and the means to support the current Palestinian uprising, developments in the Middle East and the issue of the international conference, the US maneuvers in the area and the aims of Schultz's most recent trip, the efforts to reconcile Syria and the PLO, and improving Palestinian—Soviet relations. (Editor's Note: The PLO visited Moscow before the PLO—Syrian reconciliation began later in April.)

Interview with Comrade Abu Ali Mustafa

After the talks with the Soviet leadership were concluded, *Al Hadaf* magazine interviewed Comrade Abu Ali Mustafa, Deputy General Secretary of the PFLP, regarding the delegation's visit. The following is a summary of the interview:

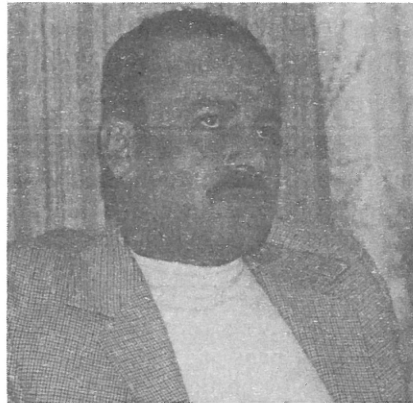
THE UPRISING

The Soviet leadership expressed full support to the Palestinian uprising and reaffirmed the significance of its continuing. They condemned the fascist Israeli crimes against the Palestinian people. The Soviet comrades confirmed that it was high among their priorities to raise the issue of political support to the uprising and to the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people at international forums. The Soviet Solidarity Committee informed the Palestinian delegation of the material support that Soviet social institutions have decided to donate to the uprising.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

The Soviet leadership reiterated its position that an international conference on the Middle East should be fully empowered and include all concerned parties, including the PLO on an equal footing. What is new regarding the Soviet position is presenting UN Security Council resolution 242 as a legal basis for convening the conference. The Soviet leadership however, emphasized the necessity of linking this with the Palestinian people's right to self-determination. During the talks,

both sides confirmed their adherence to all UN resolutions concerning the Palestinian and Middle East question. It was clear from the contents of the discussion that the Soviet leadership makes a distinction between merely calling for an international conference on the one hand, and the substance of the issues to be discussed on the other. The Soviet comrades pointed out how the US administration is avoiding giving a clear answer concerning the international conference, and that the



Schultz plan is only an attempt to abort the Palestinian uprising and save the Zionist state from its crisis.

Comrade Abu Ali said that he believed that it is an illusion to depend on resolution 242 as a basis for entering an international conference. He questioned why the world ignores UN resolution 181 (the 1947 Partition Plan), regarding the Palestinian question. He also said that one should not fall into the trap of considering the international conference as an end in

itself rather than a means towards a solution. Abu Ali expressed his conviction that the Soviet leadership is well aware of this distinction, based on their principled support to the Palestinian national rights of return and a Palestinian independent state, led by the PLO, the sole, legitimate representative of our people.

DID GORBACHEV ASK THE PLO TO RECOGNIZE ISRAEL?

Comrade Abu Ali confirmed that neither Gorbachev nor any other Soviet leader who met with the delegation presented the issue of the PLO recognizing the Zionist state. The Soviet comrades confirmed their adherence to the Palestinians' national rights, based on their conviction in the justice and legitimacy of these rights. This is a constant and principled Soviet position.

THE US PLAN

Comrades Gorbachev and Shevardnadze have rejected Schultz's proposals because they offer no solution to the Middle East conflict; the US administration through its various maneuvers in the area is only seeking to protect its own interests and those of 'Israel'. The Soviet leadership thinks that the US proposals are heading towards a deadend. The Palestinians and the Soviet comrades agree on rejecting the Schultz plan. In the Soviet view, the US moves and acknowledgment of the importance of convening an international conference, even while seeking to devoid it of real substance, have come about due to the impact of

the Palestinian uprising on world opinion. The Soviet comrades assess that the US and Israeli plans are in crisis, and that this crisis has been aggravated by the uprising.

PALESTINIAN—SYRIAN RECONCILIATION

It is expected that the Soviet foreign minister will soon tour a number of Arab countries to discuss the political developments in the Middle East conflict.

The PLO delegation sensed the Soviet concern about creating the proper atmosphere for improving Palestinian-Syrian relations. The Soviet leadership highly appraised the official Syrian position after Schultz's last visit to Damascus. Concerning the Jordanian position, the Soviet leadership confirmed the necessity of the PLO being independently represented, not through Jordan. The Palestinian delegation agreed with the Soviet

Novosti Press Release

Soviet View of the Settlement in Brief

1. Withdrawal of the Israeli forces from the territories occupied in 1967: the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Golan Heights.
2. The Palestinian people have the right to self-determination in the same measure as it is insured for the people of Israel. How the Palestinians will exercise this right is a matter which concerns them alone.
3. The most effective mechanism for a settlement of the Middle East conflict is an international conference under UN auspices, legally based on the recognition by all parties of Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, and of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination. All parties to the conflict should be represented at the conference, including the Palestinian Arab people. The permanent members of the US Security Council should attend as well, with the role of creating a positive atmosphere for the talks; to this end, they can submit proposals collectively or individually.
4. The UN Secretary General directs invitations to all the participating parties.

leadership that in the event of a unified Arab delegation to the international conference, the PLO should be independently invited. The PLO delega-

tion emphasized that more important than a unified Arab delegation is a unified Arab position on the Palestinian question. ●

«Israel» 40-Year State of Siege

As the Zionist state celebrates its 40th anniversary, the Palestinian uprising is challenging the viability of the fundamental premises on which this racist, settler colony is based. Not only has Israeli brutality failed to quell the popular revolt; it has laid bare before the world the moral and political bankruptcy inherent in the Zionist project.

On May 15th, the state of 'Israel' was declared. Although the Zionists speak of their «Declaration of Independence», the adopted text read as follows: «...we hereby proclaim the establishment of the Jewish state in Palestine...»

There was no mention of an independent state. In fact, a Communist party amendment to declare «the independent Jewish state» was rejected while, as the first Israeli prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, wrote: «We decided to evade (and I choose this word intentionally) the matter (of borders).»

Four days later, a state of emergency was declared under the Defense Regulations originally imposed by the British Mandate authorities in 1945. This 'legalized' the destruction of 385 Palestinian Arab villages and the expulsion of the majority of the Palesti-

nian people from their homes, while enabling the imposition of a military government on those who remained in the Zionist state. This military government was not to be abolished until 1966, whereafter it was reinstated in the West Bank and Gaza Strip after the 1967 occupation. The current Palestinian uprising only serves to accentuate the fact that a state of emergency has been a constant fact of life in the 40 years of the Zionist state's existence.

The Israeli crisis, which some trace back to the new occupation of 1967, really dates back to the state's bloody origin, as was highlighted by the participation of Palestinian Arabs of the 1948 occupied territories in the current uprising. 'Israel' is in a permanent self-declared state of siege - at war not only with neighboring Arab countries, but

first and foremost with the Palestinian people, both those who are internally colonized and those in exile. The state of siege is deemed necessary not only to ward off the political and military challenge posed by Palestinian resistance; it is a prerequisite for the state's physical and economic existence. «The vast properties of the Palestinian Arab people inside the state of Israel remain vested in the Custodian of Absentee Property so long as the state of emergency declared by the Provisional Council of State in 1948 has not been declared to have ceased to exist» (Uri Davis, *Israel: An Apartheid State*, Zed Books, 1987, p. 64). Lift the state of siege and Palestine would quite literally revert to the Palestinians.

HEADING BACK TO 1948

The state of siege was apparent as the Israelis celebrated their 40th anniversary in mid-April (in accordance with the ancient Jewish calendar). Despite Prime Minister Shamir's repeated assurances that the occupied territories were «nearly quiet», four days of highly volatile demonstrations preceded the Israeli festivities, as Palestinians protested the assassination of PLO

leader, Khalil Al Wazir (Abu Jihad). Speaking at the main celebration, Defense Minister Rabin, mastermind of the unprecedented campaign of repression mounted against the uprising, stated: «We know this is one long war that our enemies have forced upon us» (*International Herald Tribune*, April 20th). On the concluding day of the Israeli celebrations, with half the Palestinians in the 1967 occupied territories under curfew and the rest restricted from moving outside their area, Shamir could find nothing better to say than, «Look, Israel is not the sort of state where life is quiet, ideal, pastoral» (*International Herald Tribune*, April 22nd).

A senior Israeli official close to Foreign Minister Peres was a bit more articulate in expressing how the Zionists see their current situation: «We're heading back to the 1940s. The extremists are driving the whole Arab community and pushing us to the right. Everything is vanishing: their chances for an independent state and our chances for normality» (*International Herald Tribune*, April 11th). Echoes of 1948, and the Zionist crimes of that time, also figure prominently in the escalating racist threats of avowed right-wing Israeli politicians (see box).

The continuity of the Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories shows that the Zionist leadership, which promised a haven for Jews from all over the world, is today unable to provide minimal security and normality for their own population. On July 3, 1950, Ben Gurion said in the Knesset, «These two laws, the Law of Return and the Citizenship Law, constitute the Bill of Rights, the Charter, guaranteed

to all Jews in the diaspora by the State of Israel.» Yet less than 20% of Jews in the world opted to live in the Zionist state, and those who did found that the 'return' posited them as colonialists fighting men, women and children who cling to their homeland, and as cannonfodder for imperialist wars to expand Israeli territory. By the early 1980s, it became apparent that the number of Israelis emigrating from the Zionist state was greater than the number of Jews who were immigrating. The reversed ratio was attributed to economic recession and to the constant state of war whose futility was heralded by the Zionists' near fiasco in the October 1973 war. Though it is too early to present statistics, the trend of increasing emigration can only be aggravated by the current Palestinian uprising which bears daily witness to the fact that Zionism, as a colonial movement, cannot offer real or lasting security for Jews.

