

No. 30 Sept. 1988

DEMOCRATIC PALESTINE

The Uprising
Moves Towards
Palestinian
Independence





Democratic Palestine is an English language magazine published with the following aims:

- 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

Dear *Democratic Palestine*,

I was delighted to find a detailed and thoughtful review of my book, *Israel: An Apartheid State*, in the recent issue of your publication (No 29, June 1988).

May I respond to your concluding comment and continue the dialogue, aiming, indeed, to render thinking and analysis richer and more precise.

As further contribution to this debate, please find enclosed the petition *For Palestine*, signed by eleven anti-Zionist Jewish citizens of the state of Israel. The signatures to this petition were collected at the RETURN conference «The Case Against

Zionism: Zionism and Jewish Identity», London, June 1988. You will find the relevant documents enclosed.

With all good wishes

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Editorial

For Palestinian Independence

After the July 31st declaration of the Jordanian regime's decision to end legal and administrative ties with the West Bank, attention focused on the anticipated Palestinian response: Would the PLO bow to US and Israeli demands, in line with the wishes of Arab reaction? Or would it utilize the new situation to make a step forward towards the achievement of Palestinian self-determination and an independent state?

The PLO and the Palestinian people welcomed the Jordanian move, despite King Hussein's motives, for they considered it the most important victory of the Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories to date. The PLO has accepted the challenge and engaged in intense internal dialogue in order to reach consensus on decisions that could have historical import.

Ending legal and administrative ties with Jordan does not mean that the West Bank will be in limbo. Far from it, the Palestinian people in the course of the current uprising have shown themselves more than capable of running their own lives and civil affairs. The popular committees, an offshoot of the uprising, have proven this irrevocably, organizing the people's lives without a trace of the corruption of the Jordanian administration and in diametrical opposition to the fascism of Israeli military rule. The popular committees' truly democratic mode of functioning is perhaps the real reason they were outlawed by the occupation authorities, for they represent a threat not only to the occupation but to the very heart of the racist Zionist ideology.

DIALOGUE FOR CONSENSUS

The Palestinian Central Council was meeting in Baghdad at the time King Hussein announced the new Jordanian move. It thus became the first Palestinian body to discuss the implications of this step. The Central Council debated the issue thoroughly and confirmed the PLO's readiness to shoulder its responsibilities towards the Palestinian people, and to do whatever was needed in the new situation, in accordance with previous PNC decisions. The Central Council formed a political/legal committee to study all options open to the PLO and present its findings to the Executive Committee.

Another meeting among Palestinian organizations was hosted by Libyan leader Qaddafi, in an effort to bring back into the PLO those organizations which have remained outside its framework. However, these organizations set conditions that could not be fulfilled. Thus, the discussion on how to respond to the new situation continued among those organizations who are in the PLO. A series of Palestinian leadership meetings in August and September resulted in the crystallization of two trends:

The first trend is represented by some sectors of the Palestinian bourgeoisie outside the occupied territories, who lean towards accommodation of US and Israeli demands, i.e., unconditional recognition of 'Israel' and acceptance of UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338. In addition, they feel that the PLO should seek to revive the Amman accord with the

Jordanian regime and negotiate directly with 'Israel' through a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. The representatives of this trend find their support in the reactionary Arab regimes who stand doubly exposed in the face of the Palestinian uprising. Their efforts to impede the uprising are futile; they have no mass support in the occupied territories or outside, and their influence within the PLO itself is very limited.

The second trend is represented by the mainstream of the PLO which examined the various options for responding to the new situation in the context of safeguarding the historic achievements and unity of the PLO, and advancing the uprising. The opinions expressed by this mainstream prevailed in the discussions, resulting in agreement on the following as viable options to be presented to the PNC for ratification: (1) Making a Palestinian Declaration of Independence at the upcoming PNC meeting, based on the principles outlined in the UN Charter concerning the right of all people to self-determination, freedom and independence; (2) calling for temporary UN supervision in the 1967 occupied territories, to be followed by Israeli withdrawal and the convening of an international peace conference, attended by the permanent members of the UN Security Council and all parties to the conflict, including the PLO on an equal footing with others; and (3) forming a provisional government at a future date when this would be beneficial as a step for realizing Palestinian rights.

The idea of UN troops in the occupied territories has its origin in the interim demands put forward by the United National Leadership of the Uprising in the spring. At that time, it was proposed as a way of protecting the masses from the unbridled brutality of the Israeli occupation troops. Adopting this position, and combining it with the other points listed above at the proper juncture, would substantially strengthen the PLO's position. It would provide concrete guidelines for combining the mass and militant struggle for a just peace in the region. It would accentuate that it is the Palestinian cause that stands at the core of the Middle East conflict, while simultaneously providing a simple and straightforward platform on which the Palestinian people's allies can base their support.

In the same vein, declaring an independent Palestinian state, to be recognized by friendly countries around the world, would erect a legal barricade against any future attempt by the Jordanian regime to reusurp the West Bank, and against Israeli annexationist ambitions in the 1967 occupied territories. This state would be born occupied, so to speak, which is all the more reason for the deployment of UN troops, to supervise the withdrawal of the occupation troops.

This set of options is based on the twin priorities of national unity and advancing the uprising. Historically, Palestinian national unity and mass struggle have proven to be the PLO's most valuable assets, and the reason behind its achievements. This has never been more clear than today when the ten-month-old uprising in the occupied territories has opened new horizons for the Palestinian liberation struggle. The upcoming PNC is expected to make decisions that will reinforce these priorities, especially the uprising, at this historical juncture. The challenge delivered by King Hussein is being turned into an opportunity for qualitatively advancing the Palestinian cause. ●

Press Conference

On August 8th, Dr. George Habash, General Secretary of the PFLP, held a press conference in Damascus. The following is his response to journalists' questions concerning the Jordanian regime's measures.

What is the PFLP's stand towards the latest Jordanian measures and towards a Palestinian government-in-exile?

These measures are welcome; in fact, we consider them as a positive result of the uprising and a victory. The uprising has cancelled the Jordanian option, but we should ask ourselves: What is the aim of the Jordanian regime in taking such measures? Is the regime's aim really an affirmation of the decisive victory which the uprising has achieved?

We must answer this question in the light of our historical experience with the Jordanian regime and its policies against the Palestinian cause, revolution and the PLO - the policies of annexation and the attempts to cancel the Palestinian role. In this light, we think that the Jordanian regime's aim with these measures is to cast new responsibilities on the PLO, so that it will sink under their weight. Accordingly, the PLO will be forced to return to the regime in order to seek a form of partnership with it in all things related to the Palestinian question.

We therefore demand that the PLO accept this challenge and take all the steps needed to respond to it, on the basis of the uprising's goal of freedom, independence and an independent Palestinian state.

We believe that the PLO can face the challenge, based on the potentials of the Palestinian masses in the homeland, the PLO's own capacity including its material resources, and support from the PLO's Arab and international allies, and also the UN institutions. Based on this, the PLO can say to the Jordanian regime: These measures are welcome and we are capable of responding to all the demands of this step.

Concerning a Palestinian national government, undoubtedly you remember the PFLP's stand when this question was raised in the first month of the uprising. We said then that we are not thinking of a government-in-exile, because we are not at the gates of victory, but at the gates of a new stage which requires hard and long struggle to change the balance of forces in a way which will facilitate a Palestinian state. We therefore rejected the establishment of a Palestinian government. However, the PFLP takes changes into consideration.

We cannot consider the establishment of a Palestinian government on the basis that we are at the gates of victory, because we still need a long stage to achieve victory. However, the Jordanian measures dissolved all legal and administrative relations with the Palestinian West Bank. Therefore, some Israeli circles demanded annexation of the Palestinian territories, and subjugating them to Israeli law, due to the legal vacuum which resulted from the latest step of the Jordanian regime.

What laws now govern our people's life in the Palestinian West Bank and Gaza Strip?

There is a new basis for thinking of a Palestinian government; it doesn't mean that we are at the gates of victory, but it is necessary to find laws to govern our people's life in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In the light of this, in the last meeting of the Central Council held in Baghdad, the PLO decided to form a political-legal committee to answer the question: Who will fill the vacuum and how? A meeting of the PLO's leaders will be held at the end of this month to respond to this question. The PFLP will be ready to deal with all possibilities. Our interest is to succeed in responding to the present challenge. If we find that forming a Palestinian government is necessary to succeed in facing the challenge, we will not hesitate.

Of course, forming a government-in-exile is not the sole response to the measures of the Jordanian regime. Shortly, in the next meeting of the Palestinian leaders, we will discuss the subject of the presence of UN troops for an interim period, as a stage of transition which would enable us to convene an international conference in order to facilitate the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. This has been adopted a few months ago by the PLO's institutions. Our Arab and internationalist friends had questioned us about how we think to implement our concept of establishing a Palestinian state, and about the uprising's ability to achieve the slogan of freedom and independence. Our response was the following: The uprising continues in order to defeat the occupation; meanwhile, we demand the presence of UN troops; then, there will be a UN presence connected with the subject of an international conference, in which we see the mechanism to achieve the interim aim of the PLO.

The PFLP's response to this question is not enough. The response of the Palestinian leadership is required. We will be intent, in the next meeting, to attain a united response from the PLO's bodies concerning this subject. A Palestinian national government is not the sole possibility; there are others as well. I want to affirm that taking such a step requires a discussion with the Arab and internationalist forces who are supporting the Palestinians' national rights.

In the case of establishing a Palestinian national government-in-exile, will it take the place of the PLO?

The PLO will remain existent with its covenant and interim program. The PLO is the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. If there is a government, it will be one of the PLO's instruments.

What reaction do you expect from the Arab and non-aligned states to the establishment of a Palestinian government-in-exile?

Concerning the first part of the question, and based on the

summit which was held in Algeria, I am justified in saying that all Arab regimes must accept the PLO's move related to this issue. Concerning the non-aligned countries, we expect full support to what the PLO decides, because they have been essential supporters of our struggle for achieving a Palestinian state.

Does what you said about a government-in-exile mean that you accept its establishment to fill the legal vacuum in the occupied territories caused by the Jordanian decision?

The vacuum should not again be filled by Jordan. If a Palestinian government-in-exile is the sole option to fill the vacuum, we will be ready to accept this option, but we know that it is not the sole option. As I mentioned, a meeting of the

Palestinian leaders will be held at the end of this month to answer this question. There should be a united Palestinian answer, and not only the PFLP's answer.

Are you going to participate in the PNC meeting to be held in Baghdad?

The place for convening the PNC has not been decided yet. What happened in Baghdad is that the Palestinian Central Council recommended to the PLO Executive Committee that the PNC be convened as soon as possible, in order to support the uprising. Naturally, the PFLP will participate in the PNC, supporting and being loyal to the uprising and its martyrs. We will participate in order to answer all questions which the uprising and the Palestinian national struggle are facing at this stage of the revolution. ●

Did King Hussein Set the West Bank Free?

King Hussein's July 31st announcement that Jordan will end legal and administrative relations with the Israeli-occupied West Bank is perhaps one of the most important moves in the history of the monarchy. It is surely one of the most decisive political developments elicited by the Palestinian uprising. Still, there are reasons to doubt that this is such a decisive break as the king presents it to be. It is rather the latest tactic in his historical endeavor to undermine the Palestinian people's adherence to the PLO and their right to an independent state.

For the first time ever, the Jordanian monarchy has publicly and officially conceded its claim to the West Bank. This means abrogation of the results of the 1950 Jericho conference where a small group of pro-Jordanian notables rubber-stamped the monarchy's claim, whereafter the Jordanian parliament legislated the annexation of the West Bank. On this background, the Arab League «entrusted» the West Bank to the Jordanian kingdom until its liberation. What followed, of course, was instead the Israeli occupation of 1967.

This occurred before the definitive rise of Arab nationalism and in the absence of the organized Palestinian national liberation movement. The status quo has since been irreversibly challenged by the rise of the Palestinian armed resistance and the PLO. The onset of the current Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories shattered the so-called Jordanian option for resolving the Palestinian question. The action and slogans of the masses, while primarily directed against Israeli oc-

cupation, have made it unavoidably clear that they will accept neither alternatives to the PLO nor Jordanian moves to contain their struggle for genuine freedom and independence. In the climate of the uprising, pro-Jordanian figures in the West Bank have retreated, exposing the monarchy's isolation as never before.

REASONS FOR THE JORDANIAN MOVE

The impact of the uprising was the main factor, but there were other reasons which contributed to the king's decision. Not least among these were the decisions of the Algiers Summit in June, which reasserted the PLO's representation of the Palestinian people and official Arab support to their rights, including the establishment of an independent state. The summit also asserted that Arab aid should be channeled via the PLO and relevant international organizations, not through Jordan. This marked a big defeat for the Jordanian regime, overturning the

results of the 1987 Amman summit which King Hussein had engineered to eclipse the PLO's role and the Palestinian dimension of the Arab—Zionist conflict altogether.

Another factor which drove the king to his fateful decision was fear of the Likud's position. Not only does the Likud reject the very idea of territorial compromise needed to enact the Jordanian option; it goes farther, terming Jordan «a Palestinian state» and thus evoking the historic Zionist option of «population transfer», i.e., driving Palestinians en masse into Jordan. For this reason, the speech in which King Hussein announced his intention to sever ties with the West Bank was replete with statements such as: «Jordan is not Palestine. The Palestinian state should be established on Palestinian land.»

The king's decision was also the culmination of a string of failures for his various plans to foster the Jordanian option. These aimed either to reabsorb the West Bank or to share in ►

its administration alongside the Israeli occupation. Above all, they aimed at promoting the Jordanian kingdom as the lynchpin for any solution to the Middle East crisis. The failure of the king's plans applies both to those aiming to create an alternative to the PLO and those aiming at coopting the PLO into a false partnership, as with the ill-fated Amman accord of 1985 which was eventually cancelled by the PLO. The uprising served to accentuate the Palestinian people's abhorrence of the aims behind the Jordanian regime's five-year development plan and joint administration of the West Bank.

On the other hand, the Labor Party has showed itself unwilling and/or unable to forge an Israeli consensus for settling the Palestinian issue via a «land for peace» exchange involving Jordan. The US, for its part, has done very little to help King Hussein make the Jordanian option a reality.

Added to these larger reasons is a trend within the Jordanian regime itself which has always advocated washing their hands of the Palestinians. This trend gains weight in times when Arab officialdom, for whatever reason, appears to side with the Palestinian option rather than the Jordanian one. For example, after the 1974 Rabat Summit which recognized the PLO as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, the regime began pursuing a «Jordanization» policy whereby many state departments, ministries and especially the security services were virtually closed to Palestinians. Today very few Palestinians are heads of labor or professional unions, despite the fact that Palestinians constitute somewhat over half of the population in Jordan. Recently, a decision was also taken to limit Palestinians' admission to Jordanian universities so that they would not constitute more than 15% of the student body. In several major newspapers, Palestinian editors have been replaced by Jordanians.

THE CHALLENGE

On this background, the king cancelled the five-year development plan, abandoned claims to the West Bank, and dissolved the lower house of the parliament where half the seats are

occupied by Palestinians from the West Bank. The Ministry for the Affairs of the Occupied Territories was subsumed under the Foreign Ministry. Less than a week later, the regime announced that it would halt salaries to West Bank civil servants, health care personnel, teachers and policemen as of August 16th, while giving them severance pay and maintaining their right to pension.

While the PLO and Palestinian people welcomed the regime's acknowledgement of their independence, it is also clear that the real intention was to entrap the PLO and make the masses despair. The Jordanian regime tried to create a vacuum in the West Bank, betting on the PLO's inability to see that people have basic health, educational, legal and administrative structures to sustain everyday life - and especially the needs of continuing the uprising.

Besides depriving over 20,000 Palestinians of half or all of their income, the Jordanian move intended to make every West Banker, and many other Palestinians as well, fear for their passports. Originally, Jordanian Interior Minister Dajani stated that 90,000 Palestinians in the West Bank, holders of Jordanian passports, had lost Jordanian citizenship as of July 31st, and that they would henceforth hold only Jordanian travel documents. However, after a PLO delegation's August 13th visit to Jordan, it was decided that West Bankers would hold temporary passports to be renewed every two years instead of every five years, as has been the case. As of July 31st, no Palestinian will be granted Jordanian citizenship. Also visiting permits for West Bank Palestinians coming to Jordan were restricted to one month, as opposed to the previous three.

With all these measures, the Jordanian regime planned to preoccupy the PLO with endless discussions on how to solve the material problems that arose for West Bankers, and how to respond to the political challenge contained in the Jordanian decision. This would be at the expense of work to further the uprising, and optimally the king hoped to elicit divergences among Palestinian leaders as to how to face the challenges, possibly leading to new splits. Concurrently, the Jordanian measures were an

assault on the uprising on two fronts - that of daily survival of the masses and that of political unity. The grand finale of the king's scenario would have the PLO, much weakened and possibly divided, begging the monarch to resume its interference in Palestinian affairs.

There are other indications that the king's real intentions are divisive. Despite claims that these measures aim to accentuate the Palestinian identity, in essence the regime aims to partition the Palestinian people according to where they now reside. In his speech, the king said that Palestinians in Jordan are Jordanians. This is meant to provide a model for resettling Palestinians in the countries where they presently live. As a result, the PLO would in the end represent only those Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

PRELUDE TO MORE REPRESSION

The king also warned that no party would be allowed to interfere in Jordan's internal affairs. This is most likely the prelude to new attacks on the national movement in Jordan. Lists are already being drawn up of PLO cadres present in Jordan; they would be required to declare whether their loyalty is to the monarchy or to the PLO; those who choose the latter would be expelled on the principle of «love it or leave it.» In the same vein, everyone working with the PLO and carrying a Jordanian passport would be considered a spy.

The «Jordanization» policy may be escalated to limit Palestinians' access to education and jobs. Palestinians from the West Bank who work in the public sector in Jordan, where they reside on the basis of travel permits, may have their contracts terminated; they would be treated like other Arabs working in Jordan, i.e., required to obtain residence permits. In this light, the Jordanian moves appear as a way of taking revenge on the Palestinians for having charted their own course of struggle.