This is especially true in as much as Zionism has also depended on brute force to build its state and resolve its own crises. Yet, as the current uprising demonstrates in very literal terms, «official Zionism, as embodied in Israeli state policy and in the discourse of its loyalists in the West, has no military option against the Palestinians, who seem destined to remain irritatingly before Israel, challenging Zionist settlements, vociferously protesting and fighting the abrogation of their rights, popping up in precisely those places (the West Bank, Gaza, and Lebanon, for instance) where they were supposed to have been defeated» (Edward Said, *Race and Class*, Winter 1988, p. 33).

Though the major political blocs

(Labor and Likud) have shown exemplary 'national unity' in endeavors to repress the uprising by brute force, this has simply not worked. Instead, Zionism's political bankruptcy has become apparent, for there is no Israeli consensus on any other type of solution.

THE IRON WALL

In contrast to Labor Zionism which tries to couch its racist, colonial ventures in liberal and even 'socialist' phraseology, Revisionist Zionism (the precursors of the Likud) has always said point blank that the struggle for Palestine is a fight for existence, whether for the Zionists or the Palestinians. Thus, Vladimir Jabotinsky wrote in 1923, «Zionist colonization, even the most restricted, must either be terminated or carried out in defiance of the will of the native population. This colonization can, therefore, continue and develop only under the protection of a force independent of the local population - an iron wall which the native population cannot break through. This is, *in toto*, our policy towards the Arabs. To formulate it any other way would only be hypocrisy» (quoted in Lenni Brenner, *The Iron Wall*, Zed Books, 1984, pp. 74-5). Moshe Dayan, a main architect of the 1967 occupation, acknowledged the same reality when he said, «There is not a single settlement that was not established in the place of a former Arab village» (*Haaretz*, April 4, 1969).

This true face of Zionism can be seen today in the resurgence of blatantly racist and aggressive statements by Israeli officials, such as the ones made by Shamir when opening an ancient castle near Bethlehem as a tourist site: «Anybody who wants to damage this fortress and other fortresses we are establishing will have his head smashed against the boulders and walls.» Addressing the Palestinians in revolt, he continued, «We say to them from the heights of this mountain and from the perspective of thousands of years history, that they are like grasshoppers compared to us» (*International Herald Tribune*, April 1st).

Such demagoguery in the face of crisis exposes Zionism's bankruptcy on several levels. From a historical perspective, such colonialist bravado is doomed. Alongside the apartheid regime in South Africa and its occupation of Namibia, 'Israel' stands as an

Echoes of 1948

In March, Rafael Eitan, former Israeli chief of staff and member of Knesset, told the *Jerusalem Post* that the uprising «could have been halted by expelling 300 of the inciters. That, plus collective punishment, would have done the trick without the need to call in the army... If war breaks out and they make trouble, we'll simply have to deport a million people... You don't need a large force for that; we had a far smaller army in 1948 and it was done wherever it was needed» (*The Middle East*, April 1988).

On March 24th, Trade Minister Ariel Sharon said «that if war breaks out

with neighboring states, Israel may expell Arabs living in the occupied territories and inside the country. Sharon told Israeli reporters in Tel Aviv that after the outbreak of the 1948 Mideast war, when thousands of Arabs fled or were expelled from Jewish-held territory, then-Prime Minister David Ben Gurion refused to let them back.» Referring to the current uprising, Sharon said, «Those who began the war in December 1987, must remember that they are fully responsible for its results. This is the deterrent. Remember it well, not just the residents of Halhoul and Qalqilyeh but also the residents of Jaffa and Jerusalem» (Associated Press, March 28th).

anomaly in a world where direct colonialism is all but abolished. The guarantee for such states is their connection with imperialism, but imperialism's world-wide dominance is also on the decline. The Palestinian uprising, on the other hand, as the flashpoint of the overall Palestinian revolution, is part of the world-wide national liberation movement which points the way to the future. As such, the uprising has brought Palestinian statehood into the realm of practical possibility, as the antithesis of Zionist occupation.

In a more immediate perspective, statements like Shamir's are but a cover-up for Zionism's failure to resolve the contradictions inherent in its own projects. The 'iron wall' has indeed been erected against the Palestinians and never more obviously than today when the occupied territories are simply sealed off if there is reason to expect widespread protests. But the Palestinians neither disappear behind the wall nor stop struggling. Instead, such measures have elicited more friction in the Zionist camp. A case in point was the situation around Land Day when the occupied territories were sealed off for three days. Trade and Industry Minister Ariel Sharon and settler groups openly opposed this policy because it collides with their 'reality' that the territories are part of 'Israel'. They advocated mass deportations as an alternative. However, both sealing the territories and mass deportations, like the Palestinians' general strikes, raise the question of where 'Israel' would recruit a labor force to do the low-status, manual work which Israeli Jews today avoid.

Referring to the Likud, Abba Eban, former Israeli foreign minister and now chairman of the Knesset committee on foreign affairs and defense, wrote in the *New York Times*: «Do they not realize that the collapse of the Schultz approach could make 1988 a tragic year for Israel, dividing the country, escalating violence in the occupied territories, dragging down the economy, eroding Israel's international relations and, at the end, threatening war with a united Arab coalition?» (*International Herald Tribune*, April 4th).

Actually this influential Israeli was unwittingly paying tribute to the impact of the uprising. It is not solely Shamir's obstinacy which blocks the Schultz plan, but more broadly that this im-

perialist proposal does not begin to address the essence of the conflict, i.e., the Palestinian question which, with the uprising, is on the ascent. The Schultz plan being merely a new version of the Labor Party settlement model, the uprising has also exposed before the world that Labor offers no alternative to the program of the Zionist right, much less to the Palestinian issue. Labor's proposals for resolving the issue of the 1967 occupied territories via cooperation with Jordan are actually another model of the 'iron wall', designed to protect the demographic 'purity' of the Zionist state. However, the Zionist ultraright always exploits crises and signs of Labor 'softness' to strengthen its own hand, while from the Palestinian vantage point, as stated by Edward Said, «Peace must be made with us, and not with a 'demographic



problem' - and the occupation must end» (*International Herald Tribune*, April 28th).

The real position of the Labor establishment can be read in statements like that of Peres upon deportation of eight Palestinians and ordering 12 more expelled on April 11th: «We are not deporting residents, just inciters and agitators and extremists» (*International Herald Tribune*, April 12th). Like the Zionist official who spoke about «extremists driving the Arab community,» Peres cannot admit that 'Israel' is facing a whole people, united in their simple determination to be free. Such an admission would undercut the fundamentals of the Zionist colonial project which was marketed both to Jews and internationally, under the false label of «A land without a people for a people without a land.» The 'benign occupation' which Zionism has boasted has

always been a myth, and this myth has now been irrevocably shattered by the stones of the Palestinian uprising. Thus, a 'statesman' like Peres is reduced to absurdities such as that those Palestinians deported from Palestine are anyway not residents.

BEITA, APRIL 6TH

Events in the West Bank village of Beita, near Nablus, presented a microcosm of the dilemma which the uprising presents for the Zionists - and the extreme absurdities to which they resort. On April 6th, a group of settler youth from Elon Moreh settlement just 'happened' to take a nature tour near Beita. Later ABC television asked one of the hikers why they went where they did at such a time of tension. She replied, «We have to show them that we are the owners of the country» (*International Herald Tribune*, April 18th). Even without this admission, it was obvious that the nature tour was a settler provocation, showing readiness to endanger even Israeli lives for the sake of expansionist goals.

When some Palestinians threw stones at the settler group encroaching on their village, one of the two armed guards accompanying the settler youth opened fire, killing two Palestinians and an Israeli girl, and injuring a number of others. Immediately the Israeli army announced she had been killed by a stone, starting what grew into a credibility crisis.

With settlers crying for revenge, hundreds of Israeli soldiers besieged Beita and nearby villages. Curfew and collective punishment of Palestinians for Zionist crimes was the watchword of the operation led by Israeli Chief of Staff Shamron: Hundreds of Palestinians were rounded up, scores of houses were demolished and large areas of almond and olive orchards were bulldozed, while settlers went on the rampage throughout the area, damaging Palestinian property and shooting wildly. Six Beita residents were later deported.

When an Israeli military autopsy showed that the Israeli girl had been shot in the head, an absurd debate ensued as to whether she had died from a stone or the bullet, or whether a Palestinian had shot her, even though it was established that a Palestinian had only taken the settler's gun after he had fired all the bullets. When the army issued its final report, it admitted that

the girl had died from a bullet shot by the settler. However, to cover its own misguided 'justice', the army added that the guard had only shot wildly after being hit on the head by a Palestinian stone, even though he was notorious for previous indiscriminate violence.

The Beita affair is no exception in terms of Israeli brutality - this has been a constant fact of life for Palestinians under occupation for forty years. What is noteworthy is how the Zionists entangled themselves in their own lies and distortions. The current uprising and the international attention it has elicited leave little space for Zionist atrocities to go unnoticed as they did in the past.