IS THE KING BOWING OUT?

There are many reasons to doubt that this move means the Jordanian

monarchy's final withdrawal from the West Bank and Palestinian affairs. From the political angle, this regime was originally created by British colonialism to help in controlling the mass movement in the area and protecting the Zionist state-to-be. King Hussein has loyally fulfilled his role in coordination with US imperialism, British colonialism's successor. Over the years, the regime has worked to absorb and oppress the Palestinians who have been expelled from their homeland, covering over their true national identity and preventing their organization and resistance to the Zionist occupation. The most notable example was the 1970-71 massacres where the regime's forces killed thousands of Palestinians and drove the Palestinian resistance out of Jordan.

King Hussein has always posed as a key player in any Middle East settlement on the basis of being crucial in resolving the Palestinian dimension of the conflict. Without this dimension, he would have difficulty being considered an important actor on the regional and international scene. Also in demographic and economic terms, the Jordanian kingdom, without the West Bank and the Palestinian dimension, would not have a much greater status than any other emirate. Economically, the Palestinian question has always been the goose that laid the golden egg. Besides US aid to Jordan for controlling the Palestinians, the monarchy has lived off Arab financial support given on the basis of Jordan being a «confrontation» state, plus money channeled to the Palestinians under occupation.

In fact, the king did leave a legalistic loophole for resuming his role. Since the Jordanian parliament passed the resolution annexing the West Bank in 1950, it remains the body which can constitutionally annul this resolution. Therefore, when the king made the declaration himself, he was leaving the door open for resumption of the Palestinian-Jordanian relationship if this becomes advantageous in the future.

All these facts indicate that the Jordanian move is not a hasty reaction, but a calculated step aiming to extract the kingdom from the dilemma posed by

the uprising, at the same time leaving loopholes for reversing the new tactical position. Some observers have speculated that King Hussein's moves were intended to prod the US and 'Israel' into concrete moves towards a settlement before it is «too late.» However, in view of King Hussein's strategic coordination with US administrations, it seems inconceivable that this step was not coordinated with the US. The US reaction serves to substantiate this; US officials tended to downplay King Hussein's moves, emphasizing that he still has a role to play. Some did concede that this meant the end of the Shultz plan, but this was only acknowledgement of a well-known fact created by the uprising.

THE ISRAELI REACTION

The Jordanian regime's step had a big impact on the Zionist state where the question of how to deal with the uprising in relation to the upcoming elections was already the main subject of debate. The overall reaction was negative as expressed by Yossi Ben Aharon, director-general of the prime ministry: «It is not a positive step...» while the foreign ministry was quick to issue a statement that «Israel won't let the PLO pay the Jordanian salaries» (*International Herald Tribune*, August 5th).

The Jordanian step created a crisis for the Israeli Labor Party since its political platform views Jordan as a partner in any political settlement, and it had made the Jordanian option a focal point in its election campaign. Initially, the Labor Party was caught between two tendencies - whether to adhere to the «Jordanian option» or move towards dealing directly with the Palestinians. On the external level, Labor was caught between another set of conflicting pressures: On the one hand, the party was eager to appear flexible in front of the international community, to counter the PLO's diplomatic offensive; on the other hand, in 'Israel', it had to answer the far right's accusations that it was too «soft» on matters of vital interest to the Zionist state.

The juggling act which Labor engaged in was expressed in Prime Minister Peres' statements in Paris, on his

way to meet US President Reagan and Egyptian Foreign Minister Meguid. He said that if elected, he would meet with «every Palestinian leader who renounces terror and violence» and accepts UN Security Council resolution 242. He even hinted that this didn't exclude PLO leaders, saying: «We are not going to look into his (the Palestinian leader's) past and his biography... We are going to look at his positions» (i.e., meeting the Israeli demands for concessions-editor's note). At the same time, Peres left the door open for a return to the Jordanian option, saying that a Labor government would be willing to negotiate with either a Jordanian or a Palestinian delegation or a combined delegation (*International Herald Tribune*, September 26th).

The Likud's position was more unified. All its leaders basically confirmed the coalition's usual policy that the maximum to be offered to the Palestinians is 'autonomy' as specified in the Camp David accords, while ruling out territorial compromise or negotiations with the PLO. Likud took the opportunity to attack the Labor Party for setting its hopes on the Jordanian option, and itself interpreted the king's step as meaning that Jordan has desisted from calling for Israeli withdrawal from the 1967 occupied territories. The Likud extremists renewed their calls for annexation of the West Bank, while Sharon reiterated his position that there is a Palestinian state and it is Jordan; therefore, there should not be another one. Sharon also proposed closing the bridges to Jordan and cancelling travel permits to prevent Palestinians from «smuggling» PLO money into the territories. Shamir, as head of state and of Likud, opposed the calls for annexation on the formal grounds that this would violate the Camp David accords, and more pertinently on the basis of his often repeated position that «you cannot annex what is already yours.»

The final outcome on these issues will be determined in line with the results of the upcoming Israeli elections. In the meantime, the two Zionist blocs in government, while rivaling each other in proposed solutions, continue to unite in all-out efforts to repress the uprising before the election date.

The Uprising

Dual Power in Occupied Palestine

In the last few months, the uprising has not only established itself as a permanent phenomenon, but imposed a state of dual power in occupied Palestine. The resilience of popular action and organizing, even after the Israeli ban on the popular committees, stands as the latest evidence of the unity of the people and their determination to continue the struggle until achieving freedom and independence.



Deir Ammar village: «PLO — Israel No!»

The Uprising is here to stay, as even the Israelis admit.

It took months of sustained mass struggle, but it finally happened. Israeli officials, significantly enough military officers first and foremost, began to publicly acknowledge that the uprising could not easily be squashed. The first such statement came from the army commander in the occupied West Bank, Maj. Gen. Amran Mitzna; on June 18th, he stated that the occupied territories would never return to the previous relative calm, but that the uprising would probably continue a long time. In the same period, Chief of Staff Dan Shomron and Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin both noted the increased use of molotov cocktails and

firebombs against their troops. Israeli government sources estimated that about 800 firebombs had been thrown at their forces since the uprising began, almost half of them in the preceding few weeks.

By mid-July, Shomron had become more explicit. While in Beit Sahour, he stated, «The Israeli army cannot control the will of the Palestinians. The uprising may continue for years... the real question is: To what level of violence will this conflict continue... Our real aim is to decrease the level of violence» - a tacit admission that it cannot be stopped. Earlier, Maj. Gen. Amnon Shahak, head of the Israeli military intelligence, had stated that «the Palestinians still accept the PLO as the ultimate leadership of the uprising

in the occupied lands even though a new local leadership has emerged...» (Associated Press, July 1st). As reported by the *Guardian*, July 9th, 70-80% of the Israeli army's present general staff see the need for territorial concessions.

It is no accident that it was first in the military that the futility of beating down the uprising was acknowledged. It is the army that is faced with that very task and thus the first to see the reality. Moreover, the tangible effects of the uprising on the military have become more marked over time. As reported by *Israel and Palestine*, May 1988, «...each Jewish male must now serve in the army at least 65 days a year (in addition to his 3-year-long draft period, plus longer reserve duty for of-

ficers)...» As reported by AP, July 12th, Rabin estimated the Israeli military's expenses as a result of the uprising at 160 million dollars. Rabin also announced that the cost of combatting the uprising might hinder the current armament program of the army and military research, by imposing budget restrictions.

Equally significant was the worry expressed by Reserve General Menachem Meron, former director general of the Defense Ministry, that the Israeli army «will turn into experts at riot control at the expense of combat readiness» (AP, July 12th). As one example of this, the elite Givati Brigade had planned exercises in December, but these were postponed when the entire brigade was deployed against the uprising in the Gaza Strip. They finally held their exercises in July. In addition, by late June, 30 Israeli soldiers had been imprisoned for refusing to serve in the occupied territories.

Compounding the problems in the military field is the fact that the damages inflicted on the Israeli economy by the uprising are beginning to show their long-term impact. In June, the governor of the Israeli Central Bank admitted that the uprising is hitting the Israeli economy hard; growth in business may fall by 40% this year, cutting the 1987 growth rate of 6.9% to 4% or less (*New Worker*, June 24). Economy Minister Gad Yaacobi estimated that the uprising has cost 'Israel' over 600 million dollars, including losses in tourism, export and production revenues (AP, July 12th). On September 9th, Israeli radio reported that Prime Minister Shamir supported the Treasury Ministry's recommendations of major budget cuts, due to the added costs of the uprising.

Still, sectors of the Israeli political leadership feigned ignorance of the reality because it doesn't match their strategic expectations, as when Shamir termed the uprising a «bother» rather than a threat to the Israeli occupation. On July 12, Housing Minister David Levy inaugurated a new settlement in the West Bank, and vowed more would be built despite the uprising. On the other hand, Yoshe Beilin, director general for political affairs in the Foreign Ministry and Labor-oriented, admitted in mid-July that there is no military solution for the uprising. He added that nonetheless the methods of

force will continue to be applied as long as there is unrest, demonstrating Zionist unity of action against the uprising.

A political furor was created by the statements of Maj. Gen. Avraham Tamir, director-general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry; while in Washington, he said: «Everybody knows that the PLO is, for the Palestinians, for the Palestinian people, their national organization... So the question is not how to replace the PLO, but how to change it» (*International Herald Tribune*, September 3-4th). Tamir also said that 'Israel' would not negotiate with the PLO, and that he opposed a Palestinian state. Still, his acknowledgement of the PLO was enough to prompt Shamir to call for his dismissal.

At the same time, the Likud and other extreme rightist forces were calling for a change in the rules so that Israeli soldiers and civilians (settlers) could shoot to kill at stonethrowers. A battalion of 170 armored corps soldiers, ending reserve duty in the West Bank, signed a petition urging the army to allow soldiers to shoot more freely at demonstrators. The tank commander Gad Shlafkin said, «That way we won't come to the point where soldiers are humiliated in front of the rioters» (AP, September 2nd).

In any case, the upsurge in militant demonstrations in mid-July was vastly disconcerting for both wings of the Israeli government. This upsurge was in part the culmination of the battle of the schools.

THE BATTLE OF THE SCHOOLS

Since the first days of the uprising, the battle for education has been an integral part of this round of struggle, against the occupation. Depriving Palestinians of a meaningful education has always been a main thrust of Israeli occupation policy, and on the other hand, students have always been in the forefront of the mass struggle. Palestinian universities have repeatedly been closed for extended periods, while other schools suffered intermittent closures following protests. With the onset of the uprising and the entire Palestinian population's involvement in this, Israeli repression against educational institutions became more severe and systematic than ever. Virtually all West Bank schools were shut for the dura-

tion, while those in the Gaza Strip operated only off and on; 475,000 students were deprived of daily education.

Meanwhile, with the uprising's thrust towards Palestinians organizing their own affairs, steps were taken to organize popular education on the local level. The United National Leadership called for the formation of educational committees and for actions to protest the occupiers' use of schools as barracks for their soldiers.

Finally, with the school semester anyway nearing an end, the occupation authorities decided to open the schools in stages from mid-May, starting with East Jerusalem and kindergartens, and moving up and out. By June 6th, high schools in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip were opened, but universities remained closed. The occupation authorities hoped to use the opening as a device for 'normalizing' the situation. At the same time, they reasserted their intention to interfere in Palestinian educational affairs as evidenced by the statement of Brig. Gen. Shaikha Erez, head of the West Bank military government, that «teachers who are connected with the rioting are not teachers anymore» (*International Herald Tribune*, May 24th).

The United National Leadership called for children to return to school, and Palestinians en masse asserted their right to education, while teachers worked to have the school year extended through the summer to make up for lost classes. But as could be expected, there was no normalization. Many students returned to schools which had been heavily damaged by the occupation troops; in one El Bireh school alone, 77 windows had been broken by the occupation troops stationed there. In addition, soldiers remained deployed in the vicinity of the schools.

The uprising having become a way of life, school pupils continued to participate in demonstrations and other activities, as on June 1st when thousands marched in protest of the occupation on the International Day of the Child. Within a week, the authorities were threatening to close the schools again. At the same time, they released 120 detainees of school age, a *de facto* admission that they had been arresting children, despite their denials. In the same period, the Hebrew press had printed several exposes about the



Beir Zeit students commemorate a martyr of the uprising.

detention of children and youth at Ofra detention center, east of Jerusalem, and Dhahariya camp, also in the West Bank (see box).

Throughout June and early July, there were repeated confrontations between students and the occupation troops. On July 4th, the Unified National Student Movement in the Gaza Strip issued a call saluting the struggle of Palestinian teachers and pupils, demanding the release of all detained students and condemning the Zionists' disruption of education. The call also set out a series of student activities.

In the West Bank, clashes were especially intense in the Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Hebron and Nablus areas. On several occasions, Israeli soldiers raided schools and beat students and teachers alike. On July 12th, when Nablus youth broke a curfew to demonstrate, Israeli helicopters fired on two schools. The biggest clash occurred on June 25th, when 200 soldiers surrounded Al Hussein school in Hebron to quell the large student protest against the demolition of a Palestinian home in a nearby village. (The house owner had been arrested on charges of stabbing an Israeli settler.) On this day, 25 students were treated for tear gas inhalation and beating, and 50 were detained.

Schools were again subject to closures especially after the June 15th general strike in solidarity with detained students, and again in mid-July, just before final exams were scheduled. These closures were mainly a vain attempt to stop the campaign of renaming the schools, proclaimed by the

United National Leadership of the Uprising. In many places, schools received new, revolutionary names. In Bethlehem alone, 12 schools were renamed, becoming the School of the Intifadeh, the School of the Palestinian Revolution, etc.

The July 21st Israeli announcement of the premature end of the school year was met by militant protests throughout the territories, converging with protests of Israeli atrocities against the citizens at large. In the second two weeks of July, seventeen Palestinians were killed by the occupation troops, the heaviest death toll since the April protests against the murder of Abu Jihad. The bulk of the martyrs in this round were 15-25 years of age.

As of this writing, the Zionist authorities are delaying the opening of the schools for the fall semester.

DUAL POWER POPULAR COMMITTEES BANNED

Parallel to the battle of the schools, battles have been raging between the masses and the occupiers in virtually all fields. Though suffering heavy casualties, the masses of the uprising have imposed a state of dual power in the occupied territories through their persistence and creativity. It was first and foremost this phenomenon that the Zionist authorities sought to erase when they banned the Palestinian popular committees on August 18th and specified a ten-year jail sentence for membership in them. In an act of desperation, the Israeli leadership has virtually prohibited Palestinians from

engaging in community organizing. The banning shows that even though the civil disobedience campaign is not total, it is sufficiently powerful to be deemed an intolerable threat to the occupation. In the strategic sense, the banning is part of the Zionist war against every seed of a future Palestinian state, a question which has been brought on the agenda of concrete possibilities by the uprising. In the tactical sense, this ban is intended to accomplish what murder, mass beatings and arrests, curfews and expulsions have failed to achieve, i.e., the end of the uprising.

The banning of the popular committees was preceded by a number of other attacks on Palestinian civilian institutions: the May banning of Shebibi (the Palestinian youth movement); the June closure of the Society for the Preservation of the Family in El Bireh; the July 31st arrest of Mustafa Tawfiq Abu Zahara, head of the Jerusalem merchants' group, and of Feisal Hussein, head of the Arab Studies Center, and the closure of the center; the arrest of dozens of journalists, and bans on distribution of the Palestinian press, as happened with *Al Fajr* in early August, when it called for the resignation of the appointed West Bank mayors, in line with the calls of the United National Leadership. The banning of the popular committees was followed by the closure of the Trade Union Federation in Nablus, which groups 45 unions.

Most immediately, the bannings were the Israeli response to their failure to win the battle of tax collection and ID cards, i.e., their failure to break the civil disobedience and self-sufficiency campaigns.

THE WAR OF THE TAXES

The Israeli leadership had not anticipated that Palestinian merchants would form a pillar of the popular resistance. Accordingly, they planned their economic sanctions with a class bias, hoping some strata would succumb to immediate economic interests and drop out of the uprising. Merchants did quite the reverse; not only did they continue the commercial strike in accordance with the program of the United National Leadership; they joined with other businesses in refusal to pay taxes to the occupation. With revenues from the territories cut in half, the occupation troops launched a campaign of tax raids in July. At the same time, they extended into the West Bank

the campaign begun earlier in the Gaza Strip, to force all Palestinians to get new identification cards. Besides being a form of bureaucratic harassment, forcing people to wait in offices for hours, revoking ID's was intended as a new form of control, to single people out for arrest and to register who had paid taxes. All in all, this campaign, which from the beginning elicited resistance from Gaza residents, reminds one of the abhorrent pass system used by the apartheid regime in South Africa to control the movement and lives of Black citizens of the country.

In Ramallah, El Bireh, Beit Sahour, Qalqilya, Tulkarm and other places, Israeli soldiers arrived before dawn, sealed off the towns and embarked on

house-to-house searches, confiscating ID cards and summoning residents to a central location to be presented with bills for overdue taxes and future estimates. Those who resisted had belongings confiscated and, in some cases, their businesses shut down. The general response was for Palestinians to close their shops themselves in protest, and clashes often ensued between the masses and the Israeli soldiers. Attacks were staged on institutions of the occupation, such as the July 5th attack on the cars of Israeli customs officials in Tulkarm, and the July 11th burning of the Ramallah traffic department.

The tax sweeps were connected to the Zionists' overall war against Palesti-

nian self-sufficiency and civil disobedience. The calls of the United National Leadership in July emphasized storing supplies, breaking blockades to assist besieged villages and camps, voluntary work, building cooperatives, etc., as prerequisites for moving to more extensive civil disobedience.

Beit Sahour residents were among the many Palestinians persecuted for their self-sufficiency and civil disobedience. The village had become a model for home gardening, raising poultry, organizing the distribution of provisions and alternative, popular education for the children. Intense confrontations started with the July 7th tax sweep where Zionist brutality led to widespread arrests. Hundreds of residents marched to the municipal building, shouting, «This is not our government; we don't want the Israeli identity cards.» Over a thousand turned in their ID's to the deputy mayor.