CHALLENGING THE ZIONIST REALITY

The Beita incident elicited new speculation in the international press about the moral integrity of the Israeli occupiers, escalating a tendency to such questioning which began with the uprising. It was in such an atmosphere that the Israelis celebrated their anniversary. In Cyprus, President George Vassiliou boycotted the Israeli 'In-

dependence Day' reception, citing his solidarity with the Palestinian uprising. In Holland, where the establishment is staunchly pro-Israeli, Premier Ruud Lubbers did attend such a celebration, but in an unprecedented move, he publicly criticized 'Israel' for opposing an international conference. The uprising has turned the tide of years of uncontested Zionist propaganda in the West. This is not without implications for the future of 'Israel' due to its high degree of dependency on outside support. While imperialist states, especially the USA, can be counted on to continue support to the Zionist state, based on strategic considerations, the public support to 'Israel', based on myths of Israeli democracy and providing a refuge for persecuted Jews, has begun to be eroded.

Important as international criticism of 'Israel' is, the basic arena in which the uprising is challenging the Zionist project is on the ground in Palestine. Each Zionist repressive measure has elicited a new form of Palestinian resistance. For example, after Rabin authorized soldiers to shoot to kill against firebombers, the United Na-

tional Leadership boldly declared a day of firebombing. The Palestinians are prepared to fight fire with fire to gain their freedom, even though their fire is stones and petrol bombs in the face of Israeli automatic weapons and cannons. This determination is having its effects on the Zionist army. Major General Uri Saguy, Israeli ground forces commander, has said that the army's deployment in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip has «seriously harmed the soldier's basic level of training... Only if the uprising tapers off with the coming of summer will we be able to stabilize the training process for the regular army» (Associated Press, May 13th).

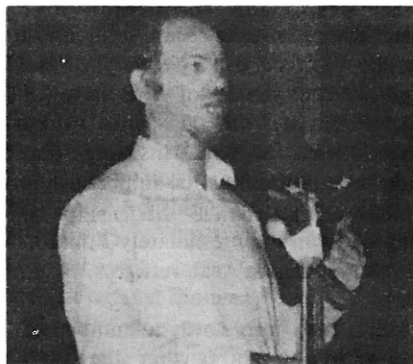
As a result of all these factors, the continuation of the uprising is bound to raise questions in the minds of more Israelis as to the viability of their colonial existence. In this sense, the uprising is the spark not only for broader Palestinian mobilization, but also for the Israeli population's possibility of eventually breaking with Zionism. And this is the threat for which the Zionist establishment has no counterammunition at all. ●

Book Review

Israel: An Apartheid State

By Dr. Uri Davis; Zed Books Limited, 1987

The first half of Uri Davis' latest book is devoted to expounding its title, *Israel: An Apartheid State*. Davis asserts that: «Formally speaking, the Israeli procedure of denationalization is far more radical and far-reaching than its South African equivalent... the majority of the inhabitants of the Republic of South Africa, its black people, are rendered aliens in their own homeland, but they are not defined out of legal existence. In the case of Israel, Zionist apartheid is applied under the category of 'Jew' versus 'non-Jew'. Of the almost three million non-Jewish Palestinian Arabs who are today entitled, under the constitutional stipulation of the 1947 UN Partition Plan, to Israeli citizenship, less than 25 per cent (approximately 700,000 persons) are Israeli citizens. Under the Absentee Property Law (1950), the state of Israel



has similarly denationalized 75 per cent of its non-Jewish Palestinian Arab inhabitants (over two million persons classified as 'absentees')» (p. 25-6).

Elaborating on this thesis, Davis reviews the political and legal mechanisms whereby 'Israel' confers on its Jewish citizens automatic access to national resources and services,

while excluding the Palestinian Arabs. Thus, Davis focuses on the character of the Israeli state and the part of Palestine occupied in 1948. While there are other excellent books on this subject, Sabri Jiryis' *The Arabs in Israel* (1976) being the pioneering work, Davis' book distinguishes itself as being extremely comprehensive, yet compact, in its analysis of these mechanisms.

Providing extensive documentation, including lengthy quotes from Israeli laws concerning citizenship and land ownership, Davis leads the reader through the intricacies of the Israeli system of institutionalized discrimination. He pinpoints the lynchpin which both institutionalizes and masks Zionist apartheid, namely, the «legislation ceding state sovereignty to organizations such as the World Zionist Organization-Jewish Agency which are

constitutionally committed to serving and promoting the interests of Jews and Jews only...» (p. 60).

In the chapter covering political repression, Davis examines the 1945 Emergency Laws, noting that their passage, four days after the Israeli state's establishment, means that politically and legally the Zionist state has always been in a state of emergency. Davis also notes that the 1967 war «marked both the zenith and the beginning of the decline of Zionist and Israeli achievements» (p.65). He recounts the subsequent problems faced by the Zionist state in the 1973 war and the 1982 invasion of Lebanon, and concludes: «... there is little doubt that the Zionist impetus and the capacity of the state of Israel to implement its Zionist objectives of establishing Jewish sovereignty and a Jewish numerical majority in all parts of British Mandate Palestine are very much impaired. Since the war option as a Zionist panacea is currently unavailable, the only alternative for the Israeli leadership, committed officially and unequivocally to the Judaization of the entire territory of Palestine, is the intensification of internal repression» (p. 60).

All in all, *Israel: An Apartheid State* will be extremely useful to those wanting to know more about the causes of the Palestinian-Zionist conflict; it will be equally useful to those already in the know as a concise and well-documented reference.

DIALOGUE TOWARDS A DEMOCRATIC PALESTINE

The book distinguishes itself on another count as well, due to the author's consistent anti-Zionist stand and history of struggle alongside the Palestinian people. The second half of the book is devoted to presenting the alternative to Zionist apartheid - the PLO, and the possibilities for a democratic state in Palestine. Davis is not content with simply exposing Zionism, but is explicitly committed to an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue to promote an alternative solution which would benefit both Palestinian Arabs and Israeli Jews. In his view, such dialogue should be based on three truths:

1. «...as long as the 1948 refugees are excluded from any part of their homeland, including Acre, Haifa, Jaf-

fa, Beer Sheba, and reduced to the misery of refugee camps and exile, they are right to reassert their presence in the homeland from which they are excluded, if necessary by military means and armed struggle... we must support them morally and materially in this struggle.»

2. «...an Israeli Jewish people has been created in the process of the Zionist colonization of Palestine. This people must be guaranteed full rights to cultural autonomy: Hebrew schools, newspapers, clubs, etc. It cannot and must not be allowed a state of its own for the single reason that the continued existence of the state of Israel as a Jewish state must necessarily entail the continued exclusion of the 1948 Palestinian Arab refugees from all and any parts of their homeland. If all 1948 refugees are allowed to return and *all* UN Assembly resolutions are implemented, including the 1947 Partition Plan and Resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, stipulating the return of all Palestinian Arab refugees or the payment of compensation, there can be no Jewish state.»

3. critical awareness.

With these truths in mind, Davis reviews the political development of the PLO in terms of how it has formulated its strategic and interim goals in conformity with international law. In general, his presentation is to be much appreciated in that it clearly shows that the PLO is the party most qualified to forward a just, peaceful solution to the conflict. On the other hand, Davis very precisely analyzes the limitations of the Israeli 'peace camp': «the Israeli Jewish peace camp strives to secure recognition by the PLO of the *legitimacy* of the continued existence of the state of Israel inside its 4 June 1967 boundaries... without insisting that such recognition must be subject to the condition that Israeli citizenship be granted to all - approximately 2 million - 1948 Palestinian Arab refugees...» (p. 102).

Davis also puts forth a number of propositions such as that the PLO should not recognize 'Israel' in its pre-5 June 1967 boundaries, but could recognize the 'Israel' specified under the conditions of the 1947 UN Partition Plan; he envisions a process whereby the two states, an Israeli and Palestinian one, would grant citizenship to all their inhabitants (present and former) and hold universal elections for their

respective legislatures, culminating in a united secular democratic Palestine, through peaceful means, in a few years. Davis' proposals also include enabling Palestinian Jews to become members of the Palestinian National Council and amending the Palestinian National Covenant (Charter) to allow Israeli Jews to remain in liberated Palestine and acquire Palestinian citizenship.

Although some of Davis' ideas go beyond the policy adopted by the PLO to date, we think that the last two mentioned propositions in particular are worthy of discussion as part of the PLO's work to build relations with democratic, anti-Zionist forces. Other of Davis' propositions, such as the first two referred here, could be understood as part of a PLO peace initiative aimed at adapting to new conditions that may be created in the course of the ongoing liberation struggle, including exploiting the contradictions that will arise in the Israeli society in this process. However, such questions must be discussed in the context of an overall analysis of all factors of the conflict. We see it as a limitation that the book does not deal with the role of imperialism, the US in particular, in the conflict, even though this issue impinges directly or indirectly on many of the strategic questions raised. At the same time, Davis mentions only in passing the international conference under UN auspices, which is in fact the peace initiative unanimously adopted by the PLO, as opposed to the false 'peace' plans promoted by the US and some Zionist forces.

The neglect of US imperialism's role in the Palestinian-Zionist conflict is reflected in a number of Davis' assessments to which we would put serious questions, for example his evaluation of the PLO's relations with Jordan. These relations can never be evaluated as a local question isolated from imperialist plans in the region, for the Jordanian monarchy has historically functioned to promote these plans, meanwhile shielding the Zionist state.

Davis notes that at the PNC's 16th session a major shift occurred in PLO policy with the adoption of a resolution advocating a «confederation between two independent states» (Palestinian and Jordanian), followed by the 1985 Amman accord with the Jordanian regime. Davis views this accord as «a tactical manoeuvre pursued under the pressure of extremely adverse conditions for the PLO regionally and inter-

nationally, which was directed at buying time, and which can be expected to achieve nothing other than buying time» (p. 80). While it is Davis' right to hold this view if he deems it correct, it is another thing when he insinuates that those who vehemently opposed the Amman accord did so based merely on a *priori* suspicion of the prevailing PLO leadership's intentions.

Davis' assessment appears to stem from the fact that he does not deal with the existence of differing political lines and class forces within the PLO. But even more principally, it is rooted in failure to connect the prevailing status of the Palestinian-Zionist conflict at that time, with the concurrent US plans. The Reagan plan forwarded in 1982 officially appointed the Jordanian monarchy as the vehicle for absorbing and thus liquidating the PLO and the Palestinian cause. The danger of the Amman accord, and the reason it was opposed by a broad spectrum of Palestinian revolutionary forces, was that it provided the Jordanian monarch with a lever for undermining the Palestinian struggle from within, totally putting aside the independent state which was at the heart of the 16th PNC's resolutions. Davis overlooks the fact that the Amman accord was only endorsed by one Palestinian resistance organization, Fatah, and that the 17th PNC held in Amman, which backed this policy, was boycotted by all Palestinian organizations other than Fatah and the Arab Liberation Front. In contrast, it was abrogated at the unifying PNC in Algiers in 1987, attended by the major Palestinian organizations.

Another unclarity in the book concerns the PLO's policy of meeting Israeli forces that recognize the PLO as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, regardless of whether they are anti-Zionist or not. According to the author, «To interpret this policy as ascribing legitimacy by the PLO to Zionist philosophy and practice is, in the view of the author, from the political perspective completely irrational... It is not the meeting, contact or dialogue *per se* that can or ought to serve as a criterion for political assessment, but the *content and the context* of such meeting, contact or dialogue» (p. 81). This sounds reasonable but Davis neither explains how and under what conditions the PLO can avoid ascribing legitimacy to

Zionism with such meetings; nor does he directly explain what the Palestinian cause stands to gain from such contacts.

Since Davis harbors no illusions about the Israeli peace camp (the analysis of Peace Now is a strong point of the book), we can assume that his evaluation is related to his vision of the future course of the conflict, counting on continued struggle to create new realities. Davis states that current contacts with Zionist Israelis «presage the possibility, in the long term, for the Zionist movement and for the Israeli government to accept surrender in the face of the attrition of prolonged popular armed struggle and the inevitable victory of the PLO... There is every reason to expect that Israel will surrender to Palestine, probably in the framework of an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations, where the Israeli Prime Minister of the racist regime of Zionist Israel will negotiate the terms of the 'suicide' of his government with the Chairman of the PLO Executive Committee and future Prime Minister of the democratic Republic of Palestine» (p. 82).

What remains unclear is how PLO contacts with Zionist forces *now* promote this development. In fact, there is a great deal of concrete evidence that such relations harm the PLO and Palestinian cause. Such contacts give Arab regimes a pretext for reneging on their official boycott of 'Israel', meanwhile edging closer to the Camp David accords which ignore Palestinian rights. PLO contacts with Zionist forces, following upon Egypt's entry into Camp David, also provided an excuse for a number of African governments to restore their relations with the Zionist state, that were broken after the 1973 war. All this detracted from the PLO's role on the regional and international level, as the vanguard in the struggle against Zionism.

Similarly we miss the connection between the prediction about Zionist surrender and other future perspectives outlined in the book, such as that the Zionist leadership inherently resorts to war and repression to relieve its crises, that the fascist option has always been central to Zionism, and that in the last years, the anti-Zionist forces have been further marginalized as «Israeli Jewish society is subject to a process of escalating Nazification» (p. 85).

The connection we miss may lie in Davis' view of the decline of the Zionist momentum after 1967, not having achieved a convincing victory since. Davis gives as one example the Israeli «loss» of the Sinai and its settlements there via Camp David. Certainly this was a loss when compared to historical Zionist dreams. But this is only a partial analysis. It overlooks the important fact that imperialist influence became stronger in the region in the seventies, and that Begin's 'Israel' only embarked on Camp David because it perceived the tremendous strategic gains to be made by Egypt withdrawing from the confrontation, while the Zionist state institutionalized its strategic cooperation with the USA. Davis compares the future Israeli surrender to that of Rhodesia, but the Palestinians are not fighting 'Israel' only. They are fighting a state which has increasingly taken on the property of a military base in the area, which the US will do all to protect. Rhodesia, in contrast, had already proved itself troublesome to its imperialist allies who supported it only covertly in the final stages of Zimbabwe's liberation. It has yet to be proved that massive US aid to 'Israel' influences the society in the direction of compromise or surrender to the Palestinians, quite the contrary.

We do not ourselves claim to have a detailed blueprint of how the liberation struggle will develop in the future, what changes this will enforce on the Israeli society and how the PLO should adjust its policies accordingly. We do however think that a more comprehensive and precise analysis should underlie PLO policy on critical questions such as relations with reactionary regimes and Zionist forces.

We do not make these points in order to disparage Dr. Davis' contribution to the dialogue on how to achieve a truly democratic Palestine. Rather we hope this dialogue continues, becomes richer and more precise. We think that Dr. Davis would agree with us that the current uprising in occupied Palestine has given new impetus and possibly new parameters for this discussion, and we welcome further discussion of the topic in the light of this.

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«Israel»

Prototype for the RDF

This is a continuation of the study on US—Israeli relations and the Zionist state's role in the Middle East.

The US—Israeli 1983 memorandum of understanding was a concrete working program for strategic military cooperation, providing for: coordination of objectives, strategies and tactics; prepositioning US military equipment, ammunition and fuel in 'Israel'; US use of Israeli hospitals in an emergency; use of Haifa port by the US 6th fleet; US air force use of Israeli runways and ground support, and the construction of a special facility for US Strategic Projection Force aircraft; shipment of US supplies to the Lebanese Army overland via 'Israel'; intelligence-sharing; Israeli maintenance and overhaul of US aircraft and ships in the eastern Mediterranean; cooperation in anti-submarine warfare; «anti-terrorist» cooperation; coordinated air and naval maneuvers; coordinated defense industry planning, and research and development; and joint economic and security projects in 'third world' countries.

In the main, the 1983 agreement represented institutionalization of military cooperation that has evolved over the years, based on the imperatives of imperialist strategy in the Middle East, and the Zionist leadership's efforts to assert its ability to further these imperatives. An earlier installment of this study dealt with this agreement in terms of US objectives (see *Democratic Palestine* 18:«Israel: *Nom de Guerre* for US Military Base»). This article will examine the special operations undertaken by 'Israel' to attain its status as the local power most capable of projecting US imperialism's force in the area.

Although the Zionists usually emphasize Israeli «defense and security» needs, the reality is that few if any of the state's military operations can be justified in terms of defense. In addition to expansionism, an overriding aim of Israeli wars and special operations has been to attain recognition that 'Israel' is imperialism's most valuable ally in the region. Long before the US conceived the Rapid Deployment Force (now the Central Command) or began building its own bases in the Middle East, 'Israel' was serving as a *de facto* RDF for imperialist endeavors. In 1966, an Israeli official told the *New York Times*, «The US has come to the conclusion that it can no longer respond to every incident around the world, that it must rely on a local power... as a first line to stave off America's direct involvement... Israel feels that she fits this definition» (cited in *Palestine Focus*, May-June 1987). The US's tendency to use its own military power in the Middle East over the past decade has not diminished the Israeli role, but rather had led to more advanced cooperation between the two states.

TERROR AND DISINFORMATION

It was 'Israel' that staged the world's first hijacking in December 1954, capturing a civilian Syrian aircraft to get hostages to exchange for Israeli soldiers who had been captured infiltrating Syrian territory. In 1958, the Zionist state provided logistical support at Haifa port for the landing of US Marines in Lebanon to prop up Camille Chamoun's pro-imperialist government. This set the precedent for May 1983, when the USS Savannah docked at Haifa to take on supplies

for the 6th fleet anchored off Beirut, in the failed attempt to shore up Amin Gemayel's reactionary government. Later the same year, the memorandum of understanding was signed, making such US naval visits routine. As reported by the *Jerusalem Post*, April 4, 1986, US ships have anchored in Haifa 221 times since 1977, including twelve visits by aircraft carriers.

As fighting erupted between the Jordanian regime and the Palestinian revolution in 1970, 'Israel' eyed the chance to prove its credentials in Washington once again, and possibly expand its own territory eastwards. The Israeli intelligence claimed Syria had invaded Jordan with a massive force on the side of the Palestinians - a claim which the US was obviously unable to verify. 'Israel' claimed it would take both the army and air force to deal with this. Though nothing materialized, Rabin, then Israeli ambassador to the US (currently Defense Minister), recorded the Israeli gains in his memoirs as he asserted had been related to him by Kissinger: «The President (Nixon) will never forget Israel's role in preventing the deterioration in Jordan and blocking the attempt to overthrow the regime there. He (Nixon) said the United States is fortunate in having an ally like Israel in the Middle East. These events will be taken into account in all future developments» (quoted in Seymour Hirsch, *The Price of Power* and cited in the *Journal of Palestine Studies* 54, Winter 1985).