As punishment, Beit Sahour was placed under curfew for ten days. «At the beginning of the curfew it was announced that the curfew would last until the crops were destroyed or, failing that, fields would be bulldozed. People attempting to irrigate or work in backyard gardens were shot at. While the threat to bulldoze was not carried out, the lifting of the curfew came after one crop had been ruined» (Database Project on Palestinian Human Rights). About 200 people were arrested during the curfew, including eight members of the popular committee, who were placed under six-month administrative detention. One of those detained was a Bethlehem University professor who had responded to the United National Leadership's call for self-sufficiency by selling seedlings to his fellow citizens for their home gardens. Even before his arrest, he had been forced to stop this little enterprise due to Zionist harassment.

However, Beit Sahour was not passified by this repression any more than the uprising will dwindle due to the banning of the popular committees. Clashes between the masses and the occupation troops continued in the ensuing days, intensifying after a town youth was killed by a building block which 'fell' on his head from the roof of an Israeli lookout post.

ECONOMIC WARFARE

Israeli economic sanctions took many forms in an attempt to under-

DETAINING CHILDREN

On May 2nd, *Hadashot* reported the opening of a «new» detention center for children from nine to sixteen years of age, to be called Ofra. However, the newspaper noted that the building in question already houses dozens of detainees who are sentenced to a maximum of five months, and were transferred to Ofra from Ansar III in the Negev. On May 19th, *Maariv* reported the closure of the center by the military authorities, noting that the closure seemed related to the eyewitness reports about youth from Gadna (Zionist paramilitary organization) being brought in to beat the detainees whose number was put at 281. According to *Maariv*, some are being set free, while others will be transferred to other prisons.

A few days before, *Hadashot* had reported that about 60 Gadna youth were sent to Ofra. One of them gave the following testimony: «We were told that prisoners from Judea-Samaria (West Bank) and Gaza were in this camp. One morning, as we went to work, we saw three blindfolded prisoners who were tied hand and feet. We asked the soldier with us if we could beat them without getting into trouble. 'Why not?' was his answer. In the evening after dinner... we went back to the place and I recognized one of the prisoners I had seen in the morning. I tore off his blindfold and hit him in the face. He begged not to be beaten but I took a club and threw it at his head.» The Gadna youth related that another prisoner had started to shout, and «I

went mad, took an iron bar and beat him until he was only a bundle of flesh and bones. I heard afterwards that he had been hospitalized and put into a cast. While I was hitting them, I felt a great pleasure; had I had a gun, I would have killed them, not because they did anything to me, but because they are harming the state so much.»

Since this type of brutal beating has been common since the uprising began and is officially sanctioned by the Israeli leadership, one can doubt whether the reported closure of Ofra has any meaning, or even why it was closed. Perhaps it was due to illusions that the «moral fiber» of the Israeli military can be protected by ending some of the most sordid examples, after they have been publicly exposed.

Another horror center for youth is operating at Dhahariya. As reported in *Haaretz* on June 15th, the Organization for Imprisoned Arab Children denounced the conditions in this center which houses Palestinians aged 12 to 18. As an example, 35 youth are kept in a 10 x 6 meter room where it is dark, cold and full of stench. Families are not given any information about their children.

In Gaza, parents have to pay bail equivalent to \$3,000 to get children out of jail. If the child is arrested again, this sum will be kept by the occupation authorities.

source: *Eurabia* (French), July-August 1988

mine Palestinian subsistence. West Bank agricultural villages continue to be besieged and deprived of their water supply. In July, a series of villages south of Jerusalem were prohibited from selling their fruit crops. According to one resident, their fruit was rotting, for while 20% of the village produce could be marketed locally, 80% was usually exported through Jordan. The village was thus robbed of 90% of its annual income.

Suspension of services has been another Israeli economic weapon to threaten the population into stopping civil disobedience. On June 1st, the Israeli authorities announced the suspension of public services in the territories, due to the fall in tax revenues. Free treatment was abolished at government hospitals, a measure that hits everybody, but especially the injured of the uprising. Some specialized care is only available in Israeli hospitals, but the occupation authorities also closed this valve by requiring that Palestinians from the territories pay \$150 for admission to Israeli hospitals. Palestinian doctors, however, immediately said that they will disregard this new ruling, marking a new phase in the struggle for medical care.

In addition, the civil administration announced the dismissal of 1,000 of its 17,000 Palestinian employees, implying a cutback in both services, however minimal they may be, and in Palestinian incomes. In mid-July, the military authorities announced that Gazans will have to change the licenses on their vehicles and pay a new car tax, amounting to \$200-265 - about half an average worker's monthly wage

WHO'S IN CONTROL

The question of who's in control has also been underscored by an increase in planned attacks on Israeli targets and collaborators. Starting in May, widespread fires brought the uprising into the heart of the Zionist enemy. By early June, the fire brigade in Upper Nazareth (Israeli settlement in the Galilee) had already expended its annual budget fighting fires set by Palestinian nationalists to burn the forests and other economic interests reserved for exclusive Jewish use. Later in the month, the Israeli police and military were on full alert, including air patrols, for the June 24th Day of Fire proclaimed by the United National Leadership. The many fires that day

included two in Israeli factories. In May and June as a whole, there were well over 400 fires, damaging over 40,000 acres, seven times the extent of destruction from fire in 'Israel' in the years 1974 to 1986.

The impact of the uprising has been brought home to the Israeli population in other ways as well. Within ten days in June, there was a firebomb attack on Tel Aviv's main mall; an explosion at Hertzalia settlement, which injured a number of Zionist settlers; and an explosion in Bir Sheba, which injured three, while an Israeli settler was killed with a knife within the 'green line'. In early July, Israeli Police Commissioner Krauss reported that there had been over 1,000 protests in the preceding three months in what he considers 'Israel' - including 730 in the Jerusalem area, in addition to 51 firebomb attacks. He blamed Palestinian nationalists for the majority of fires plaguing the Zionist state, and reported the arrest of 900, 55 of them for arson.

The trend continued with the July 14th bomb explosion near Tel Aviv University, and the August 19th grenade attack that wounded 25 Israelis in Haifa. On August 21, Israeli radio reported a marked increase in tension in the Tel Aviv area, after three Palestinian workers were burned to death; in the ensuing days, there were a series of stonethrowing and petrolbomb attacks and attacks on settlers.

In mid-June, Defense Minister Rabin acknowledged the increase in violent protests. Firebomb attacks on Israeli soldiers had become a near daily phenomenon in the occupied territories, occurring even in West Jerusalem. Other methods were employed by the militants of the uprising, such as the mid-August sabotage of the water lines to a Zionist settlement in the Al Khalil (Hebron) area. Daring acts by the masses also posed the question of who controls the territories. One such incident occurred in East Jerusalem in mid-July when thirty Palestinians attacked six policemen with sharp objects in the courthouse, in an attempt to free a detainee. Similar daring was exhibited by a Palestinian while visiting a detained relative in the Gaza City prison; he drew a knife and stabbed and wounded an Israeli soldier. In late June, an Israeli settler was stabbed in the Hebron market. On August 12th, a group of Palestinians confronted an

Israeli patrol in the Gaza Strip with axes, chains and clubs.

The increase in armed attacks on the occupation troops was continuously bolstered by the ongoing mass action. Despite all the Zionists' repression, the people have continued to demonstrate and confront the occupation troops in the streets. To give an example from just one period, the English language weekly in the occupied territories, *Facts*, reported 114 major clashes in 62 locations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, between July 4th and 9th. While general strikes averaged six to seven per month in the preceding period, there were nine in August, after the United National Leadership called four strikes in the last week of the month in solidarity with the expelled and those killed in the Tel Aviv fire and by the Israeli troops shooting on hunger strikers in Ketziot prison.

The masses' daring and creativity is being exhibited daily. Here we can only name some examples such as on July 4th, when over 100 masked, uniformed Palestinian youth, armed with knives and iron bars and carrying Palestinian flags staged a 15 minute march in Nablus. In mid-August, the Gaza masses were faced with round-the-clock curfew and total sealing off of the Strip for the third time since the uprising began. They responded by repeatedly breaking the curfew to demonstrate, shouting: «We want a state.»

At the same time, the militant masses of the uprising continued to besiege all those who collaborate with the enemy. The June 7th attack on Hassan Al Tawil, appointed mayor of Al Bireh, showed the seriousness of the leadership's call for such officials to resign. In late August, five collaborators were attacked in three days in the Gaza Strip and West Bank; one of them was killed.

Call no. 24 issued by the United National Leadership on August 23rd urged more attacks to drive out the occupation troops, and more severe measures against those who don't heed the will of the masses. Most important, the call defied the Israeli ban on the popular committees by calling for redoubled efforts to build even more of them. «The people are the popular committees and will not abandon them,» said the leaflet. This in a nutshell, explains the success of the uprising so far and the reason it cannot be crushed, despite the Israeli terrorism against the masses and their leadership.

Detention and Expulsion

Despite broad international condemnation, Israeli repression has not abated, even as the uprising has become an acknowledged permanent state of affairs. The fact that the Zionist authorities continue to escalate brutality against the masses, as the sole option for dealing with their resistance, leads to a single conclusion: The only way to end human rights violations in Palestine is to end the occupation.

The events of August in occupied Palestine vividly demonstrated the brutal measures employed by the occupation troops - mass beatings, detentions, killings, curfews and expulsions. Just as clearly, they showed that these methods, despite inflicting great suffering on the Palestinians, are essentially futile. Each Zionist attack is met by renewed mass struggle.

August 9th was a general strike day in the 1967 occupied territories, to mark the uprising's entering its 9th month. Israeli troops shot dead a 14-year-old in the West Bank, and injured many others. The same day, a Palestinian worker was burned to death and two others injured, when the construction shack they were staying in was set afire; one of the injured later died. A few days later, Palestinian political detainees in Ketziot (Ansar III) began a hunger strike protesting their subhuman conditions. Israeli troops opened fire, killing two detainees and wounding three others. Then, on August 18th, the Israeli authorities banned the popular committees, expelled four Palestinian patriots and issued expulsion orders for 25 more.

Demonstrations swept the occupied territories protesting these outrages. Facing the masses and further enraged by a successful fire bomb attack that injured seven Israelis in the Gaza Strip, the occupation troops piled up new statistics of death and injury. Each day in the second half of August, at least one Palestinian martyr fell under the soldiers' gunfire; most of the victims were young, including a 12-year-old boy and a 9-year-old girl. Two Palestinians died from teargas inhalation on August 23-4th in the Gaza Strip, one of them a 12-year-old girl. At least two were beaten to death, one in prison. Countless more were injured. On August 17th alone, 100 Palestinians were treated for beating injuries in Shifa hospital in Gaza. Hospital officials stated that 90% of the victims had been beaten in their homes by Israeli soldiers supposedly searching for stonethrowers. On August 22nd, seventeen Palestinians were wounded by Zionist gunfire in the Gaza Strip, while 70 suffered beatings or teargas inhalation. Meanwhile, the entire Gaza population lived under a round-the-clock curfew, as the Strip was closed

off to journalists and UN food convoys; six major areas of the West Bank were also under curfew. At the end of August, relief workers termed this the most difficult period since February, due to the extended curfews and large number of injured.

In the space available to us, it would be impossible to chronicle all the Israeli atrocities against Palestinians in this period. Below we concentrate on two aspects: expulsions and detentions.

ANSAR II, III, ETC.

Just as the first Ansar was spawned by the Zionist attempt to wipe out the PLO in Lebanon, so Ansar II arose from the aim of quelling mass resistance in the occupied Gaza Strip over the past few years. With the onset of the uprising, it was inevitable that Ansar III would be born in accordance with the Zionist dictum that it is illegal to be a Palestinian in Palestine, thus the need for concentration camps. On August 29th, Rabin stated that 18,000 had been arrested in the course of the uprising.

By singling out the two Ansars in occupied Palestine, we are not implying that Palestinian political prisoners receive anything like acceptable treatment in other Zionist jails where torture is systematic. But what is typical of these detention centers, as well as Al Fara'a and Dhahiriya in the occupied West Bank, is that they are under the control of the Zionist army rather than the prison administration. Thus, the detainees are not even formally guaranteed the rights specified in the Geneva Conventions, nor the minimal things for which Palestinian political prisoners have struggled for over a decade. Lawyers have even fewer legal straws to grasp at in trying to defend their clients, and most of the detainees at these centers have no lawyers at all, not to mention family or Red Cross visits. It is typical at such centers that the detainees are imprisoned without trial or knowing why they were arrested.

Keeping these centers with this status is obviously intentional on the part of the Zionist authorities, for it meets their need for preventive and group detention without fulfilling normal judicial requirements of presenting charges and evidence. Anita Vitullo, a free-lance journalist based in Jerusalem, recently wrote a book on Ansar II, in which she relates that due to this situation, Gazans regard deten-

Palestinians expelled to Lebanon on April 19th.



tion as a kind of «military kidnapping.» She further points out, «Once the practice of detaining youth indefinitely at an army camp is accepted, there is the danger that other Israeli army camps, and even settlements, could easily be turned into temporary prisons where, under the wide powers of the army and settler 'defense' forces, youth could disappear for days at a time without the family, Red Cross or lawyers being able to ascertain their whereabouts. Certainly there seems to be no logical reason for the persistence of irregular detention camps like Ansar II and Fara'a except as a way to extend the already considerable powers of Israeli military law.» Even before the uprising, there were reports that settlers and Shin Bet plainclothesmen were involved in arrests and beatings in Ansar II.

While detainees in Ansar II increased to about 800 with the advent of the uprising, Ansar III was established at Ketziot in the desert of the Negev (Naqab-South Palestine) to house the bulk of the new detainees, as mass arrests and administrative detention became the norm.

At least 10,000 Palestinians are

presently in Israeli jails. Roughly half of them were detained under the uprising. For the first time, the arrest of women has become widespread, with Palestinian lawyer Walid Fahoum estimating that 90 of 4,500 detained as of late July were women. About half the prisoners of the uprising are under administrative detention, whereas the pre-uprising average at any one time was fifty persons. This reflects how widespread the current Zionist detention policy is; even before the official banning of the popular committees, about 300 Palestinians had been arrested simply for membership in them.

In May, Knesset member Dedi Zucker of the Citizens Rights Movement revealed that one in eighty Palestinians over 16 years of age was in jail. A sample study of 330 prisoners showed that 15% were between 16-21 years of age; 58% between 21-30; 27% older than 30, while the oldest detainee was a man 75 years old. Of the prisoners, 35% were agricultural workers, 25% students, 6% professionals, 6 journalists, 7% skilled workers or technicians (and miscellaneous). Over half had previously been under administrative

detention.

Whereas since 1967, administrative detention had been applied to the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, under the impact of the uprising, the Zionist authorities have again resorted to imposing this on Palestinians living in the 1948 occupied territories. Four Palestinians of 1948-occupied Palestine were put under administrative detention in the first phase of the uprising. In the early summer, several more were put under six-months detention orders without trial; they were members of the Sons of the Village, suspected of setting fires in 'Israel'. On July 13, the respected patriot, Salah Baransî, head of the Palestinian Heritage Society in Taibeh, was put under six-months administrative detention.

The biggest single concentration of the prisoners of the uprising is at Ansar III; most have not been charged and about half are under administrative detention. It seems obvious that the site for this concentration camp was quite deliberately chosen for being far removed not only from the centers of the uprising, but from population centers in general, to keep the conditions there away from prying eyes. Also, the desert climate provides many opportunities for ongoing torture, as was evidenced by the appeal which the detainees managed to smuggle out in May (see box).

Testimonies of those released and lawyers' reports provide additional facts about the savage treatment and humiliation practiced by the Israeli army against Ansar III detainees. Most recently, a news conference was called in Jerusalem by the Israeli League for Civil and Human Rights which is chaired by Israel Shahak. A 16-year-old Palestinian testified how he had been forced to strip naked, cover himself with paint and stand in the sun for hours, before Israeli soldiers hit him with clubs to make the paint fall off, along with parts of his skin. The youth, Walid Sayfi of Jerusalem, said this was done because he stared at a guard; he testified that prisoners are regularly beaten and humiliated.

Shahak, himself a survivor of the Bergen Belsen concentration camp, also spoke, noting that «Some of the ordinary things done in Bergen Belsen were exactly what was done in Ansar III... Ansar III and others should be called Nazi-like concentration camps.»

THE TOLL OF ISRAELI HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

The Database Project on Palestinian Human Rights released the following statistics on Human Rights Violations under Israeli rule during the uprising, covering the period of December 9, 1987 to June 26, 1988.

DEATHS — TOTAL: 285

due to the occupation forces: 248

shot: 175

beaten / electrocuted: 17

teargassed: 55

due to settlers or collaborators: 16

under investigation or possible official responsibility: 21

SERIOUS INJURIES: 6,000 causing permanent damage and/or requiring long-term rehabilitation; 18,000 registered injuries treated in hospitals and clinics; 36,000 injuries requiring some kind of medical treatment (which might be treated locally by medical committees or medical personnel).

ADMINISTRATIVE DETENTIONS (new orders): 2,500 - official number given by the Israeli army in early June.

DEMOLITIONS AND SEALINGS: 144 (This figure includes both collective punishment and the demolition of unlicensed buildings.)

DISPLACED PERSONS: 1,500+

UPROOTING OF FRUIT AND OLIVE TREES: 30,000+ (in addition to other destruction of crops and settlers' destruction of trees and crops).

CURFEWS: «Curfews and area closures have been so frequently imposed during the uprising that our usual system of counting and documenting them has proved futile...»

Database Project Updates can be obtained from the Human Rights Research and Education Foundation, 1 Quincy Court, 1308, Chicago, Illinois 60604.

After the fatal shooting of two Ansar III detainees, the International Committee of the Red Cross, on August 18th, protested to 'Israel' that detention of West Bank and Gaza Strip residents at Ketziot violated international humanitarian law. The next day, the ICRC again called on 'Israel' to end «grave and repeated breaches of the 4th Geneva Convention,» referring in particular to the 29 new expulsion orders issued, and noting its past protest of Israeli violations, including the destruction or walling-up of houses, bans on travel and growing crops, and

restrictions of economic activity (AP, August 22nd).