SETTING PRECEDENTS FOR BLACKMAIL

'Israel' has staged a series of spectacular 'firsts' to establish its reputation as a 'superman' able to deal with 'terrorists' (read: anti-imperialists) and to battletest military equipment and techniques for itself and its allies. In 1968, Israeli war planes attacked Beirut airport and destroyed 13 civilian airliners. In 1972, the Mossad arranged the carbomb assassination of Palestinian writer and PFLP leader, Ghassan Kanafani. In 1973, an Israeli commando force killed three PLO leaders in Beirut - Kamal Nasser, Kamal Adwan and Abu Joseph Najjar - in an operation similar to the recent assassination of Khalil Al Wazir in Tunis (see article in this issue). In the same terrorist tradition, the Mossad has murdered a series of Palestinian patriots abroad, while in the autumn of 1985, the Israeli air force staged a long-range bombing attack on the PLO headquarters in Tunis.

According to Amos Perlmutter, Michael Handel and Uri Bar-Joseph, authors of *Two Minutes Over Baghdad* (1982), all of whom have close ties to the Israeli military establishment, the 1976 Israeli raid on Entebbe, Uganda, was the first long-range «rescue» operation of its kind. The 1981 attack on the Iraqi nuclear reactor was the first «pre-emptive» action against a nuclear installation in history - something previously considered by the US against Soviet facilities - and the longest bombing raid in Israeli history. Begin bragged, «This will be my Entebbe» - anticipating greater popularity as crystallized in his subsequent election victory.

Actual defense needs played little part in the deliberations of the Israeli leadership. When the decision to bomb the reactor was taken by the Israeli cabinet in October 1980, «those who supported the raid replied that the amount of weapon-grade uranium in Iraqi hands was not enough to produce even one bomb.» In addition, 'Israel' three times proposed to India to make a joint attack on Pakistan's nuclear reactor, but was turned down (*International Herald Tribune*, February 23, 1987). This is despite the fact that there has never been any indication that Pakistan would use its nuclear power against the Zionist state. The real intent was demonstrating Israeli capacity to threaten and blackmail the Arab regimes and nationalist forces, while advertizing Israeli military capacity before the world. The authors of *Two Minutes Over Baghdad* estimate the Israeli Air Force to be the third largest in the world, both qualitatively and quantitatively, and the most experienced in modern air tactics and warfare. They moreover note: «... the brilliant execution of the Israeli Air Force in the Iraqi nuclear raid is probably the best possible advertisement for US aircraft manufacturers (General Dynamics and McDonald Douglas)... The Mirage III had practically no customers until Israel achieved such dramatic success with its Mirage IIIs during the 1967 Six Day War.» They describe quite openly the results cultivated by 'Israel' with this incidence of state terror: «...the annihilation of the Iraqi reactor has torn apart the rules of international behaviour previously known in the Middle East... Israel and Prime Minister Begin have created for themselves a nuclear monopoly in the Middle East.» Concurrently, the Arab world received a shock of 1967 proportions.

Perlmutter, Handel and Bar-Joseph's telling of the US reaction is also noteworthy: «You can't help but admire their technical proficiency, although we strongly condemn the action,» said one US Defense spokesman. Reagan reportedly assured the Israeli ambassador that the raid would not hurt US-Israeli relations, while National Security officials privately applauded the boldness and efficiency of the raid on a «Soviet ally». Bob Woodward's 1987 book *VEIL* revealed more about the US role: «...under the intelligence arrangement set up with Casey's approval, Israel had almost unlimited access to U.S. satellite photography and had used it in planning their raid.» The raid occurred on June 7, 1981. One month later, the head of Israeli military intelligence Maj. Gen Yehoshua Saguy visited Casey in the US where «they agreed that if there ever was a need for something special they would deal directly with each other.»

'Israel' is still banking on the fear instilled in the Arab regimes by the 1981 attack. Its blackmail is not restricted to nationalist forces, but is also aimed against reactionary regimes which are vying for US favor. In March this year, 'Israel' made a big fuss when it was learned that Saudi Arabia had obtained surface-to-surface DP-3 missiles. As noted in *Newsweek*, April 4th edition: «The missiles are not yet operational, and last week Israel hinted it might make sure they never were. 'We have a reputation that we do not wait until a potential danger becomes an actual danger,' said Yossi Ben-Aharon, a top aide to Prime Minister Shamir. It was taken as a clear reference to Israel's 1981 raid on an Iraqi nuclear reactor - and U.S. electronic intelligence confirmed that Israeli Air Force jets have been conducting intensive, low-level attack practice runs.» As of this writing, it appears the Israelis have refrained from any such attack in view of US advice. This is merely one more sign of the Zionist state's increasing integration into imperialism's global strategy.

PARTNERSHIP

From the time of the 1967 war, the Zionist state placed itself more overtly in the context of US global strategy. This tendency became even more blatant after the 1973 war when «Israel» was only bailed out by the massive US airlift of military supplies. US-Israeli military relations assumed a more institutionalized character, with the ever increasing militarization of the Israeli economy occurring under direct US auspices. Israel Shahak gives one interesting example of this: «The main source of the increase (in Israeli military production) following the Arab-Israeli war of October 1973, was the 'acquisition of whole factories in the U.S. by Sultam, Taas and Tadiran,' and their transfer to Israel, and the employment of the most developed American technology (*Israel's Global Role: Weapons for Repression*, AAUG, 1982; the internal quote is from Haaretz, March 7, 1977). With US-made F-15s forming the backbone of the Israeli air force, «Israel» is dependent on the delivery of spare parts and ammunition from the US in the case of a prolonged conflict.

Israeli emphasis on developing its own arms industry and the US cooperation in this venture shows that the nature of their relationship is that of partnership, not simply that between a big power and its client. As noted in *MERIP Middle East Report* No. 144, January-February 1987, «Israel controls the largest inventory of US and US-compatible arms outside the United States. More important than compatibility of weapons is the compatibility of ideology and political analysis. Here we see the offspring of the Nixon-Kissinger strategic calculations in the years following the 1967 war... The US has allowed Israel to co-produce US military equipment under license at a 'higher level of technology' than any other FMS credit recipient, according to one State Department official.»

ANTI-SOVIET STANCE

Concurrent with its integration into US global strategy, the Zionist state assumed a more blatantly anti-Soviet stance, seeing the attainment of specific Zionist goals as inextricably bound to advances for imperialism. After the 1973 war, Rabin argued against moves towards a political settlement as follows: «Israel should try to 'gain time', he urged, in hope that 'we will later find ourselves in a better situation; the U.S. may adopt a more aggressive position vis-a-vis the USSR...» (Noam Chomsky, *The Fateful Triangle*, 1983, p. 13, quoted according to Amnon Kapeliouk, *Israel: la fin des mythes*, 1975). The Zionist leadership had thus primed itself to be a main partner in the Reagan Administration's anti-Soviet crusade, as was formalized in the November 30, 1981 memorandum of understanding article 1, clause 1: «The United States-Israeli strategic cooperation, as set forth in this memorandum, is designed against the threat to peace and security of the region caused by the Soviet Union or Soviet-controlled forces from outside the region introduced into the region.»

The 1982 invasion of Lebanon embodied the Zionists' efforts to intertwine their objectives of eradicating the Palestinian cause with other US imperatives in the region. In the spring of 1982, US Secretary of State Haig had linked three main issues the US had to deal with in the region: 'autonomy' for the Palestinians, i.e., expanding Camp David; the situation in Lebanon and the Gulf war. The Zionist state undertook to resolve two of these issues, implementing the ready-made plans for invading Lebanon in hopes of destroying the PLO, after the spring uprising in the occupied territories had made it clear

that the Palestinian people were having nothing of 'autonomy'. While Israeli Chief of Staff Eitan proclaimed in July 1982, «The battle in Beirut is for Greater Israel,» Israeli ambassador to the US, Moshe Arens, revealed the Israeli global ambitions in his August 1982 statement: «The war in Lebanon has brought tremendous gains for the US and has changed the relationship of forces between the great powers» (cited in *Haaretz*, September 21, 1983).

The Zionist lobby in the US eagerly explained part of what Arens meant. A booklet published by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee in 1983, entitled *Israel and the US Navy*, listed the benefits that had accrued to the US due to military cooperation with the Zionist state: «Israel's provision of combat data on the performance of American and Soviet systems in the 1967 Six Day War, the War of Attrition, and the 1973 Yom Kippur War. Some data gleaned from the 1982 Lebanon campaign has already been provided by Israel and it has offered to do more... The Israeli Air Force (IAF) has indirectly assisted USAF by proving the superiority of American aircraft over both Soviet fighters and Soviet air defenses» - a reference to «IAF successes against the Syrians... The Soviet

The culmination of Israeli incorporation into the US's global anti-Soviet campaign was the Zionist state's 1986 decision to join the Strategic Defense Initiative (Star Wars). Thus 'Israel' took a step even more radical than some of the NATO allies were prepared to take. (See *Democratic Palestine* no.23 for coverage of US—Israeli SDI cooperation.)

THE ARC OF INTERVENTION

Due to the failures experienced in Lebanon, the Israeli military did undertake tactical readjustments, but these did not head in a less interventionist direction. Upon succeeding Sharon as defense minister, Moshe Arens worked to reorganize the Israeli armed forces. «An outline of his plan appeared in *Monitin* (April 1983), accompanied with a map of the areas included in Israel's strategic planning. The map has Israel in the center with an arc indicating the boundaries of its intervention. Within this arc lie Libya, Chad, Sudan, Ethiopia, the entire Arabian Peninsula and Iran. The temptation to extend the arc to a full circle and speculate on its boundaries is almost irresistible» (*Palestine Focus*, August 1983).

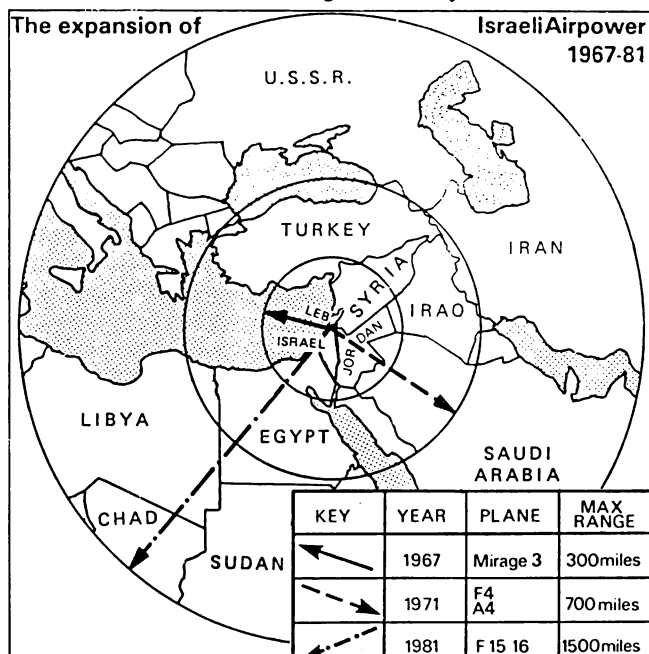
THE LAVI

The development of the Lavi fighter jet was another sign of the Zionist state's intentions to elevate its interventionist capacity and strategic alliance with US imperialism. Among the interrelated aims was procuring US funds to bail the Israeli Aircraft Industries, the biggest employer in 'Israel', out of economic stagnation, at a time when the Israeli government had no extra funds. Moshe Arens, Defense Minister in 1983-4, was the prime mover of the Lavi project. In an interview with *Jerusalem Post* (January 31, 1986), he spelled out the effects the Lavi would have on Israeli status in the region and internationally: «When we go and buy an F-16, the Arabs know we have an F-16. When we build a Lavi, they don't know what we have... And then they have to ask themselves what else have these people (the Israelis) been able to do... The plane is 50 per cent American, and represents something that has never been done in the Western world before. No other country has developed an aircraft with the U.S. as a cooperative venture -something that opens both marketing and joint production possibilities between the two countries, in addition to the obvious statement this makes about the strength of the strategic bond between us.»

In an interview with *Defense and Foreign Affairs*, February 1986, Arens also admitted that 'Israel' is in fact becoming more and not less dependent on the US. When asked if the Lavi project negated Israeli self-reliance, he said, «... we're not attaching the kind of importance that we did in past years in gaining independence, in having everything manufactured here.»

In the same period the Lavi was being developed, a US plan to fund a Jordanian Rapid Deployment Force died in Congress due to Israeli opposition.

The Lavi project was halted in autumn 1987 when the Israeli government finally conceded to the US assessment that the expenses of its production were prohibitive. Still, the Israelis (and the US) have the blueprints; even if they never produce this warplane, they can sell the know-how and technology involved. A recent issue of *Israeli Foreign Affairs* (December 1987) wrote about indications that South Africa may produce a similar warplane based on having recruited thousands of Israeli technicians and engineers who worked on the Lavi project: «When the Israeli Cabinet canceled the Lavi aircraft pro-



Union will therefore now have to devote large financial resources to replacement and renovation of the systems that have proven vulnerable... The military result of Lebanon is thus a huge implicit gain for USAF, in undermining the value of tens of billions of rubles in Soviet air defense expenditure».

Along the same lines, 57 US Congressmen directed a letter in March 1983 to then US Defense Secretary Weinberger, urging an agreement with 'Israel' on military data sharing since, in the Lebanon war, 'Israel' had used over 100 US-developed weapons systems in Lebanon, which had not previously been utilized in full-scale combat (chronicled in *Journal of Palestine Studies* 48, Summer 1983).

«We can say that we really put US technology to a real-world-test in Israel,» asserted Major General Uri Tsimhoni, Israeli military attache in Washington from 1984-86. In an interview with *Defense News*, August 11, 1986, Tsimhoni spoke about US-Israeli cooperation and joint development of NATO weapons, noting, «We really have to defeat many of the same Soviet aircraft, the same Soviet tanks, whether it's in the Warsaw Pact or in Syria or in North Korea.»

ject, employees of the state-owned Israeli Aircraft Industries staged riotous demonstrations against the anticipated layoff of 3,000. Then the demonstrations suddenly stopped.» The *Jerusalem Post*, November 9, 1987, wrote about Pretoria's recruitment campaign. Around the same time, the Israeli military closed its special office for recruiting laid-off Lavi employees, because it had received no applications. The Italian daily *Il Giornale* wrote, «It seems that there is a secret agreement between Israel and South Africa to produce the Lavi aircraft.» The same newspaper commented that it is «very interesting that the USA does not react to the news about the production of the Lavi in South Africa,» wondering if the US had actually given its blessing to the deal.

NATO STATUS

In the last decade, a specific aim of the Zionist leadership in offering its military and intelligence services to imperialism, has been attaining for 'Israel' a status equivalent to a NATO ally. General Keegan, head of US air force intelligence, assessed the Israeli intelligence-gathering role at a Washington symposium in May 1983, saying: «Today the capacity of the American Air Force in particular and the American armed forces in general to defend NATO positions is indebted to the attention of Israeli intelligence more than any other intelligence source, in the fields of tracking satellites, electronic listening posts, etc.» (*Yediot Aharanot* as translated by *Al Fajr*, December 16, 1983).

Following the November 1983 memorandum on strategic military cooperation, US Defense Secretary Weinberger and his Israeli counterpart, Arens, signed an unprecedented security agreement in March 1984, «integrating Israel into the US global defense system» (*Jerusalem Post*, May 25, 1984). In September of the same year, 'Israel' delivered 12 Kfir jets to the US Navy on a no-cost, four-year lease for use in combat training, with the Israeli Aircraft Industries assuming responsibility for maintaining the jets during this period. In December 1984, there were US—Israeli joint naval maneuvers. In November 1985, there were joint military exercises and the biggest armada yet of the US 6th fleet docked in Haifa. The February 12, 1986 edition of *Newsweek* reported that US 6th fleet jets had been practicing precision attacks in the Negev for more than three months. By June 1986, 'Israel' and the US had agreed on a major re-equipment of the Israeli navy and the upgrading of Haifa port to facilitate its use by the 6th fleet. According to the *Financial Times*, June 2, 1986, all this was related to the «Israeli navy's wish to expand the range of its operations well out into the Mediterranean, and meet the perceived danger from an increase in the power of the Syrian navy...»

One of Defense Minister Rabin's main tasks in 1986 was campaigning for equivalency to a NATO power. «The acquisition by Israel of the *de facto status of a NATO member would thus be a valuable insurance for the future,*» wrote the *Jerusalem Post*, July 31, 1986, adding that Rabin had argued for this in his most recent visit to Washington. Speaking to a United Jewish Appeal mission, including a number of US Senators, «Rabin yesterday called for upgrading the military relationship between Israel and the US to that of major, non-NATO allies of the US, such as Japan, Australia and New Zealand,» (*Jerusalem Post*, August 19, 1986).

This also entails closer Zionist military cooperation with countries such as West Germany. According to the *Jerusalem Post*, June 27, 1986, organized groups of West German

military personnel began visiting 'Israel' in 1985 on «study trips» including tours of the occupied Golan Heights and West Bank. The only other place visited by such groups is the USA.

COUNTERREVOLUTIONARY SECURITY

Parallel to providing more facilities for imperialist military presence in the Middle East, the Zionist state worked to take the lead in «anti-terrorist» cooperation to emphasize its usefulness to the Western alliance. Avraham Tamir, responsible for the Israeli military's strategic planning from 1970-84, before becoming Peres' national security adviser in 1984, spoke before American audiences emphasizing the «fight against terrorism, in which Israel has more experience than any other country,» giving the Entebbe raid as an example (*Jerusalem Post*, June 6, 1986). In May 1986, the Zionist state hosted US Attorney-General Meese for eight days, so that the two countries could institutionalize «anti-terrorist» cooperation. In the same month, 'Israel' reached an agreement with Italy on closer intelligence cooperation. The following month, General Dan Shomron, who led the Entebbe action in 1976 and is now Chief of Staff, visited France in his capacity as Deputy Chief of Staff - the highest ranking Israeli officer to visit France since 1967. There he toured military installations including the paratrooper base used by the French Rapid Intervention Forces which has had missions in Africa and Lebanon. Also in June 1986, Deputy Prime Minister Shamir visited Paris and reached «broad agreement on anti-terrorist» cooperation with Premier Chirac (*Jewish Telegraph Agency*, June 24, 1986).