EXPULSIONS

Without underestimating the horror of other Israeli repressive measures, one can term expulsion the most cruel next to outright death, because it means driving Palestinians permanently from their homeland. Expulsion, particularly when practiced so extensively as during the uprising, is closely tied to the idea of «population transfer» - an option which has come under renewed discussion in the Zionist state over the last

few years. In this light, one can see each expulsion as a test balloon for the «final solution,» whereby Palestinians would be driven across the borders en masse, as happened in earlier wars, in what could only be termed attempted genocide.

Faced with a whole people in uprising, the Zionist authorities mistakenly thought they could quell «the disturbances» by expelling persons they singled out as instigators. As a result, four Palestinians were expelled on January 13th, eight on April 11th, eight on April 19th, one on June 13th, eight on August 1st, and four on August 18th, making a total of 33 recent expulsions, added to the thousands over the years of occupation. Among those expelled are ex-political prisoners, lawyers, journalists, trade unionists and student council members - showing that the Zionist authorities want to rid Palestine of activists. While some were accused of membership in revolutionary organizations, others are like the six citizens of Beita, expelled April 19th, because they happened to live in a village which was encroached upon by Zionist settlers.

The Zionist state has persisted in this policy despite international condemnation as was expressed in the January UN Security Council resolution, when even the US administration did not see fit to protect its «strategic asset» with the veto. A new element was introduced after the issuing of 25 new expulsion orders on August 18th, in what could be the large single case since the mass expulsions from the Gaza Strip in the early seventies. It was reported that on August 22nd, John Whitehead, US deputy secretary of state, warned Israeli leaders from carrying out these orders «or damage to our bilateral relations will occur.» Having grown accustomed to US administrations issuing critical statements, all the while funding Israeli aggression, as happened during the 1982 invasion of Lebanon, one retains some scepticism that these threats will be followed up. However, it may be that the US administration sees the need for protecting 'Israel' in a new way, because with the media coverage of Israeli atrocities, there is a beginning awareness in the American public of what their tax dollars are going for. It is in US imperialism's interests to clean up the Israeli image, in order not to have problems with the funding of its prime base in the strategic Middle East.

Letter from Ansar III

The following letter was smuggled out of the Ansar Three camp in May, written on toilet paper.

To all people of conscience:

To all defenders of human rights:

We call upon you to rescue us from the Camp of Slow Death, Ansar Three, the Negev

We, the thousands of Palestinian prisoners in Ansar Three, have been detained without any judicial formalities whatsoever. We have not even been told the charges which have been levelled against us. We are kept in inhuman desert conditions where the daytime temperature reaches 45 C degrees and drops below zero at night, in an area teeming with lizards, insects and rats.

But this hardship is nothing compared with the cruelty and arbitrary brutality of the soldiers. A physical and mental war is being conducted against us through starvation, thirst, humiliation and physical and psychological torture. Their behaviour breaks all international conventions governing the treatment of prisoners, and reflects a lack of even the most basic moral and human values.

We are forced to keep our tents open from 5 am to midnight, exposed to the searing heat of the sun and the sandstorms of the desert. Two or three times a day we are made to sit outside under the scorching sun, for periods of up to half an hour, under the muzzles of our captors' guns.

Water is scarce, and is cut off for many hours each day. There is barely enough for drinking, washing, and twice-monthly baths in this suffocating heat. We have only one change of clothing, and we are forbidden to receive clothes or other necessities from our families. Neither are we provided with items for washing clothes.

Our health is deteriorating and we are suffering physical deterioration and disease; health care is virtually nonexistent.

In addition we are totally isolated; our families are not allowed to visit us, we are not allowed to send or receive letters, and we are forbidden radios, newspapers, magazines, books, writing paper and pencils.

We are being subjected to punitive measures which aim to crush our human spirit and deny our social being. We are not even given those rights contained in the law of administrative detention.

We call upon you to stand by us, and to call for an end to the organized violence and humiliation which is leading us to a slow death. The peace and justice which the people of the Holy Land long for is being strangled in this evil place.

We urge you to organize humanitarian groups to visit this murderous detention center, and to work for its closure.

We call upon you to stand on the side of humanity

May the world hear our voice.

New US—Israeli Memo of Understanding

In the last week of June, Israeli Defense Minister Rabin visited Washington D.C., in an attempt to confront the Palestinian uprising from the safe heights of increased military cooperation with US imperialism.

While in Washington D.C., Rabin met with top US officials, including President Reagan and Secretary of State Shultz. Two topics featured most prominently on his agenda. The first was convincing US public opinion of the legitimacy of the brutal methods being used by the Israeli state in its attempt to suppress the Palestinian uprising. The second was to draw attention to the supposed 'threat' posed by the missiles China is selling to Saudi Arabia and Syria, as well as the Soviet missiles in Syria, Libya and Iraq. Rabin worked to persuade Reagan in particular that this phenomenon posed a threat to US as well as Israeli interests in the region.

Despite all appearances, this second point is also intimately connected with the uprising in that 'Israel' desperately needs to draw attention to an issue outside Palestine, and far removed from what is going on there, specifically Israeli inability to deal with the Palestinian uprising.

Judging from US officials' statements during and after Rabin's visit, Rabin did not succeed in getting the Reagan Administration to publicly endorse the fascist measures being used against unarmed Palestinians. However, he did succeed in obtaining a new memorandum of understanding which provides for more and qualitatively advanced US-Israeli military cooperation. This shows that US verbal criticism of Israeli human rights violations is little more than crocodile tears, designed as a cover-up for consistent US support to Israeli aggression. Even if the US begins to take this issue more seriously in order to polish up the Israelis' image, the strategic advantages of military cooperation with 'Israel' remain the

overriding concern of the US administration. The Reagan Administration had prefaced Rabin's visit by vetoing the Security Council resolution raised in mid-April, condemning Israeli handling of the uprising.

NEW MISSILES FOR 'ISRAEL' — NEW INPUT FOR SDI

Meeting with Rabin, Reagan concurred on the question of the «Arab missile threat.» On June 28th, he issued a statement that he was troubled by the «ominous new military developments in the area» - referring to missiles and chemical weapons. This set the stage for the signing of an agreement for collaboration on the development of a new surface-to-air, antiballistic missile - the Arrow - for 'Israel' with the US funding 80% of the development costs. The agreement was signed by David Ivry, director of the Israeli Defense Ministry and Lt. Gen. James Abrahamson, director of the US Strategic Defense Initiative Organization (Star Wars). US Secretary of Defense Carlucci stated that the Arrow missile would «make a contribution to our SDI program, and has applications as well in other areas.» The connection between the new Israeli missile and the SDI program is another evidence that this program is not simply a crazy idea or a matter of research alone. Rather it is a framework for developing new types of offensive weapons for the US and its allies. There is, in fact, no reason to think that 'Israel' wants the new missile for its deterrent value alone. In June, Israeli Chief-of-Staff Lt. Gen. Dan Shomron publicly stated that 'Israel' would strike Syrian missile sites if the surface-to-surface missiles Damascus is reportedly buying from China, are deployed.

In view of the bolstered US—Israeli

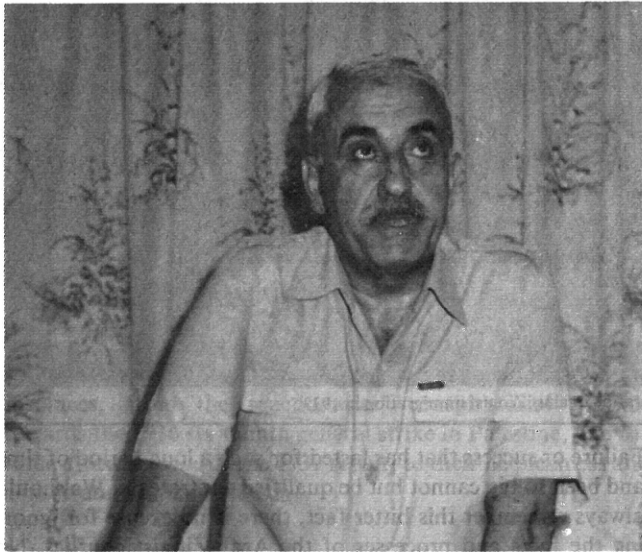
military cooperation, Reagan's hypocrisy is doubly obvious when he calls for international efforts to stop the spread of arms and nuclear arms. Meanwhile, the US obstructed the UN's third session which was dedicated to disarmament and to examining the extent of the Zionist nuclear arsenal. Also Shultz, who brags about his 'peace' initiative in the Middle East, was quick to term the new US—Israeli military agreement an essential contribution to deterring war, adding, «If you are sitting in Israel and surrounded by short-range ballistic missiles, you will realize the great importance of learning how to defend yourself...» In fact it was apparent that Shultz's greatest worry on his last visit to the Zionist state was how to rescue the Israelis from the dilemma caused by the Palestinian uprising.

MORE US AID

Less than two weeks after Rabin left the USA, the Senate adopted the fiscal year 1989 foreign aid bill that maintained 'Israel' as the main recipient of US aid worldwide, to the tune of 1.2 billion dollars in economic aid and 1.8 billion in military assistance. At the same time, the first publicly announced, full-scale US-Israeli navy maneuvers began with the arrival of the 6th Fleet's USS Eisenhower in Haifa port. The exercise included mock combat and the refueling of this aircraft carrier by Israeli naval vessels. On August 23rd, the Israeli navy announced plans for a 1.2 billion dollar, US-financed program to build a new generation of missile boats and two submarines, adding to the current Israeli fleet of 28 missile-carrying boats. Everything points to the continuation of Israeli state terrorism on land, air and sea, even as the Palestinian uprising challenges the viability of this prime US base in the Middle East. ●

'Israel' — 40 Years

The following is the first half of an article by PFLP General Secretary George Habash, which first appeared in *Al Hadaf* Magazine in May this year - on the fortieth anniversary of the Zionist state. It addresses the need for a more realistic assessment of this state as a prerequisite for deriving the Palestinian and Arab strategy of confrontation.



Forty years have passed since the establishment of the Zionist entity on the land of Palestine. Forty years is the age of the Arab and Palestinian tragedy, of the Palestinian exodus, of the uprootedness, homelessness, negation, annihilation and massacres suffered by our people at the hands of the Zionist usurpers and their allies.

These were also forty years full of resistance and struggle on the part of both the Palestinian and Arab people for the preservation of their national identity and the restoration of their rights and occupied land.

In 1948, the Zionists' dreams materialized when the ideas Hertzl expressed in his book, *The Jewish State*, became a real state in Palestine. With extensive support from imperialism in general and Britain in particular, the armed Zionist usurpers established their state under the umbrella of international law represented by the Partition Plan (UN Resolution No. 181). They went further in their interpretation of this resolution, undermining the defined borders of the Palestinian state. Within a few years, the chapters of the conspiracy were completed through the convention of the Jericho conference (1950) which declared that the Hashemite regime was entitled to annex the West Bank to the Kingdom of Jordan. The very word *Palestine* has for years been absent from political lexicons and atlases in a cruel attempt to erase it from memory.

Although the 15th of May 1948 is the official date of the establishment of the aggressive Israeli state, its emergence dates back much farther, being the result of a build-up phase extending over thirty years, from the Balfour Declaration to the Partition Plan. In this phase, the Jewish Agency (of the World Zionist Organization) was acting as a state within the state (in this case, the British Mandate), and exercising its power to the utmost in the political, economic, military and social spheres. This phase, characterized by the official adop-

tion of the Zionist scheme by British imperialism, was itself the extension of twenty years of preparatory efforts by the Zionist movement which had taken an organized, comprehensive form at the Basel Congress in Switzerland in 1897. This congress was the culmination of the extensive discussion which had accompanied the emergence of the Zionist movement in the middle of the 19th century.

Here lies the very reason for the «Israeli surprise» in the Arab-Israeli war of 1948. There were those who considered this war just a short round; they thought they were facing a few bandits; they had no idea of the development of Zionist power in the economic and military fields, and in terms of human resources. This power was markedly superior to that of the Arab forces which took part in the war, qualitatively and quantitatively, in terms of arms and human resources.

This was accompanied by the intensification of both impotence and treason on the part of Arab reaction, together with pervasive backwardness, discord, etc. The 1948 war was one between two widely divergent sides: the Israelis who were living their present and building up their future, and the Arabs who had just come out of the moribund Ottoman heritage, and whose development had been arrested since 1918, due to imperialist domination and the partition of the region among the principal imperialist powers of that time.

Because of all these factors, the 1948 defeat represented a typical interaction of Zionist ambitions, imperialist collusion and Arab reactionary failure and treason; hence, the interdependence of the struggles for the restoration of Palestine, ending the corrupt Arab reactionary regimes, and liberation from colonialism and imperialist domination.

The lopsided international balance of power prevailing at that time contributed to the success of the imperialist-Zionist effort to establish 'Israel'. The Soviet Union had just emerged from the war where it had suffered heavy damage and casualties, together with the newly born socialist community. It was not in a position to foil the imperialist-Zionist scheme. This is aside from all the wrong calculations and evaluations on which attitudes towards the Zionist entity were based. These included assumptions that the Jews had a right to self-determination, and that there was a chance for «democratic development in the young Hebrew state».

Much of world public opinion assumed that 'Israel' was a state of victimized Jews who had - relatively speaking - paid most dearly for the rise of the Nazi monster in Europe; thus it would be peaceful and an «oasis of democracy» in the region. Both western and Zionist mass media contributed to the promotion of this image, achieving outstanding successes. This image is not easy to erase, even after forty years of the Zionist entity's existence and aggression. Only gradually has the image of the cruel occupier shooting at children, women and old people, carrying out massacres, etc., begun to replace the image of the small, peaceful country threatened by Arab «barbarism» and Palestinian «terror».



British soldiers surround Palestinian demonstration against Zionist immigration in 1933.

STRATEGIC ZIONIST GOALS ACHIEVED

Already forty years have passed since the establishment of this entity, and for more than half of this time the modern Palestinian revolution has existed... In the same period, six wars took place (1948, 1956, 1967, 1973, 1978, 1982), and there were constant skirmishes and military operations. The outcome of this continuous conflict has been, generally speaking, in favor of the enemy. The Zionist movement has attained a series of strategic objectives including:

1. Establishing a state larger than what was envisaged in the Partition Plan, as a result of the 1948 war.
2. Expanding the state to include Palestine as a whole, as well as parts of Syria and Egypt, through the 1967 war; and the expansion of its direct military involvement in Lebanon, due to the 1978 and 1982 wars.
3. Consolidating the state's internal structure at the socioeconomic and military levels, in accordance with a strategic plan.
4. Gaining increased acceptance by the states of the region, whether officially or unofficially, on the basis of shared interests, especially in the decade following the Camp David accords.
5. Monopolizing the initiative due to the balance of power being clearly in its favor.

What 'Israel' has achieved over the last forty years has promoted it from the category of a «haven for Jews» or «national homeland» to that of a great regional power which has emerged as a serious menace not only to the Palestinian and Arab people, but also to regional and international security.

The success achieved by the enemy is, in fact, much bigger than it appears when viewed in the light of certain considerations, two in particular: First, the thrust of the Palestinian-Arab side is in accordance with the forward motion of history, while the Zionist process is against it; and secondly, the potential resources of the Arab side are incomparably greater than those at the disposal of the enemy. Yet the outcome of the conflict has been in favor of the side which is weaker both in terms of resources and of fitting into the historical process.

Failure or success that has lasted for such a long period of time and been so big cannot but be qualified as strategic. We should always remember this bitter fact; there is no excuse for ignoring the facts and processes of the Arab-Zionist conflict. No matter how painful the facts are, the first precondition for making our confrontation effective is exact, scientific understanding of the character of the conflict, as well as of the nature, goals, and objective and subjective conditions of the parties involved.

There is no need to emphasize that the defeat suffered by the Arab side in this conflict was never due to lack of readiness on the part of the masses and their vanguard forces to commit themselves and to sacrifice. The best proof is that this ill-fated fortieth anniversary of the state of 'Israel' is marked by intense struggle between the people of Palestine and this entity planted on their land. The blessed uprising in our occupied homeland has entered its sixth month without interruption, in a uniquely heroic popular confrontation. Still, the question of why we have failed till now to defeat the imperialist-supported Zionist attack remains unanswered. Why have successive generations been incapable of stopping this scheme which has enacted a fresh leap of expansion every few years? This fact obliges us, the Palestinian and Arab revolutionary, progressive and patriotic forces, to make a self-critical review of this long experience. We must look for the reason behind the Arabs' strategic failure, because identifying the root of the problem constitutes the point of departure for qualitatively new action. We must not be afraid of making such a comprehensive critical revision; we must be free of political reactions and neurosis which lead to escaping from reality, in order to make the accumulated experience an avenue to deep and systematic understanding of its lessons.

'Israel' has launched its aggressive wars against the Arabs in the context of a clearly defined, comprehensive strategy. The general lines and invariables were laid down over nine decades ago. Within the framework of such a strategy, 'Israel' has fought the battle of building its socioeconomic, scientific, technological and military base. Its developed military base is

grounded in the theory of the strong chain, rather than on that of the central link. According to the first, the chain is never stronger than its weakest link. Hence, 'Israel' tries to consolidate all the links of the chain, instead of concentrating on a single strong link in a chain of weak links. According to this theory, the Israeli concept of strength has been the full expression of force in all spheres: economic, human, social, scientific, technological and military. The Israeli concept takes into account all probabilities in its relationship with the imperialist center, and tries to convert borrowed force into its own force on the assumption that the enemy «the Arabs» would make full use of their actual and potential resources. It is highly probable that the secret of the enemy's success in attaining the status of a great regional power lies in this point. This is the modern expression of the biblical «Greater Israel», not in its well-known geographical sense, though this has not been cancelled from the comprehensive Zionist strategies, but in the modern sense of power.