So-called anti-terrorist cooperation has economic advantages as well: «Israel's latest military export, according to the (Israel) television report, is anti-terrorist expertise. Twenty companies, usually headed by former senior officers from elite Israeli army and secret police units, offer such services,» advertising proficiency in assassinations, etc. (*Los Angeles Times*, September 18, 1986).

US—ISRAELI ALLIANCE CONFIRMED

This year the prolongation of the Palestinian uprising poses serious questions to the Zionist state's ability to continue in its role as US imperialism's forward base and rapid deployment force in the region. At present, the bulk of the Zionist army is deployed in the 1967 occupied territories, repressing civilians. 'Israel' spends \$4.4 billion, about 15% of the 1987 gross national product, to maintain the world's 3rd or 4th mightiest army (*International Herald Tribune*, February 23, 1987). Still, it has been unable to stop the uprising of an unarmed people. The brutal Israeli attempts to squash the uprising aim not only to maintain the Zionist state's internal security, but also at reestablishing its image as the region's 'superman'. Though Israeli repression has met with international outcry, the US so far seems determined to preserve the status quo of its no. 1 ally. As the uprising raged on, «Congress and the Reagan Administration were handing Israel a gift package of \$2 billion in debt relief benefits, equal bidding rights with NATO allies on military contracts, and a US agreement to pay 80% of the development costs of a new Israeli missile» (*Israel and Palestine*, January 1988). As 'Israel' celebrated its 40 years of illegal existence, Shamir and Reagan signed a new memorandum of understanding, basically reaffirming their strategic alliance in a time of crisis.

Afghanistan

Opportunity for Peace

The Geneva accords have pulled the carpet out from under the Reagan Administration's «low-intensity warfare» as practiced against Afghanistan and the Soviet Union. For the first time since the 1978 revolution, the Afghani government and people have obtained international guarantees that they should be able to continue their effort towards peace and progress without the threat of imperialist-reactionary interference.

On April 14th, the foreign ministers of Afghanistan, Pakistan, the US and the Soviet Union signed a set of accords which Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze characterized as a «political settlement of the situation around Afghanistan» (*International Herald Tribune*, April 15th). Signing the first accord, Pakistan and Afghanistan pledged non-interference in each other's internal affairs, to «refrain from the promotion, encouragement or support, direct or indirect, of rebellious or secessionist activities.» This was the lynchpin of the accords, for it rules out the Pakistani-US military aid to the Afghani contras.

In the second accord, the Soviet Union and the US pledged to serve as international guarantors of the agreement. The third accord, signed by Afghanistan and Pakistan, provides for the resettlement of Afghani refugees currently in Pakistan and Iran, in their own country. The fourth accord connects the first three and ties them to a timetable for the Soviet troop withdrawal which began May 15th and will be completed within nine months.

IMPERIALISM'S SOUR GRAPES

The US media in particular reacted to these accords by predicting chaos in Afghanistan, comparing the Soviet withdrawal with the US defeat in Vietnam, and speculating about supposed rifts between the Afghani and Soviet leaderships. These imperialist apologists are actually just reflecting the Reagan Administration's frustration. Costing over \$2 billion over eight years, the CIA's operation against Afghanistan is its biggest since Vietnam and one of its biggest ever. The Reagan Administration was counting it as a

great policy success. By aiding the Afghani counterrevolutionaries, the US could practice «low-intensity warfare» to sap the energies of the progressive government in Afghanistan and the Soviet Union, without committing US forces. In contrast to supporting the contras against Nicaragua, the US's covert war on Afghanistan met with almost no domestic opposition.

Nonetheless, the US was forced by a combination of factors beyond its own borders and control, to sign an international accord which makes its support to the Afghani contras illegal. The real background for the accords is to be found in three main factors:

1. The consolidation of the Afghani revolution, especially with the success of the national reconciliation policy initiated in 1987, by Comrade Najibullah, General Secretary of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA).
2. The Soviet determination to resolve regional conflicts as part of its global peace offensive.
3. The Afghani counterrevolutionary forces' chronic corruption, disunity and unpopularity, even among Afghani refugees in Pakistan; and the problems this has created for the Pakistani regime, despite its great desire to sabotage the Afghani revolution.

There is also a form of thinly veiled racism in the many predictions that the Afghani regime will not be able to manage in the absence of Soviet troops. In this light, the comments of UN Undersecretary-General Diego Cordovez, who devoted six years to mediating this accord, are interesting: «We are being besieged by news analyses that advance the notion that the Afghani people will be unable to agree among themselves and conse-

quently will be plunged into renewed civil war... I believe that those predictions underestimate the Afghans, as pundits so often have underestimated other peoples of the Third World» (*International Herald Tribune*, May 9th).

CAUSE FOR HOPE

Based on the experience of the past year and a half, there are many reasons to believe that the Afghani government can preside over a peaceful, democratic resolution of the situation if foreign intervention really ceases. In an interview with *The New Worker*, April 29th, Ahmad Sarwar, Charge d'Affaires at the Afghani Embassy in London, recounted the steps achieved in national reconciliation so far: «Since we announced the policy, over 200,000 people have come back from abroad. Thousands have laid down their arms and come over to the government side. More than 6,000 of our opponents have joined the commissions for national reconciliation, and are actively participating in the creation of peace in Afghanistan. Recently... two groups who backed the rebels returned from India and joined the government. Thirteen of the thirty provinces have been declared zones of peace and all troops withdrawn from them.»

To meet the challenge of the new situation, the government has proposed negotiations to create a broad-based coalition government, including the rebel groups and the former shah (king); 28 ministerial posts have been offered to the opposition. In accordance with the new constitution ratified last year, parliamentary elections have been held throughout the country - a first in Afghanistan's history - and posts were kept open for the opposition which has so far refused to participate.

Friends of the Afghani revolution may legitimately ask themselves whether these new moves might not be seized upon by those who want to retard Afghanistan's advance towards socialism. However, such questions must be evaluated on the background of objective conditions. In this connection, Ahmad Sarwar's assessment provides a yardstick for evaluating government policy: «We are at the stage of feudality and pre-feudality in Afghanistan. The party is not a communist party, but a revolutionary party, and its aim was to democratise all social and economic life in the country. It is too soon for the party to be a

communist party immediately. We are a revolutionary, democratic party. We are going to build a socialist society, but we are a long way from socialism yet. We have to go through some stages first. We cannot jump at once to socialism. We need the material base.»

Until now, the work of the PDPA has proceeded under extremely adverse circumstances, due to the war instigated by imperialist and reactionary forces. Still, it gives cause for optimism that the Afghani revolutionary forces can rise to the challenge of leading the masses in a national democratic revolution, oriented towards socialism. The party itself has grown from under 20,000 to 200,000 in the ten years since the revolution. The mass organizations that have been established (trade unions, women's and students' unions) broaden the ranks of the progressive movement struggling to develop the country. The building of numerous factories, roads, schools and hospitals has laid the cornerstone of the material base to be further expanded. Since the revolution of 1978, 1,700,000 Afghanis have learned to read. This is a fact of political as well as social significance, for the counterrevolution was in the past able to capitalize on widespread ignorance among the masses, in fomenting opposition to the progressive government.

THE THREAT TO PEACE

A review of the internal Afghani situation leads one to conclude that the sole threat to implementation of the Geneva accords stems from the same forces that instigated the war on Afghanistan - chiefly the US, the Pakistani dictatorship and the seven-faction rebel alliance they support. Indeed, this alliance has declared that it is not bound by the Geneva accords, and will continue the war until an Islamic government is established in Kabul. They punctuated their declaration by shooting down an Afghani civil plane, killing 29 passengers, as the accords were being signed, utilizing US-supplied Stinger missiles. Yet ultimately, this alliance cannot sustain armed struggle or even its own internal structures without the massive aid which the US and others have channeled via Pakistan.

More unsettling is that the US and Pakistan had no sooner signed the accords than they put questions to the legitimacy of the Afghani government,

and asserted their intention to violate the accords under certain circumstances. The US tried to introduce a false concept of symmetry whereby it would only discontinue arms to the rebels if the Soviet Union desists from military aid to Afghanistan. This was flatly rejected by the Soviet leadership which pointed out that their aid is given in line with long-standing, legitimate treaties between the two states. Comrade Najiballah put the question of symmetry in its proper perspective when he told an American delegation from the International Center for Development Policy that his government would accept a cut-off of Soviet military aid if the US ends such assistance to Pakistan.

In early April it was reported that the US had recently given an additional \$300 million in military aid, matched by Saudi Arabia, to the Pakistan-based contras. By May 15th, when the Geneva accords went into effect, the Afghani contras were sitting with a newly delivered year's supply of arms, including new improved weaponry (anti-tank, mortars and mine-clearing equipment), according to *Time* magazine, April 18th. In early May, a US State Department official reported that Michael H. Armacost, undersecretary of political affairs, had sent an aide to Pakistan the week before to tell the rebels «that we continue to support their cause, and that we regard the Geneva agreements as a means of fostering their cause by securing a firm commitment by the Russians to get out promptly,» as a condition for the rebels taking control of the country (*International Herald Tribune*, May 7-8).

All these are indications that the US will try to circumvent the Geneva accords by upgrading its military aid to Pakistan, and letting the Pakistani military channel part of this to the contras. In so doing, however, the US will put itself at odds with the UN whose forces are charged with monitoring the Afghani-Pakistan border to see that the accords are observed. While the US is not known for respect for international legitimacy, it could prove embarrassing to be caught in violation. This would also put the US at a distinct disadvantage in future negotiations with the Soviet Union on disarmament and other issues related to international peace.

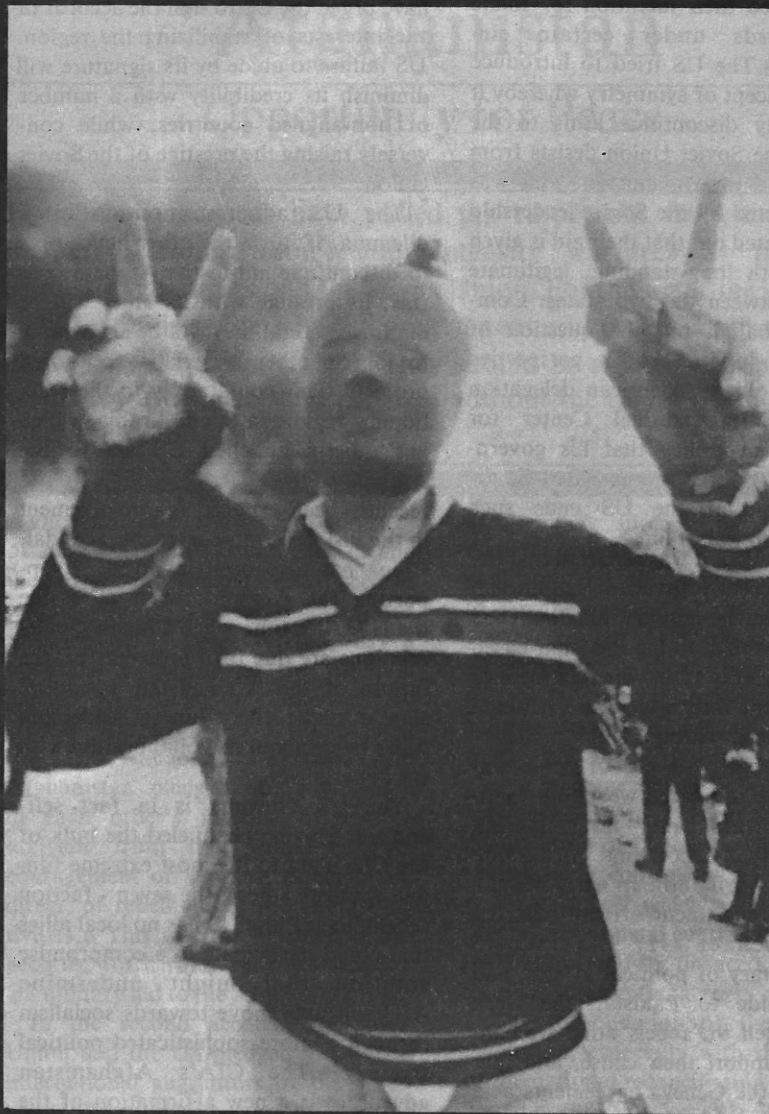
US relations with India could also be affected. President Gandhi is known to

have urged the US to sign the accords in the interests of stabilizing the region. US failure to abide by its signature will diminish its credibility with a number of non-aligned countries, while conversely raising the prestige of the Soviet Union.

The US administration is in a dilemma. If it, on the other hand, opts to discontinue aid to the Afghani contras, its prestige with its allies will be diminished, and they will be less willing to join in other imperialist-sponsored projects. This could apply to the reactionary regime in Saudi Arabia, which has quietly matched US aid to the Afghani contras over the years, and has recently been exposed for involvement in the ill-fated Iran-contragate scandal. China has also been involved in supporting the Afghani rebels alongside the US. At a time when Chinese-Soviet relations are due for improvement, the failure of the Afghanistan adventure should make the Chinese leadership think twice about its collaboration with US imperialism.

The US dilemma is in fact self-created. Having channeled the bulk of the CIA's aid to the most extreme fundamentalists among the seven - faction rebel alliance, the US has no local allies that could participate in a compromise solution that might undermine Afghanistan's move towards socialism through a more sophisticated political strategy. The CIA's Afghanistan adventure is a new affirmation of the real meaning of Reagan's support to «democratic forces fighting communism.» In frenzied efforts to turn back the tide of history, the Reagan Administration has supported forces who are not only reactionary - opposing for example that women learn to read, but are also far from the mainstream of the traditional religious forces in Afghani society, who are much more moderate in their beliefs.

In view of all these facts, the Geneva accords are a cause for celebration and should be supported by all progressive forces. Though problems may remain, implementation of these accords is to the interest of the Afghani people, and their hope for progress and peace. The UN has achieved a great victory in working out these accords. It is hoped that the UN will put all its force behind seeing that they are enforced, so that they can serve as an example of the possibility of resolving conflicts in the interest of peace and justice.



The Gospel of Stone

by
Memdouh
Adwan

An age of stone it is
Midsummer's shade of impatience has perished
The sword of impatience too died in mid-battle
River waters have turned to stone
An age of stone it is.

If life with honor is wanted
Then be a stone
Pick up a stone
Hit with a stone.

Rain has dried in arid winter
Clouds prick needle-like
Winds too shy to come with no rain
Forgetting all rain, though clouds are there
With edges keen the trees they kiss
and denude them.

Torrents of stone rain down on heads
Stone resounds the echo of stone
Stone...and then a spark
In such chaff
Proud in dung
Dried up with cold
Disgraced by flames will be.

A fire stone flint
its secret gives to the arms of a lad
saturated with bitterness
To a boy fully free from all care
For benefit or loss.

Was he playing when he threw his stones?
Or else his motto is:

If there is an enemy

There should be a stone too
Between game and disdainful riot
Rivers of stone do pass
Rains of stone approach.

How could he know?

He was but a fish in a leaky sea
All the waters stolen in darkness
Slaughtered, he wavered in dance
Receiving an *aula*¹ in the ring of dance
Giving a *Shanbash*²
He threw a stone.

Dance he did... death his game
As if the motherland gave birth to him alone
As if she called none but him
Rise he did, holding her cord
The taste of milk still on his lips
For her eyes, then
He'll stoop in dance, free from disgrace
to touch her knee.
In pride does she lift his brow
Then and there he is a cord of fire
exultant he bows to take a stone
A dance timed to the beat of death
A departing swan song
A kerchief of arrogance wet with tears
Witnessing an age dragged towards bloodbaths

A boy refused to wait

His hand stretched towards the serpents' den
With no trace of fear
With a fighting hand a stone he picks
A stone that has no meaning or color
Flying towards the invaders,
it becomes black
The homeland is Mecca then.

From stone to stone
The motherland lies embracing her chaste soil
Early came the pains of labor
Beneath the olives of Al Khalil
The miracle of combat then ushers in
The forgotten babe in the stone cradle of Galilee
doth speak.

The kings' caravan is at a loss
A stone guides them to the beautiful child
Stones they cooked for him
To make him forget his humiliation
Yet he taught them:

Stones of the deluge do help
In countering despots
In times so mean.

With a merrily departing stone
 Barriers collapse
 With a single stone removed
 Towers of the most presumptuous castles fall
 Tombstones descend from the graves
 And ancestors revive.

A boy saw the victim's face through the jury
 Saw daggers hiding
 Under the coats and subtle smiles of witnesses.

A stone
 Glass of hothouses broken
 To hatch eggs they were
 Giving in times of defeat
 Spineless chieftains.

A boy sees how naked kings are
 At once denounces all disguised shame
 Long-hidden by peacock feathers.
 He records the nakedness they fear
 Engraved in stone.

A boy sends down roots in the ancient lanes
 With all stubbornness
 Inoculated forever
 against the disease of migration
 and the mishaps of journeys.

A stone he throws
 Howling bullets reach him
 He becomes a moon
 Coming back with torrents of stone
 Taught by the valiant birds of legend
 How to throw stones
 through noises terrible.
 Alone he is angered
 Alone he is playing
 No care he gives to discouraging melodies
 Nor to wails of warning approaching
 All the time untiring.

He alone is the planet
 Alone he is, the rest are enemies
 Sticking to his stone he stands
 The philosopher's stone which
 will turn the torpid darkness in our joints
 into light
 Unveiling what filth has hidden.

The long hoped-for homeland is but a cavern
 Countries converted to markets of human sale
 Conquerors prosper
 Giving their weapons a rest
 Partners in the market they are already
 - «they were always right».

Dignitaries' conferences are struck by light
 Showing all the «exchange» offices clearly
 where arms bought with bread
 are turned against those who were starved to buy them
 Hiding the true account of our life's defeat
 Covering vision with blindness
 Turning our living into a hell
 Overflowing to hell.

Would you ever know what hell is
 but thanks to a stone-throwing boy?

An age of stone it is
 Stick to the lesson of the boy of Palestine
 in the age of stone:
 Hearts dry up... they are stone
 Nothing to lose... then be a stone
 No face unsoiled... then be a stone
 Nothing to fear...
 Then be in nakedness clearer than stone
 Nothing but sold... then take a stone.
 This base one stole our bread... then throw a stone
 This in an enemy from abroad... then throw a stone
 And this a ruling enemy is... then throw a stone
 Useful arms with you no more... then throw a stone
 Shout aloud

Sound may a stone become
 No more tears to give relief
 What if that weeping boy
 A stone becomes!

1 cry to spur on the dancing.

2 reward given to an excellent dancer.

translated by Fadel Jetker.