On the other hand, how has the situation of the Arab side been in the intense struggle that has been going on since the beginning of the 20th century?

I am not going to talk much about the helplessness and treason of the reactionary forces; the history of the region is full of dismal records. I'll point out only the most outstanding instances, from the reactionaries' conspiratorial attitude towards the 1936 six-month general strike in Palestine, and the same attitude towards the 1939 revolt, to their helplessness and conspiracy in the 1948 war.

ABSENCE OF AN ARAB STRATEGY

What I'd like to point out in this essay is precisely the attitude and strategic policy of the Arab nationalist side over the last four decades of confrontation. Was there any well-defined, comprehensive strategy adopted by and providing guidance to the Arab side? The answer is a definite *No*. A lot can be said about the reasons for the lack of such a strategy. However, the fact to be emphasized is that the Arab national bourgeoisie, which assumed the leadership of the Arab national liberation movement in the second half of the century, was not capable of formulating such a strategy because of its backward and impotent character. This leadership became locked in an impasse, but neither have the revolutionary alternative forces, the class alternative to this leadership, been capable of drawing up such a strategy. How then can we imagine the existence of a comprehensive common strategy of confrontation, uniting and organizing the efforts and energies of the different detachments of the Arab national liberation movement?

The plan of the late Egyptian president, Gamal Abdul Nasser, whatever can be said about it, did for the first time provide the Arab national liberation movement with the chance to take the initiative. Yet it was not based on a comprehensive strategy as was admitted by Nasser himself.

In such a situation, how could any Arab victory be possible? How seriously can one view the plan of confrontation propounded by many successive forces throughout the last forty years? I am raising these questions in the conviction that time means more bloodshed, and we don't have the right to play at trial and error. We call upon all forces as well as intellectuals, to give the deserved attention to this vital problem. We pose these questions without any illusions that our answers will contain the full solutions; rather we consider them a modest contribution to the process of materializing the comprehensive

strategy for confronting the Zionist, imperialist and reactionary assault.

As noted above, the proper starting point is clear identification of the enemies we face. What do they want? What are their assets and liabilities? Where have we erred and what did we manage to do well through experience? How can we mobilize and organize all our resources and forces in this fierce battle?

HOW TO UNDERSTAND THE ENEMY

The starting point of any comprehensive strategy is the identification of the enemy. We must acquire a scientific, developed and interrelated understanding of the enemy. I say scientific, because many of the conceptions we have about 'Israel' are characterized by mysticism and preconceived, superficial notions. Here I include the idea of dividing the world into two camps, absolutely good or absolutely evil, respectively, thus blurring the nuances in between; and the recurring ideas about the impasse of the enemy, its overwhelming crisis and being lost and troubled. Deliberately or otherwise, such ideas create the illusion that the collapse of the enemy is but a question of time.

I say developed, up-to-date understanding, because we are facing an enemy which is continuously changing. We must not be satisfied with preconceived attitudes, limiting our information within their confines. 'Israele' today is not the 'Israel' of 1948. We have to follow its development and prevent our intentions, desires and illusions from becoming theoretical theses which violate the facts.

I say an interrelated understanding because we are not facing an enemy of about three million people. The root of the problem lies in the fact that the Zionist project is closely linked with two centers which should be taken into consideration in any research: The first is the world Zionist movement which provides 'Israel' with the very essence of its life on the human, material and spiritual levels. The second is the imperialist center. Without considering this link, it is impossible to understand the laws that govern the development of this entity, or to probe into the basis of its strategic perspectives.

Needless to say, the importance of examining these two links does not negate the importance of studying the subject in conjunction with the development of Arab reaction which considers this entity a useful instrument for blocking any progressive change in the area - a guarantee for themselves to remain in power.

The first step in our attempt to outline a realistic picture of the Zionist entity must be based on recognition that the 'Israel' of 1988 is not at all the 'Israel' of 1948, by any socioeconomic, military or human standard. Over the last four decades, qualitative developments have taken place, placing this entity in the category of a great regional power. This not only has consequences locally-in 'Israel' itself, but affects its relations with the world Zionist movement and the imperialist center; it also affects the Israeli concept of the parameters of the regional and international role assigned to it. For the sake of clarification, we shall examine the most significant tendencies in the internal socioeconomic and political development of 'Israel', and the development of its position on the higher strategic-international level.

A. THE REAL ECONOMIC SITUATION IN THE ZIONIST ENTITY

Before analyzing the most significant economic indices in ►

'Israel', it is worthwhile to look at the general strategic framework in which a series of economic developments took place. We should also examine the most outstanding of the exceptionally favorable factors which made the economic growth of 'Israel' proceed at a pace unknown in any other society.) 'Israel' is a rapidly changing entity in accordance with the particular circumstances in which it exists. Hence we see the absolute invalidity of preconceived, mystical or rigid concepts in grasping the current reality of 'Israel'; these are often misleading, dragging the holders of such views into the worst consequences.

In accordance with its development, 'Israel' has managed to reformulate its relationship with the imperialist center into that of a partner-instrument, instead of a lackey-instrument. Thus it is no longer possible to talk about an 'Israel' which is a burden; rather 'Israel' has become a strategic asset and a profitable partner for world imperialism. The 1967 war played a special role in developing this formula for the relationship between the Zionist and imperialist projects respectively, whereby the former has acquired a more obvious and specific status within the framework of the latter. The war also brought a fundamental change in the Zionist state's view of itself and its role, which has been accentuated after the 1973 war. This change is noticeable in the statements of some Israeli strategists who have called for a strategic security-political concept involving a great deal of originality at the level of supreme national strategy and security, to enable a quantitatively small and weak state as Israel to be as strong as a great mighty state... This is to be realized not only through available combat potential, but through the whole chain of which military potential is only one link. Hence the call to strengthen the whole chain, because «the chain is never stronger than its weakest link».

The essential thing in such statements is that 'Israel' is no longer a military institution which has a state, but a state which has its military institution. If the latter was the strongest link, then it has become necessary to raise the economic, social, scientific and human links of the chain to the same level. It is this very notion that has governed the economic programs of 'Israel' as well as its relationship with both the Zionist movement and the imperialist center whose economic support has acquired a strategic value no less than that of their military support. This is contrary to the usual relations between the states of the imperialist center and those in the third world. In this strategic scope, all natural, financial, human, economic, marketing resources, etc., have been utilized to serve the plan for 'Israel' being the regional great power. How has this been done? What is the outcome of the past forty years?

In the case of 'Israel' it is impossible to ignore the decisive role of the external factor which has guaranteed the necessary quota of: (1) human resources, especially highly skilled; (2) constant capital influx, leading to a high level of capitalization which would be impossible through internal accumulation; (3) marketing facilities, leading to the semi-integration of 'Israel' into the world imperialist market under extremely favorable conditions, confirming that 'Israel' has been dealt with as if it were part of the imperialist center, not a peripheral state.

No one argues against these facts. Yet the question has not, so far, received the deserved amount of attention. Besides, it continues to create confusion among many of those who are concerned about how 'Israel' has made use of these resources, and how it has invested this aid in the service of its own project

which is linked to and in harmony with the general imperialist project.

1. FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Between 1950 and 1984, 'Israel' was flooded with financial resources estimated at 92,000 million dollars at 1980 prices; more than two-thirds of this was from the USA, followed by Federal Germany and the World Zionist Organization, and finally aid, grants and credits from various imperialist states. In the same period, a sum of 94,000 million dollars, also at 1980 prices, was invested locally. This shows that the influx of money from abroad was not wasted on consumption or non-productive activities, but went towards capital accumulation. This capital investment amounts to one-fourth of the gross national product, which is one of the highest ratios in the world. Thus we reach the important conclusion that increased security burdens have not prevented 'Israel' from building a developed economic base, according a fourth of its national product for the purpose.

Going further into the details of how these huge sums have been used, we discover that 64,000 million dollars, two-thirds of the total, have been invested in fields which are characterized by productivity, mechanization and the like, while the social sector - individual possessions and housing - has not taken more than one-third of capital accumulation. This led to a high degree of capitalization in the various productive sectors.

- In agriculture for example, 18% of the land was irrigated in 1949, rising to 50% by 1984. There were 1300 agricultural machines in 1949, but 29,900 in 1984. The amount of water consumed by each Israeli is 260 liters per day, compared with 60 in the West Bank.

- Electricity production rose from 464 million kilowatts in 1950 to 129,000 million in 1984, more than one-third of this being used in industry.

- In the industrial sector, 15,000 million dollars were invested from 1950 to 1984; 11,000 million dollars of this went for modern technology. The ratio of investment in technology to overall capital investment rose from 13% to 15% in the sixties, and to 21.3% in the eighties. The concentration of investment in technology reached a record high; an estimated average of 50,000 dollars is invested per worker.

2. HUMAN RESOURCES AND SKILLED LABOR

Parallel to the intensified capitalization of the Israeli economy, available labor power has been used extremely efficiently. This applies both to new immigrants, mostly highly skilled, and to the use of science to raise the standards of the local labor force. It has entailed the creation of new fields and new ways to benefit from female labor as much as possible, as well as employing Palestinians to do low-paid, unskilled jobs, which the Israeli laborer refuses to do; the latter tries to be employed in fields requiring skills and expertise.

In the period of 1948 - 1984, there were 1.75 million immigrants; 1.4 million of them settled in 'Israel'. In the years 1974-1984, 25-31% of immigrants of working age had high qualifications. According to available information, some 49-65,000 people with high qualifications arrived in 'Israel' from 1955 to 1984. Out of these, 18-26,000 were engineers, and 10-13,800 were physicians. The years 1972-1984 witnessed the greatest influx of highly qualified immigrants. While the number of immigrants in the years 1972-84 was 35% of all 1955-84 immigrants, they accounted for 70% of all the

engineers and physicians who immigrated to 'Israel' from 1955 to 1984. These figures simply meant a total gratuitous revolution in the structure of labor power in 'Israel' with great effects on the formulation of Israeli perspectives in both economics and supreme strategy.

Moreover, Israeli educational institutions were continuously being expanded and developed, turning out thousands of graduates annually. Among those over 14 years of age, those with 16 years or more of education were 3.6% in 1961, 4.1% in 1970, 7% in 1975, 8.5% in 1980, and 9.8% in 1984. This means that scientific potential increased threefold at least.

One of the most important results of both educational development and the internal population structure is the increase of the labor force which reached 37% of the total population. (The comparable figure was 22% in Palestine in 1948). This is a high percentage, having been pushed up by extensive employment of women: 67.5 women per 100 men in 1984, as opposed to 52 in 1972, while among Palestinian Arabs the comparable figure was 17.5 in 1984. One of the most significant effects of greater employment of women is the transfer of 112,200 persons from non-productive consumption to productive areas. This also compensates for the great amount of labor unproductively employed for security purposes. This number is nearly equal to the number of imported Palestinian Arab laborers. In 1984, 125,000 Palestinians from the territories occupied in 1967 were employed in 'Israel'. This enabled Israeli planners to redistribute labor among the different economic branches, directing Israeli laborers towards higher-level production, while absorbing the Palestinians at the bottom of the production scale.

3. MARKETING FACILITIES

Having managed to guarantee the influx of financial and human resources, and employ them according to a scientific plan that aimed at supreme strategic objectives, how has 'Israel' succeeded in solving the problem of marketing? Three methods are apparent:

First is expansion of the home market through natural population increase as well as immigration. The increased rate of capitalization and employment contributed to increasing the demand for goods and services, activating the economic cycle. Moreover, 'Israel' resorted to the familiar method of inflation to change the population's tendency to save into another type of social behavior - that of converting their income into stable goods. 'Israel' has dealt with the consequences of stagnation through inflationary policies which are well-known in the capitalist economies.

Second is expansion of the market by colonial means, through occupation. It has become known that 'Israel', on the eve of the 1967 war, was facing its first serious structural economic crisis - the crisis of overproduction, having just completed a comprehensive industrialization program carried out with the reparations paid by Federal Germany. The territories occupied in 1967 constitute one-fourth to one-third of the Israeli market itself. They are secure markets, almost monopolized by 'Israel' which dominates 90% of their imports (amounting to 637.5 million dollars in 1984, while only 50.9 million dollars in 1968). The trade deficit between 'Israel' and the 1967 occupied territories has grown from 36.7 million dollars in 1968, to 442.1 million in 1984, in favor of 'Israel'. This covered 17.5% of the total Israeli trade deficit in 1984. The territories occupied in 1967 are the biggest single importer from 'Israel' after the USA. Their economic value, in this

sense, can be compared to that of the main world trade blocs, because they absorbed 33% and 39% of what was absorbed by the EEC and the USA, respectively, in 1984.

Third is Israeli integration into the imperialist market. 'Israel' has managed to enter international markets under the most favorable conditions and at a pace which matched the development of its economic structure. The imperialist states treated 'Israel' as part of the center. As a result of the exceptional facilities granted, the Israeli economy made additional leaps. From 1974 to 1984, the value of Israeli exports to the EEC increased from 698 million dollars to 1890 million dollars, i.e., a 170% increase, while its imports increased by only 73. The facilities provided by the USA contributed to the increase of Israeli exports to the US market by 445% in 1974-1984, while its imports from the USA increased only 135%.

Simple calculation shows that the practical results of the agreements between 'Israel' and the imperialist world were further increases in Israeli exports amounting to 1614.5 million dollars. Of this, 932 million dollars worth was through US facilities, while 682.5 million dollars worth was through European facilities. This total figure amounts to one-fourth of Israeli exports to all parts of the world. It is 253% of total Israeli exports to the territories occupied in 1967, i.e., the Israeli agreements with the EEC and USA have had the same importance as the 1967 war, as far as Israeli exports were concerned.

We can conclude that 'Israel' has managed, during the last decades, to make the utmost use of the abundant influx of financial and human resources from abroad, and to benefit maximally from the marketing facilities afforded. 'Israel' remoulded its supreme strategy accordingly, not only in the military sphere, but in the comprehensive framework of the power concept, which is based on economy, technology, science, etc. This reformulation led to revision of the priorities of the internal economic structure whereby industry occupies a leading position, and electric and electronic industries have increasing importance in total industrial output (17.2% in 1982, instead of 4.3% in 1965). In addition there was intense concentration of labor; 1.5% of industrial firms employ 45.3% of the industrial labor force. Labor productivity more than tripled from 1950 to 1984.

All this will lead to the reemergence of the marketing problem in the Israeli economy which is already approaching the limits of available outlets. This reinforces the belief that 'Israel' will force a normalization of relations on its Arab neighbors, peacefully or by aggression, or by a combination of the two.

Having seen the extent of modernization and development in the Israeli economy, are we exaggerating when we say that the theory of the strong chain has already been applied in 'Israel'? Does anyone of us still doubt that the enemy's concept of power has long ago surpassed the military field to include all the economic, social, scientific and technological spheres. Are we going to take all these aspects into consideration when outlining our supreme strategy, whether protracted people's war or the plan for strategic balance? Or will we remain prisoners of outdated conceptions about the enemy? Careful consideration of the significance of the above-cited figures, about the real economic situation in 'Israel', renders it necessary to think deeply about the enemy, as well as about our strategy of comprehensive confrontation against its supreme strategy and plans.

workers was only 17.5% in 1984, in contrast with African Jews for whom the comparable ratio was 84.4%. These figures are typical indications of the degree of injustice, oppression and discrimination against our people under occupation, as compared even to the lowest strata of the Jewish social scale. They expose the hideous racist character of Israeli policies within the so-called green line.

In brief, we can say that the enemy has enjoyed additional sources of income which increased its wealth and enabled it to reconcile its security and developmental needs, without disturbing the living standards of the settler population. This saved the Jewish population from exposure to social pressure. Quite the contrary, social conditions became steadily better relatively quickly. This was possible thanks to abundant resources from abroad, as well as labor productivity at home. These resources were distributed according to a rigorously applied taxation policy, aiming at bridging social gaps, while preserving the position of the private sector. State regulations guaranteed the productive character of wealth and of the profits of the private sector which was made to function in the interests of the state, not the other way around.

These are the most outstanding features of the social policies of the Zionist entity, as well as the principal changes in this sphere. Once more, the supreme strategic objectives of Zionism appear to be the regulator and motivator of the social policies, which should be carefully studied.

3. DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIC THEORY AND MILITARY CAPACITY

Along with the socioeconomic sphere, the field of strategic theory and Israeli military capacity has undergone noticeable development over the last forty years; hence the necessity of considering all these innovations in a comprehensive perspective. Rather than ruminating on our old information and analysis, we must delve into the core of the changes and evaluate them, in order to formulate a counterstrategy of confrontation, based on science and facts, not on dreams and illusions.

The results of the 1973 war may have been the fundamental turning point for the Israeli strategic theory. 'Israel' seemed to realize that the realities of the June 1967 war, and its army's

easy victory over the Arab armies, were no longer valid after 1973. The gap between the Arabs and 'Israel' could be decreased in a few years; the Arabs could exploit the change to the degree that the balance of forces could shift in their favor, unless substantial alterations were made in Israeli strategy. The objective of the Israeli strategy after the 1973 war was not, therefore, simply preserving the balance of forces in their favor. Rather, it was increasing their clear superiority, and creating a technological time gap that could not easily be bridged by the Arabs within a limited number of years.

Together with this change in the strategic theory of the enemy, there were other changes in the Israeli concepts of the balance of forces, «the enemy» and the elements of power. The changes were by no means unrelated to the essence of the supreme strategy on which the Zionist project in Palestine was based and which it has always been trying to apply in practice.

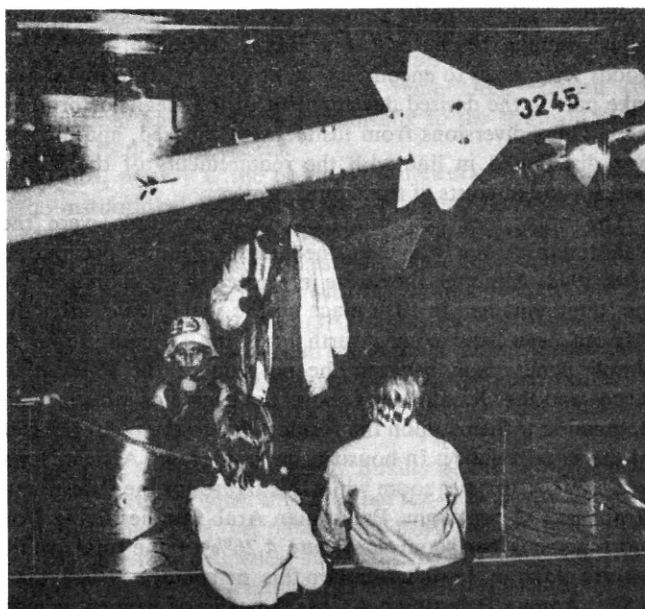
For 'Israel', national security is a concept equal to existence itself. Therefore, it needed to adopt a new way of viewing its enemy, not only the actual one, but also the potential enemies it may designate for nationalist, religious, ideological and technological reasons. When calculating the balance of forces, 'Israel' should take such considerations into account, through full estimation of all the human, technological elements, etc. Thus, it is impossible to look at the elements of power only from the military aspect. All the economic, human, i.e., demographic, and security aspects must be taken into consideration.

Accordingly, in recent years, 'Israel' acted in a way that projected its influence far beyond the frontlines with the Arabs. Nowadays we hear about projects and plans going as far as hitting the nuclear reactor in Pakistan, to prevent it from the production of atom bombs which might threaten Israeli security in different circumstances. Moreover, important changes have been made in the structure of the Israeli military institution, followed by changes in the economic structure and in the military industry in particular. We are going to point out some of the aspects of the enemy's strategic thinking which have affected its military capacity:

First: One of the most important lessons 'Israel' drew from the 1973 war concerned the human aspect, i.e., the necessity of increasing the human capacity of the military institution. The number of both reserve and active-duty soldiers has been increased, to enable 'Israel' to mobilize a number of soldiers not much less than the Arab armies in time of war. The professional and permanent personnel of the Israeli army now number a quarter of a million, besides the reserves. More serious is that this increase was not at the expense of manpower employed in the civilian sector. It was balanced by raising the rate of employment, in spite of lagging immigration, and by using Palestinian Arab labor. In addition, there was a qualitative change in the level of the personnel engaged in the security and military field, with the introduction of technologically advanced equipment and the wide use of electronics.

Second: Besides depending on imported arms, the Israeli army began to use advanced weapons manufactured in 'Israel'. The Israeli military industry has already made great progress in providing the army with its munition needs as well as different kinds of arms, together with modifying old imported weapons to meet the requirements of accelerated technological development and of the circumstances in which they would be used. The important factor which continues to limit the Israeli army, as clearly stated by Israeli leaders, is armaments, not the

The Israeli Python 3 air-to-air missile exhibited at Paris air show in 1983



human factor. 'Israel' must, they think, increase the capacity of its army by raising the standard of its arms, not only by increasing the number of soldiers. All this takes place within the framework of converting a borrowed force into an Israeli force. The most serious step taken in this direction is the use of electronics in sighting and hitting targets - «smart bombs», fully utilizing electronics in the administration of security, supervision, leadership, communications and intelligence work. This is the first priority for achieving strategic, qualitative superiority.

Third: In the thirties, the Zionist movement started its own war industry in Palestine as part of the strategy of converting borrowed force into its own force. This industry has made substantial progress. The Israeli war industry was built in the framework of a comprehensive infrastructure to consolidate the elements of power. Much can be said about the volume of Israeli war production, yet more important is the fact that 'Israel' has entered the age of electronics with precision weaponry as well as reconnaissance, targeting and delivery, communications and intelligence equipment. Although available information is still scarce, being top state secret, it is possible to deduce from a series of indications that the enemy has reached an advanced stage in this field. The most outstanding evidence may be the ever higher proportion of electronics in the total Israeli production and in exports, besides occasional statements made by Israeli officials and a number of successful Israeli military operations reflecting the high standard in this area.

We must also note that while economics play a decisive role in raising the Israeli strategic capacity, the Israeli war industry contributes, in turn, to activating the economic cycle through military exports, and by absorbing a high percentage of the available labor power.

Fourth: The nuclear option of the enemy started a long time ago, almost from the establishment of the state. Efforts culminated in 1963 with the building of the Dimona reactor. 'Israel' claims to be using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, and in fact it is used to produce electricity and to desalinize water. Still, the main objective remains to be the production of weapons of mass destruction and consequently reaching the stage of nuclear terror. Recent information has

exposed that even by conservative estimates 'Israel' has 20 bombs comparable to those dropped on Hiroshima, together with a delivery system - Jericho II rockets, which are modified versions of the Pershing II, with a range reaching the southern part of the Soviet Union.

Based on the above, we can say that 'Israel' has launched an arms race on two levels, nuclear and conventional in terms of both quantity and quality. All available information shows that 'Israel' is the absolute winner in terms of nuclear technology. As for conventional arms, there is no evidence to show that it is the losing party, quantitatively or qualitatively, so far.

Studying the enemy's military capacity, together with the perspectives of its strategic theory, is extremely essential, whether we think in terms of people's warfare or strategic balance. We have to avoid the error of underestimating Israeli capacities and the consequent dangers posed to the national security of the people and countries in the region. We must also avoid the mistaken view of the enemy as «an extraordinary power that can never be defeated», as this is an attempt to justify helplessness and submission to liquidationist solutions.

4. POLITICAL CHANGES

In the beginning was ideology; from the womb of European capitalist societies emerged the Zionist ideology. It became an organized movement and held its first congress towards the end of the 19th century. The idea of creating a «national home» for the Jews in Palestine was officially sponsored by British imperialism from 1917 up to the establishment of the Zionist entity in 1948. Since then, the Zionist ideology has been translated in stages into policies, wars and positions, into programs of development and internal building. With the establishment of the state of 'Israel', the Zionist ideology acquired its full executive instruments, and the bodies and institutions governing the settler society.

As clarified above, the economic, social and strategic spheres were subject to a comprehensive strategy. The settler community in our homeland went through the Zionist melting pot in both theory and practice, beginning with being influenced while deciding to immigrate to Palestine, then passing through the phases of absorption, employment, mobilization, schooling, information, etc. This process remoulded the brains of these settlers according to the ultimate objectives of the settler society.

In view of the particular conditions of this society, which stem from the influx of rewards for its strategic role in the area, its own efforts to maintain its role and further its development, and the particular role played by the biblical (Torah) ideology at the beginning, it is impossible to draw a line of demarcation between Zionism and 'Israel'. The facts of 40 years, today's experience and future perspectives, all confirm the indivisibility of the two. Social differences notwithstanding, Zionism remains the official ideology of this society which is subject to its influence in many ways. The settler community also benefits to greater and lesser degrees from its colonial role. How is it possible then to count on a separation between Zionism and 'Israel'?

It is sufficient to point out that all this scientific and technological progress has only led to increased barbarism and fascism. Science combined with racist ideology can only produce, socially speaking, barbarism which we are witnessing at this moment in dealing with the uprising in the occupied territories. It is the same barbarism we have been witnessing over

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The above-mentioned socioeconomic and strategic achievements of the enemy provided the basis for important changes at the political level. Great changes took place in the political thinking, and more important changes took place in the weight of the different Israeli political forces. Although the concept of «Greater Israel» is repeatedly referred to as a practical possibility by the Zionist leaders, the first goal of further expansion remains to be the full absorption of the territories occupied in 1967. The difference between the two poles of the Israeli political spectrum - Likud and the Labor Alignment - on this point is only differing evaluations of Israeli capability to enact this absorption, its capability to convert ideology into policy and actually apply this policy. All this occurs in an internal political atmosphere which is shifting towards the extreme right, and of actual policies for gradual realization of «Greater Israel» by building formidable power and fully absorbing the Palestinian and Arab territories occupied in 1967.

This leads us to comment briefly on the most salient features of the current political life in 'Israel' and their relation to the changes that have taken place in the structure of this entity:

First: Splits and mergers have been historical phenomena in the Israeli political parties. The new thing is that splits occur in the ranks of the 'left' in favor of the right, as seen in the last electoral lists for the Knesset.

Second: The game of 'doves' and 'hawks' in the Israeli parties is an old one. The new element is that key positions steadily shift to the 'hawks' at the expense of the 'doves'.

Third: Political life is increasingly concentrated in the big blocs; two of the fifteen party lists in the present Knesset occupy more than two-thirds of the seats. The situation has been almost the same since 1969.

Fourth: The settler population increasingly takes part in the elections; 80% of registered Jewish voters voted in the last elections.

Fifth: The political weight of the right has increased. In the first years after the establishment of the Israeli state, the right was weak in comparison to the Zionist 'left'. Then the gap began to diminish, reaching equilibrium, and in 1977, the right won over the 'left'. In 1984, equilibrium was restored. In spite of the present equilibrium, the trend is still in favor of the right, because there is a large reserve of right-wing parties and extremist religious groups to resort to in times of crisis, as Shamir has repeatedly threatened to do.

Sixth: The electoral weight of the non-Zionist forces among Israeli Jews is very small. In the last elections, the Communist Party (Rakah), which draws the bulk of its votes from Palestinians, got only 5,800 Jewish votes, i.e., 0.3% as against 36%, 34.7% and 1.3% for the Labor Alignment, Likud and Rabbi Kahana, respectively.

Seventh: The vote for the religious parties rose until reaching a peak in 1961; then it stabilized in the last two rounds at 11% of the Jewish vote.

Eighth: The weight of the Oriental Jews in the Knesset has steadily increased to 31 seats, as compared to eight in 1961. Two-thirds of the Oriental Jewish members of the Knesset were on the lists of the Labor Alignment or Likud, not the explicitly Oriental lists, such as Tami which got only 1.5% of the votes.

Ninth: The representation of Palestinian Arabs is weak, compared to their real numbers. They constitute 10.5% of the population but occupy only 5.8% of the Knesset seats, a percentage which had not increased since 1965.

Tenth: In the last five years, the phenomenon of the «peace camp» has emerged in 'Israel' in a noteworthy way, due to the criminal policies of the Zionist enemy in Lebanon and the occupied territories, in addition to a number of internal and external factors which cannot be discussed here. Although this phenomenon is important, it is not a decisive break with the foundation which governs Israeli policies. At least at present, it can by no means be considered a solid attitude to be depended on.

Reviewing the political life of 'Israel' shows that the changes that have occurred go parallel to a series of socioeconomic and strategic developments. Parallel changes have taken place in the demographic situation. The separate immigrant groups which constitute the population have progressively shifted away from their respective small entities to be integrated in a broader social entity. This development is due to material factors provided by the policy of controlling the social and educational gaps, etc., that separated the different groups of the Jewish population of 'Israel'.

The most significant feature of Israeli political life remains to be the expansion of the social base of the right, in contrast to that of the Zionist 'left' which kept receding. Needless to say, the terms 'right' and 'left' in Israeli politics have the same ideological content. The main difference between them concerns Israeli capacity to convert the ideological slogan into a political one, and whether to publicly proclaim their real goals. Long experience has shown how essentially identical the opposing poles in Israeli political life are in terms of the strategy and ultimate aims of the Zionist project. It has also proved that differences were confined to the immediate political framework and only concerned the means to be adopted for achieving common objectives. The typical example which proves this is that there is a consensus on the invariables of remaining opposed to Palestine - the name, the people, the cause, the revolution, the organization (the PLO), the legitimate rights, etc. This is very clear in the program of the basic Zionist parties, where Palestine appears as the total negation of the Zionist concept.

This point is even clearer in the respective foreign policies pursued by the main poles of Israeli political life against the forces of liberation, progress, peace and socialism on both the Arab and international levels. These policies are extensions of their internal policies which remain based on Zionism in theory and practice, fitting in with world imperialism in general, and the latter's most reactionary and aggressive circles in particular.

★ ★ ★

We have presented a brief picture of the most salient tendencies and changes in the Zionist entity over the last forty years. We have tried to point out the more important ones. We by no means pretend to have covered them all. We have tried to pay special attention to the sources of strength at the disposal of this entity, since our intent is to contribute to refutation of the simplistic, superficial attitude whereby various qualities and descriptions are attributed to 'Israel' with no attempt at scientific understanding. In our view, refutation of such an attitude constitutes the first condition and the prelude to building a comprehensive Palestinian-Arab-international strategy of confrontation. ●

The Misguided Document

«Prospects of a Palestinian—Israeli Settlement»

Beginning at the Arab Summit in Algiers, a document was circulated with the title «PLO View: Prospects of a Palestinian Settlement.» Essentially it proposed that: (1) 'Israel' and the Palestinians share an interest in peace; (2) the Palestinians agree with the Israeli desire for direct negotiations, but demand that they be «conducted under a UN-sponsored international conference;» and (3) an internationally supervised referendum could be held in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, if anyone doubts the PLO's representa-

tion of the Palestinians. This document, signed by Bassam Abu Sharif, advisor to PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat, was later circulated internationally, including to the US State Department.

The document met with the condemnation of almost all Palestinian organizations. Statements against it were issued by the PFLP, DFLP, Palestinian Liberation Front, Popular Struggle Front, PFLP—General Command and the Fatah Provisional Leadership (Abu Musa). It was also

criticized by Palestinians in the occupied territories, and by prominent Palestinian officials, such as Abu Iyad and Farouq Qaddoumi of Fatah's Central Committee.

Though the Palestinian right-wing leadership surely stood behind the airing of this document, they stood silent in the wake of the heavy criticism, well-aware that the views expressed were in flagrant violation of adopted PLO positions, and especially the resolutions of the 18th PNC session in

Not a PLO Document

Comrade Abu Ali Mustafa, deputy general secretary of the PFLP and member of the PLO Executive Committee, made the following statement on July 5th:

During the last ten days, the press has reported on the dangerous political document which was distributed by Bassam Abu Sharif, and the reactions to it from political forces, organizations and personalities. I, as a member of the PLO Executive Committee, wish to assert the following:

First: This document is not linked with any leading Palestinian body or institution; nor did these have knowledge of it.

Second: On June 21st, I sent an immediate letter to brother Yasir Arafat, chairman of the PLO Executive Committee, demanding that he take an explicit position, denying any connection with this document. This was intended to remove the ambiguity which arose, particularly after Bassam Abu Sharif declared that Yasir Arafat knew about the document. However, there has been no response to my demand.

Third: It appears to me, through confirmed information, that the chairman of the Executive Committee is personally behind this document. Moreover, he sent one of his personal

advisors to give this harmful document to one of the Arab rulers, in order that it be given to the US administration in Washington D.C.

Accordingly, I, as a member of the Executive Committee, declare to the Palestinian people, and to all our allies and friends, that the chairman of the Executive Committee is personally responsible for toying with national unity, with our definitive principles and with our sacred cause which is above all. I also urge the convening of an immediate session of the PLO Central Council to take a responsible position against this political game...

We are living in months of dignity... created by the exalted popular uprising and the brave struggle of our people in the occupied homeland. We totally comprehend our responsibilities and urge all Palestinian nationalists to defend the program of national consensus and the resolutions of the Palestinian National Council, and to prevent any blurring of the conflict with the Zionist enemy.

We view these acts of the aides of the

chairman of the Executive Committee, which he supports, as a destructive penetration of the popular uprising and its glorious achievements. We shall not permit any trend or individual, whoever he may be, to disperse the achievements of the uprising or weaken the continuity of its struggling spirit. We shall not accept that the leading Palestinian institutions are bypassed, or that they function according to the desires of illusory, individualistic calculations; nor will we accept attempts to transform these institutions into false witnesses to such organizational and political penetrations which affect the national program and principles.

All the leading bodies of the organizations of the PLO are required to examine these dangerous political practices and make the appropriate decisions against them and against those who are practicing or supporting them. This is required in order to protect our cause, national struggle and the PLO, the leader of our people's struggle and their sole legitimate representative.

Algiers in 1987. PLO officials were quick to attribute the document to the personal initiative of Bassam Abu Sharif, leaving an air of unclarity around the PLO's position in international circles, and disturbing Palestinian national unity.

The PLO Central Council, meeting in Baghdad from July 31st to August 3rd, alleviated this situation by adopting a resolution against any statements that do not reflect the official PLO position.

DISTORTING REALITY

Aside from compromising basic Palestinian principles and the unity among the organizations in the PLO, this document distorted the facts before international public opinion which it purported to address. The most basic distortion was equating 'Israel' with the Palestinians, thus blurring the distinction between the oppressors and the oppressed. If Palestinian and Israeli interests in peace are equivalent, why then has 'Israel' initiated four major wars in addition to innumerable bombing raids and mini-invasions, while the Palestinian liberation movement's employment of violence has been aimed at addressing the wrongs inflicted by Israeli aggression and expansion in these wars? These are not just realities of the past. Rather, the ever augmented militarization of the Israeli economy makes aggression a structural imperative of the state, as are arms sales to reactionary forces around the globe, participation in the US's Star Wars program, etc.

If the document attempts to make a separation between the average Israeli and the government, it still misses the mark. Opinion polls over the years and today show a rather solid public consensus for the state's aggressive acts. The first notable exception occurred during the war in Lebanon; it occurred *because of* unprecedented Israeli losses in the face of the resistance of the Palestinian and Lebanese masses and fighting forces. Today, the majority of Israelis concur with the army's heavy-handed tactics for beating down the popular uprising in the occupied territories, despite the broad international outcry against the army's policy of shooting to kill, breaking bones and

tear-gassing to death. Some cracks in the consensus have occurred. Most significant is the conclusion that the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip is counterproductive, reached by over 250 reserve officers grouped in the Council for Peace and Security, led by General Aharon Yariv, former head of military intelligence. This group reached this conclusion after half a year of uninterrupted Palestinian uprising. Clearly, experience shows that cracks in the Israeli consensus are made by struggle, not by offering unwarranted concessions, based on illusory premises.

The document toys with reality on two other basic points. The first of these is the distinction between Judaism and Jews on the one hand, and Zionism and 'Israel' on the other. (In fact, only 20% of Jews in the world live in 'Israel'.) Making this distinction has always been crucial for creating broader understanding of the nature of the Middle East conflict and the Palestinian cause. The PLO has, for its part, defined itself as a national movement, i.e., it represents the Palestinians regardless of their faith. In the early seventies, the PLO launched the concept of a democratic, secular state in Palestine, devoid of discrimination on religious or racial grounds. Yet with its ramblings about «the Jewish people», this document returns the discourse to the Middle Ages, before the separation of religion and statehood, which is now standard in democratic societies all over the world. This is a major concession to Zionism which has worked to equate Judaism with nationality, in the interests of its colonial project.

The other crucial truth toyed with by the document is the oneness of the Palestinian people and their cause. By failing to mention the Palestinians' right to repatriation, the document ignores those Palestinians who have been forced into exile by the repeated waves of Zionist aggression, beginning in 1948. A concurrent fault of the document is that the referendum it proposes would be conducted only among Palestinians present in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, again shunting aside over half the Palestinian people. This is in addition to the fact that such a referendum is at

best superfluous, since the PLO is recognized as the Palestinian people's sole legitimate representative; even among forces antagonistic to our cause, this is widely acknowledged, if only off the record.

The Palestinian liberation movement - and democratic Israelis - would be better served by a realistic assessment of what must be done to bring peace to the Middle East. In fact, the PLO is in possession of a realistic peace proposal as was clearly specified in the resolutions of the 18th PNC, held in Algeria, in April 1987:

«8. To support the convening of an international conference with full authority under the auspices of the UN and on the basis of its resolutions related to the Palestinian cause. This conference is to be held in order to deal with the Arab-Zionist conflict and its core, the Palestinian cause. The conference shall be attended by the five permanent members of the Security Council. The PLO shall participate as a full, independent party, on an equal footing with the other parties, because the PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, as stated in the Arab summits' resolutions. To uphold this form of international conference.»

OLD—NEW TACTIC

Bassam Abu Sharif and whoever else may have formulated this document are well-aware of these issues. Careful reading reveals that the document in reality addresses neither international public opinion nor the Israeli citizenry, but rather the US administration. Why else does it take pains to concur with the US view of an international conference as an umbrella for direct talks between 'Israel' and the Palestinians? Again, the document veils actual Israeli policy in illusions, saying that the Palestinians agree that no outside party should impose a settlement. Do the authors of the document really not know that the reason the Israeli leaders object to a fully empowered international conference is that they don't want to be confronted with the PLO and the legitimacy of Palestinian national rights which are recognized by the majority of countries in the world, as evidenced at the UN.

Another sure sign that the document addresses the US administration is that it omits the Palestinian people's rights to repatriation and an independent state, which are rejected by the US and 'Israel'. If there remains any doubt, one can refer to Bassam Abu Sharif's own statement as printed in Abu Dhabi's *Al Ittihad* on June 26th: «Direct contact between the PLO and the US administration is required now more than ever.»

Ironically, though the Arab regimes reaffirmed the need for Palestinian statehood at the recent Algiers Summit, some right-wing forces in the PLO are

reverting to the tactic employed - and quite unsuccessfully - over the years by reactionary Arab regimes who have wagered on the USA to pressure 'Israel' to make some concessions.

Perhaps the authors of this document were not surprised by Shamir's perfidious rejection of the proposal as «nothing new». Maybe they were even encouraged by the US State Department's cautious welcome of the proposals as having a «constructive tone» and «some positive points.» But as could be expected, the US spokesman avoided unconditional recognition of the proposals by saying they were not

«authoritative», meaning that more official concessions are wanted from the PLO.

If the US administration is eventually convinced to recognize Palestinian rights, this will come as a result of the continuation of the current uprising and other forms of Palestinian struggle. This document coming at this time only serves to detract from the uprising, particularly since it challenges the PLO's unity which is an important prerequisite for the uprising's continuation.

The 1988 Camp War — A Stab in the Back

The most recent war against the Palestinian camps in Beirut distinguished itself from previous camp wars in that the contending forces were both Palestinian organizations. However, in essence, this war was a continuation of the foregoing attempts to end the Palestinian revolution's presence in Lebanon.

From the time the Amal movement began besieging the Palestinian camps in 1985, it was clear that such attacks were part of a broader move to resolve the Lebanese crisis without fundamentally changing the political and social injustices which have led to this crisis. Instead, the Palestinians of the camps became the scapegoats under various pretexts, while different factions contended for a bigger share of the pie in a

sectarian redivision of power.

Yet from 1985, it was equally clear that these attempts to disarm and defeat the Palestinian camps would not succeed. The fighters and camp population in general proved their ability to resist shelling, siege and starvation, in order to maintain their right to self-defense and to continue the struggle against the Zionist occupation of Palestinian and Lebanese land.

This year's camp war consisted of a series of battles between the forces of the Fatah Central Committee (Arafat) and those of the Fatah Provisional Leadership (Abu Musa) beginning in May and continuing until the first week of July. On the surface, this was an instance of inter - Palestinian fighting, a phenomenon which has always been condemned because of the threat it poses to Palestinian unity and struggle, and because only the Zionist enemy stands to gain. However, this fighting took on even more dangerous dimensions because it occurred on the backdrop of two other, widely divergent developments: the Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories and the pending presidential elections in Lebanon. While the first development seemed to herald a positive new stage for Palestinians in Lebanon, the second gave rise to a series of military and political maneuvers aimed at pacifying West Beirut and eliminating 'disruptive' elements that might stand in the way of electing a president without the necessary reforms. These maneuvers included Israeli aggression on South Lebanon, the 'resolution' of the situation in the southern districts of Beirut, and intense US diplomatic efforts to find a presidential candidate acceptable not only to its traditional allies in the Lebanese Front, but also to the Syrian government.

THE WAR IN THE SOUTH

Continuing their ongoing struggle against Zionist occupation, and aiming to support the Palestinian uprising in ►

Shatila residents fleeing shelling



the occupied territories, Palestinian and Lebanese revolutionaries had escalated their armed struggle. By early May, eight attacks had been launched against the Zionist state from South Lebanon, in contrast to ten such attacks in the whole of 1987.

'Israel' was quick to react to the new prospects for the liberation struggle. The first week of May, it launched a major new attack on South Lebanon, sending 2,500 troops, backed by tanks and helicopters out of the 'security zone' to engage in clashes with Lebanese patriots, especially around Maidun. The Israeli troops came within a few miles of Syrian army positions in the southern Bekaa Valley. Obviously, the real intent of the operation was to send a signal to Lebanon and Syria, that 'Israel' would not tolerate an increase in nationalist struggle.

'Israel' escalated its aggression on Lebanon with a double purpose: Hoping to pacify its northern front in order to concentrate its military might on crushing the Palestinian uprising, meanwhile pressuring Lebanon to opt for a president who would not hamper Zionist aims. By late August, 'Israel' had staged fifteen major bombing attacks, most targetting Palestinian presence in the Sidon area, but also hitting Lebanese villages. Pressure was accentuated with the reinforcement of Zionist troop strength in the occupied border zone, and almost daily shelling of Lebanese southern villages by the Israeli army and their allies, the South Lebanese Army.

SOUTH BEIRUT

Meanwhile, the conflict between the two militias, Amal and Hezbollah, over control of the southern districts of Beirut was resolved. Unable to maintain its positions, Amal evacuated its forces to South Lebanon in an agreement whereby Syrian troops were deployed to maintain order in southern Beirut. This was a further move towards pacification of West Beirut, i.e., removing the militias from the streets, in preparations for the anticipated elections. It was intended as part of the effort to enforce a similar situation in East Beirut, whereby the Lebanese Army would replace the Lebanese Forces' control.

Of course, the part of this plan concerning East Beirut never materialized. Instead, the settlement in the southern districts set a precedent which could be implemented in a different spirit in the Palestinian camps, depriving Palestinians of their right to self-defense and to participate in the liberation struggle. The inter-Palestinian fighting in the Beirut camps provided a golden opportunity to those forces envisioning such moves to end Palestinian revolutionary presence in Lebanon.

A PALESTINIAN WAR?

The initial fighting between the Fatah Central Committee and Provisional Leadership forces had ended with the expulsion of the latter from the Beirut camps. The other Palestinian organizations, in coordination with their Lebanese nationalist allies, stood against this fighting from the beginning. They formed a follow-up committee to work for a ceasefire and for resolving the conflict through democratic means. The ceasefire arranged by this committee provided for the Fatah Provisional Leadership to return to its offices in the camps. However, this option was not heeded by the Provisional Leadership which began shelling the camps from positions outside. This finally forced the evacuation of Fatah Central Committee loyalists to Ain Al Hilweh camp, near Sidon. On this basis, the Provisional Leadership re-entered Shatila and Burj Al Barajneh camps, but without a shred of popular support for this dirty war. On the contrary, Shatila was left almost totally destroyed, and Burj Al Barajneh heavily damaged, with most residents of both camps having fled the shelling.

The physical damage only tells half the story. Most serious is the political implications of this round of fighting. While the uprising in the occupied territories had opened a new phase for the Palestinian national struggle, new chances for internal unity and for joint Palestinian-Lebanese struggle, this camp war preoccupied the Palestinian revolution, detracting from its efforts to take advantage of the new opportunities. In Call no. 21, the United National Leadership of the Uprising accused the Fatah Provisional Leadership of betraying the Palestinian cause and

stabbing the uprising in the back. Already, the shelling of the camps had been broadly condemned. The PFLP and DFLP issued a joint communique holding the Provisional Leadership responsible for the destruction of Shatila.

Unfortunately, this war did not end with the end of the shelling. The Fatah Provisional Leadership continues to try and impose its hegemony on the camps, including the formation of a joint security force under its own leadership. However, all but two Palestinian organizations have refused to participate in this. The PFLP, DFLP, Palestinian Liberation Front, Popular Struggle Front and Palestinian Communist Party are in agreement that all organizations be allowed to operate in the camps. The Fatah Provisional Leadership, however, has not heeded this consensus. On the contrary, in early August, they attacked four offices of the PFLP in Burj Al Barajneh, evoking a mass demonstration against this act.

Despite these setbacks, the follow-up committee continues to work for the formation of a security force representing all Palestinian nationalist organizations, that could stabilize the situation, ensure the right of all to work among the masses and reconstruct the camps as soon as possible. Finding a democratic inter-Palestinian solution is important not only to salvage the situation in Shatila and Burj Al Barajneh, but to ward off the repetition of this tragic war in Ain Al Hilweh or other camps. It is also necessary to ward off the attempts of antagonistic forces trying once again to attack the camps, as already began happening when Amal resumed harassing Palestinians in the camps of the Tyre area in early August.

Putting a decisive stop to inter-Palestinian fighting is only the first step to rebuilding the Syrian-Palestinian-Lebanese nationalist alliance needed for escalating the battle against the Zionist occupation. It is likewise a prerequisite for the Palestinian revolution to play its role as a main base of Palestinian struggle, to complement the vanguard role currently being played by the Palestinian masses under occupation.

From Elections to Partition

The Lebanese parliament's failure to elect a new president stands as the latest and most dramatic evidence that the Lebanese crisis cannot be resolved short of ending the outmoded and corrupt confessional system.

The procedure for electing the president in Lebanon is both a symptom and a cause of the present crisis. Added to the fact that the president is elected by the parliament rather than by direct popular vote is the unwritten agreement, dating from 1943, that the president must be a Maronite Christian. The inherent gap between such a system and a representative democracy is even more glaring since the presiding parliament was elected over fifteen years ago, and only 76 of the original 100 deputies remain.

Obviously, such conditions give little room for the Lebanese people to express their will. Rather, Lebanon itself is left vulnerable to the blackmail of the rightist Lebanese Front and their backers, chiefly the Zionists. Having repeatedly failed to impose a 'strong state' that would steer Lebanon in a direction favorable to imperialism and Zionism, the US and 'Israel' wanted at all costs to prevent the election of a Lebanese president who would

safeguard national interests and embark on the reform needed to resolve Lebanon's crisis. They preferred someone who would simply manage the crisis, leaving space for the interference of 'Israel' in particular, via its occupation of the southernmost border strip.

The imperialist-Zionist-rightist position was clearly articulated after former president Suleiman Franjeh announced his candidacy in mid-August, and was backed by Syria and the Lebanese nationalist forces. Since Franjeh could not be expected to cooperate with the plans of the Israelis and the Lebanese Front, Geagea's Lebanese Forces immediately announced their rejection of his candidacy. The US also rejected Franjeh's candidacy, as did the Israeli government. Uri Lubrani, coordinator of Israeli government policy on Lebanon, termed Franjeh «not a good candidate» on the basis of his close relations with Syria. At the same time, Lubrani implicitly endorsed a rival candidate, Lebanese Army Com-

mander Michel Aoun, by saying, «A strong president in the Lebanon is something that Israel would welcome... If that will happen we will be only too pleased to reconsider our present deployment in South Lebanon...» (AP, August 17th).

The Lebanese Forces' opposition was punctuated by five bombs exploding in the streets of West Beirut, and the flare-up of fighting against the nationalist forces southeast of the capital, immediately after Franjeh's announcement. Although Amin Gemayel did not overtly declare his position, it was to become clear that the outgoing president was working hand-in-glove with the Lebanese Front and Forces to avoid being succeeded by a compromise candidate acceptable to all parties in Lebanon.

In the months preceding the election, there had been a series of meetings and measures in West Beirut to stabilize the situation and create an atmosphere conducive to a measure of reform. ►

Aoun, third from left, convenes his truncated military government.



However, even though the reform envisioned at this stage was quite minimal, the Lebanese Forces demonstrated that they were ready to divide the country and render it the victim of a new round of war, rather than accept any compromise or slight reduction of their privileges.

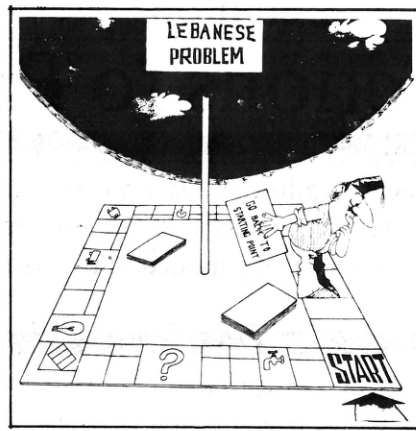
BLOCKED ELECTIONS

On August 18th, the Lebanese parliament was scheduled to convene to elect a successor to Amin Gemayel, but the Lebanese Forces in East Beirut and Lahd's Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army in the occupied zone obstructed the convening of a quorum. The militias physically prevented Christian MP's from meeting up at Mansour Palace by closing roads and in some cases temporarily kidnapping deputies who intended to fulfill their constitutional duty. Thus, they prevented the election of Suleiman Franjeh and opened the possibility of a constitutional vacuum if a new president was not elected by September 23rd, when Gemayel's term expired.

Army Commander Aoun had earlier declared that the army would intervene against any hindrance of the elections; on election day he declared a state of emergency, but the army did not move to prevent the Lebanese Forces' obstruction.

In the succeeding days, there was a mass meeting of Lebanese nationalists and a strike in West Beirut, protesting the obstruction of the elections by the Israeli and US pressure. Prominent nationalists termed this a declaration of war on the Lebanese people - a vote against national accord and for sectarian strife.

There were extensive contacts and negotiations between various Lebanese parties, and regional as well as international powers, including the visits of US envoy Murphy and of Amin Gemayel to Damascus. For the second attempted electoral session, a compromise candidate was agreed upon, Mikhael Dahar, a MP from Akkar in North Lebanon. At the same time, Gemayel kept the options open for the Lebanese Forces by considering that the government of acting Prime Minister Salim Hoss had resigned, in preparation for himself declaring a provisional



government.

MILITARY COUP BY PRESIDENTIAL DECREE

On this basis, the electoral session of the parliament was rescheduled for September 22nd. However, this session was also obstructed by the Lebanese Forces. Amin Gemayel took advantage of the vacuum by appointing a military government of six army officers, headed by Aoun. Aside from being totally unconstitutional by any measure, this junta was also stillborn. Half its members, Brigadier Mahmoud Tai Abu Dargham, General Nabil Kouraitem and Colonel Lutfi Jaber, refused to participate, deferring to the existence of the legitimate existing government headed by Hoss. Moreover, with the exception of the parties of the Lebanese Front, chiefly the Phalangists and Chamoun's National Liberals, the military government found little acceptance in Lebanon. Even among the Maronite community, prominent politicians, such as Franjeh, Dahar, Roger Edde and Raymond Edde, all potential presidential candidates, spoke out against this fait accompli.

On the regional level, only 'Israel' could be unequivocally pleased with the 'election' results. However, two Arab regimes did give tacit support to Aoun: Iraqi and Egyptian diplomats in Lebanon met with the general in East Beirut.

The US did not announce an official stand on the new military junta. However, the reception held by Aoun for diplomats was attended by the ambassadors of the permanent members of the UN Security Council, with the notable exception of the Soviet ambassador. In contrast, the Soviet am-

bassador expressed his country's support to unity and legitimacy in Lebanon by attending the meeting of Arab and foreign diplomats with Prime Minister Hoss.

DIVIDE AND RULE

Despite being stillborn, the formation of Aoun's junta is a qualitatively new step towards implementing the Zionist-imperialist-reactionary plan to divide Lebanon into two or more statelets, in order to weaken and control the country. By imposing a fait accompli, the Aoun government aims to force the Lebanese to accept a president who will sustain the system of sectarian and class injustice. Failing in controlling all of Lebanon, this military government would be the vehicle for merging the rightist-controlled areas in the North with the Israeli-occupied areas in the South into one unit for confronting the Lebanese nationalist forces and their alliance with the Palestinian revolution.

By going to the extreme of forming a military junta to enforce their policy, the Lebanese rightists are in fact revealing their own crisis and lack of legitimacy among the Lebanese people. This is a factor to be seized upon by all those struggling for a united, democratic Lebanon. Along these lines, Lebanese nationalist forces, including the Communist Party, have called for the formation of a newly constituted movement to struggle for Lebanon's unity. Such an alliance would encompass all forces committed to unity and continued struggle against sectarian domination and Israeli occupation.

On October 2nd, an assembly of Lebanese nationalist organizations and individuals convened in West Beirut to further such an alternative, in opposition to the present danger of partition and the control of the military government which they termed totally illegitimate. For over a decade, the Lebanese national movement has struggled for political reform, social justice and freedom from Israeli and imperialist interference in their country. The current impasse which heralds either partition or a new civil war, or both, shows that nothing less than their national democratic program can bring peace and unity to Lebanon. ●

PFLP Delegations

Afghanistan

In response to an invitation from the Central Committee of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), a PFLP delegation headed by Comrade Abu Maher Al Yamani, Politbureau member and head of the Political Relations Department, visited Afghanistan, May 30th - June 5th.



The Palestinian delegation was received by Afghanistan's president, Najiballah. Their talks concentrated on the situation of the Afghani and Palestinian revolutions, respectively, especially the popular uprising in Palestine, and the national reconciliation policy undertaken by the PDPA to put an end to the crisis which Afghanistan has suffered for many years.

Comrade Najiballah confirmed the continuation of his country's support to the struggle of the Palestinian people for realizing their legitimate national rights. He expressed support to the proposed fully empowered international conference to discuss the Palestinian question. Such a conference must include the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and the parties to the conflict, including the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, on equal footing with the other parties.

The Afghani president confirmed that the national reconciliation policy in Afghanistan aims at saving the people from the bloody war imposed on them. The PDPA and the Afghani state

are doing their best to implement the Geneva accords, but Pakistan is still violating them and providing the Afghani rebels with military equipment. For this reason, the Afghani government has presented several memoranda about Pakistan's violations to the special UN Committee charged with monitoring application of the Geneva accords.

Comrade Al Yamani explained the conditions in the Palestinian arena and the causes and results of the popular uprising in the occupied territories. He referred to the need for Arab and international support to the uprising, in order to realize the Palestinian people's aims of freedom and independence. Comrade Al Yamani expressed the PFLP's support to the PDPA's national reconciliation policy and its achievements in this field.

On the day of their arrival, the PFLP delegation placed a wreath on the martyrs' grave in the capital, Kabul. Then there was a working meeting between the PFLP delegation and a PDPA delegation to discuss the situation in Afghanistan and occupied Palestine in

detail. Points of view coincided concerning the Palestinian and Afghani problems, and the two parties asserted their mutual intention to consolidate their relations. The Palestinian delegation met with a number of other Afghani officials as well. Also, Comrade Al Yamani met with Palestinian students at the Afghani university, to inform them of the latest political developments concerning the Palestinian cause.

TELEVISION INTERVIEW

Comrade Abu Maher Al Yamani was interviewed on Afghani television. He asserted that the Palestinian people have faced a vicious imperialist-Zionist-reactionary war for more than forty years. They can thus empathize with the sufferings of the Afghani people as a result of the war launched by the imperialist and reactionary powers against the Afghanis' choice to develop their country.

Comrade Al Yamani posed the following question: «If the USA is interested in the victory of Islam in Afghanistan, why does it support the Zionists in occupying Palestine and the Islamic holy places, and expelling Palestinian Muslims from their land and denying them the right of repatriation?... The answer to this question is very clear: US imperialism, along with local reaction, considers the Afghani revolution a threat to its interests, for it constitutes an example to other peoples of the world of how to struggle for development and independence.»

Comrade Abu Maher also spoke about the Palestinian uprising which expresses the people's refusal of occupation, and their determination to retrieve their national rights to repatriation, self-determination and an independent state with Jerusalem as the capital. He ended the interview by expressing his deep appreciation to the government, party and president of Afghanistan for the warm welcome the Palestinian delegation received, and for their support to the Palestinian cause. ●

Moscow

From September 6th to 9th, a PFLP delegation paid an official visit to Moscow on the invitation of the Central Committee of the CPSU and the Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee.

The PFLP delegation was headed by Comrade George Habash, general secretary; Abu Maher Yamani, Politbureau member and head of the political relations department; and Omar Shahada, Central Committee member. The delegation held a series of meetings with Comrade Korninka, member of the CPSU Central Committee and first deputy of the international relations department of the Central Committee; Comrade Bulyakov, head of the Mideast department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and Comrade Kapita, head of the Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee.

The talks focused on the most prominent issues on the Palestinian, Arab and international levels, in particular the important developments in the Palestinian national struggle led by the PLO. Both parties expressed great appreciation of the heroism of the Palestinian people, their steadfastness against all the Zionists' repressive measures and their determination to

continue the uprising until the achievement of their goals.

Both parties condemned the policy of repression and terrorism being practiced by the occupation authorities against the Palestinian masses. In this light, the PFLP delegation confirmed the necessity of international protection for the Palestinian people in the occupied territories. Such international protection would be supervised by UN troops for an interim period, in preparation for convening a fully empowered international conference.

The Soviets confirmed their support for the heroic and just struggle of the Palestinian people, their uprising and their national goals of self-determination and the establishment of an independent state under the leadership of the PLO, their sole, legitimate representative. The PFLP delegation expressed deep gratitude to the Soviet leadership and people for their support to the struggle of the Palestinian people and the uprising

On September 8th, Comrade George Habash held a press conference at the Moscow headquarters of the Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee, which was attended by many Soviet and foreign journalists. The journalists' questions concentrated on the uprising and the Palestinian options after the Jordanian regime's measures. Concerning how the PLO will face the new situation, Comrade George Habash said that the Executive Committee of the PLO has held a series of meetings and will hold more in order to define its response towards the recent situation. The Executive Committee's proposal will be presented at the coming session of the PNC. He explained the options open to the PLO.

Concerning the Soviet stand on these options, Comrade George Habash said, «We had the feeling that the Soviet comrades are thinking and trying to evaluate with us the positive and negative points of each of these options... They are interested in maximal unity of the Palestinian and Arab stand... Through our historic relations with the Soviet comrades, we feel that they are leaving the final decision to us... They know that our cause is just; in spite of the disagreement with their viewpoints, they are supporting us.» ●

Romania

In response to an official invitation from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Romania, a PFLP delegation visited Bucharest from June 28th until July 5th.

The PFLP delegation was headed by General Secretary George Habash, and included Politbureau member Abu Maher Yamani and Central Committee members Taysir Qubaa and Tareq Hussein. The delegation had a series of important talks with Romanian party and state officials, covering issues of mutual interest on the Palestinian, Arab and international levels. Also discussed were ways to consolidate the bilateral relations between the Romanian Communist Party and the PFLP.

MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CEAUSESCU

The delegation's most important meeting was that with President Ceausescu, which was also attended by comrade Jon Stiwan, member of the

Political Executive Committee of the Romanian Communist Party, responsible for foreign relations. President Ceausescu warmly welcomed the PFLP delegation and expressed his readiness to hear their opinions. Dr. Habash then expressed appreciation of Romania's support to the Palestinian cause. He went on to analyze the causes and aims of the current uprising in occupied Palestine, and the ways of maximizing its political results. He confirmed that the uprising, while raising the banner of independence and freedom, aims at the withdrawal of the occupation forces and securing the presence of international forces in the occupied territories, as a step towards achieving the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people to repatriation, self-

determination and an independent state. Dr. Habash stressed that a just solution can be found through a fully empowered international conference.

For his part, President Ceausescu showed great interest in the question of maximizing the political effects of the uprising. He welcomed the results of the Algiers Summit and asserted the necessity of convening an international conference and the establishment of a Palestinian state. In his view, the main conclusion to be drawn from the uprising is that the Palestinian people want to rid themselves of the occupation as soon as possible. He stressed the importance of the PLO's unity, as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and reiterated Romania's support to the Palestinian cause. In conclusion, the two parties expressed satisfaction with the development of their bilateral relations and their desire to further consolidate them. ●

Solidarity Conferences

Benghazi, Libya

EMERGENCY WORLD CONFERENCE IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN POPULAR UPRISING IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES — BENGHAZI, LIBYA

The Benghazi Emergency World Conference «appeals to all democratic national and international organizations, solidarity and peace movements, eminent personalities and world public opinion to give a new, fresh, more powerful impulse to all forms of assistance to the Palestinian Popular Uprising in the occupied territories under the leadership of the PLO - so as to bring them relief and thus respond adequately to their sacrifices, determination and confidence in final victory» (final declaration).

On June 14th, 250 delegates from 60 countries, among them Christian Democrats, members of socialist and communist parties, as well as solidarity committees from all Western Europe, adopted a 10-point program in solidarity with the uprising of the Palestinian people in the Israeli occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The program of action stressed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to national independence, and demanded the convening of an international Middle East conference under the auspices of the UN, with the participation of the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the

Palestinian people. It stressed the urgency of developing coordinated national and international campaigns. It demanded that governments and international institutions exert concrete, effective pressure on 'Israel' for the immediate release of all political prisoners, an immediate stop to torture, expulsions and the destruction of Palestinian homes. The program of action called for the adoption of sanctions and boycott measures against 'Israel' in the economic, cultural and tourism spheres, until it agrees to abide by the UN resolutions concerning the treatment of the civilian population. It demanded that the Western powers,

especially the US, stop supplying 'Israel' with offensive weapons and nuclear equipment. The conference took upon itself the task of providing material aid in the form of food, clothes and medical supplies, to the Palestinian population of the occupied territories. Sending an international solidarity ship with humanitarian aid was proposed.

The two-day conference gave the delegates the opportunity for intensive discussions and exchange of experience, as well as contacts with a high-ranking PLO delegation, headed by Yassir Arafat.

AAPSO, Nicosia

The International Meeting in Support of the Palestinian Uprising sponsored by AAPSO was held in Nicosia, from 28-30 June, 1988. Delegations from Asia, Africa, Europe and Socialist countries, as well as international and regional organizations, and the representatives of the U.N. Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, eyewitnesses from the occupied territories, Israel and the AAPSO fact-finding mission to the occupied territories (which was harassed and maltreated by the Israeli authorities) took part in the meeting.

The President of the Republic of Cyprus gave an audience to all the participants in the meeting.

The participants discussed the different aspects of the unbearable conditions of the Palestinian people in the

occupied territories. They extend their full support to the valiant uprising against the Israeli occupation forces.

The participants express their conviction that the crux of the Middle East problem lies in the solution of the Palestinian problem - recognition of their right to self-determination and independent statehood. They demand the complete withdrawal of the Israeli forces from the illegally occupied Arab-territories.

They condemn the consistent violation of the Israeli Zionist rulers of all international norms and their rejection of all the peace initiatives made by the United Nations and the international community.

The participants examined the documents and facts presented at the meeting by the eyewitnesses who had visited the occupied territories. They condemn the indiscriminate firing at the defenceless civilian people. They

were shocked to hear testimonies about the methods of torture pursued by the Israeli armed forces and police against the Palestinian people. Hundreds of Palestinians were killed, thousands wounded and mutilated and scores of thousands detained in concentration camps under horrible conditions where they are subjected to all kinds of torture. Several are buried alive and a large number of children as well as young and old people are subjected to «bone-breaking». Collective punishment is applied on entire towns and villages while places of worship, hospitals, and educational centres are stormed. The Israeli forces and police also use gas to kill scores of women and children. They close down all press institutions in the occupied territories, detain scores of journalists, demolish hundreds of houses and expel a large number of citizens from their country and homes. All this is being carried out

according to a systematic policy which is no less repugnant than the notorious Nazi practices.

The crimes of the Israeli authorities rose to the peak with the assassination of the prominent Palestinian leader, Abu Jihad, in Tunisia at the hands of the Israeli gang - in violation of the sovereignty of an independent state - on the direct orders of the Israeli government.

Crimes are also being perpetrated against the Palestinians in Lebanon. The villages in southern Lebanon and the Palestinian refugee camps are the target of repeated Israeli shelling. Scores of members of the National Lebanese Movement and Palestinians in Lebanon are under detention. The meeting expressed solidarity with the Lebanese National Resistance Front in its struggle against Israeli occupation, and with the Lebanese people in their struggle for a full and unconditional withdrawal of the Israeli forces from the occupied Lebanese territories in accordance with the U.N. Security Council Resolutions No. 425, 508 and 509.

The meeting condemns all attempts to divide the Palestinian people as this only serves the Zionist enemy. The meeting calls for working by all means and ways to safeguard the Palestinian refugee camps in Beirut and southern Lebanon.

The participants express their strong condemnation and most vehement

anger at such brutal practices and appalling crimes. They believe that such acts are directed against humanity at large and represent a flagrant violation of human rights. They demand that the criminal act must be denounced and the criminals must be severely punished.

They deplore that the US Government condones the persistent occupation as well as the acts of violence and repression perpetrated in the region by Israel, and provides Israel with all forms of material, moral, military and political support. They denounce the strategic alliance between Israel and the USA.

The participants affirmed that a just and lasting peace in the region, would only be realized if Israel withdraws completely from all the occupied Arab territories, and if the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people-including their right to self-determination, repatriation, and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on their soil-were recognized. This would have to be realized through an international peace conference which would be convened under the auspices of the UN and in which all concerned parties - including the PLO, the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people - would participate on a basis of equality.

The participants affirmed that all people under custody or arrest as well as all prisoners - who stood up against the Occupation and all Israeli Nazi

practices in the Occupied Territories - must be released. They salute all forces and individuals who are struggling inside Israel against the Occupation. They call for an end to all arbitrary action and brutal practices perpetrated against the Palestinian people, and appeal to all people in Israel (who love freedom, democracy and peace) to vigorously endeavour to end the massacre of the Palestinian people (which has reached the level of genocide and constituted a serious violation of all international laws and norms) and to enlighten young people in Israel on the serious implications of military service in the Occupied Territories.

They appeal to all peace and justice loving peoples, governments and forces to vigorously denounce and condemn the brutal Israeli practices perpetrated against the Palestinian people. They demand that all kinds of material, moral and political support be offered to the Palestinian people and their valiant uprising, and that it should be channeled through the PLO - thereby enabling the Palestinian people to steadfastly resist the Zionist expansionist thrust and realize the goal of their struggle, namely, freedom and independent state of Palestine.

The participants express their sincere thanks and gratitude to the people and government of Cyprus for their warm hospitality. They express their full solidarity with the struggle of the Cypriot people. ●

Sanaa, North Yemen

From June 11th to 14th, one hundred Arab intellectuals, writers and artists gathered in Sanaa, North Yemen, for «The Meeting of Thought and Art to Support the Popular Revolution in Palestine.»

One participant commented that it felt like a reunion: «Suddenly we felt that we were capable of regaining our language.» He was referring to the fact that the conference assembled a group of people who had met and discussed daily in Beirut prior to 1982, only to be dispersed into new exiles after the Israeli invasion, and their cultural ties disrupted.

This reunion was created by the uprising which demonstrated the necessity of starting cultural and in-

tellectual work of a new kind, because the Arab culture had suffered a setback after the experience of Beirut, being absorbed to a great extent into the framework of the Arab regimes.

The conference concentrated on four issues:

1. The necessity of reestablishing the revolutionary atmosphere which was generated in the Palestinian arena after the 1967 defeat, but then besieged after the catastrophe of Beirut. With the

uprising, this atmosphere has been renewed.

2. Understanding fully the lessons of the uprising, especially its dimensions of democracy and national unity. The United National Leadership of the Uprising is a genuine national front grouping all around a single defined aim.

3. Giving new meaning to cultural work as a practical experience in line with the movement of history.

4. Discovering the full dimensions of the long Palestinian struggle against the Israeli occupation. The successive stages of this struggle bear evidence that it will continue and remain the main issue in the Arab world. ●

Palestinian Statehood Addressed at the Democratic National Convention

History was made in Atlanta, Georgia, on July 18-21 at the Democratic National Convention (DNC) by Arab-Americans who, for the first time, initiated a debate on Palestinian rights on the convention floor of a major political party. Over 50 Arab-American delegates (for Jackson, Dukakis, Gore), standing committee members, campaign and party staff lobbied in support of perhaps the most controversial proposed minority plank ever to be brought to a major political party convention. The plank read as follows: «That the United States help to end the impasse in the Middle East by adopting a policy which supports the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and independent statehood and which supports Israel's existence and security within internationally recognized borders.»

This resolution was also supported by over 100 Arab-American and Jewish-American delegates, alternates and standing committee members who joined to form Democrats for Middle East Peace. The resolution received over 1,500 endorsements in only two days. Chairing Democrats for Middle East Peace are Lois Levine Barrett, Missouri; Sami Odeh, California; Liz Blum, Vermont; and Jim Zogby, Washington D.C.

Prior to the convention, the Jackson and Dukakis campaigns had disagreed on 13 issues on the party platform. Later, 10 were resolved and three remained: fair taxes; no first use (of nuclear weapons); and self-determination for Palestinians. Unable to resolve these issues, the Jackson campaign decided to «stick to the principles» and called for an open debate on the convention floor with four speakers.

Arab-Americans and progressives were able to place the Palestinian question on the convention agenda due to the convergence of two factors: (1) the impact of the Palestinian uprising on public opinion; and (2) the rise of the Reverend Jesse Jackson's Rainbow

Coalition as a significant movement on the US political scene. As a broad coalition of oppressed minorities, workers and other progressive strata, the Rainbow Coalition provided the vehicle for raising the Palestinian issue in the context of an overall progressive agenda, breaking the black-out imposed by the pro-Israeli lobby.

The Palestinian issue was debated Tuesday night, the second day of the DNC by Dr. James Zogby (a Lebanese-American) and Rep. Mervyn Dymally (California) in support of the plank and Sen. Daniel Inouye (Hawaii) and Rep. Charles Schumer (New York), opposed. After impassioned speeches from both sides, the last speaker on the issue, Rep. Dymally, explained that for the sake of unity and peace within the Democratic Party and to avoid a split, he was calling for a «no-vote» on the Middle East plank. He specifically addressed Congressman Schumer, an avowed Zionist, in his speech.

GAINS

Nonetheless, serious gains were made by the various forces working on the issue of Palestinian statehood, spearheaded by the Arab American Institute (AAI) and its executive director, Dr. James Zogby. They are as follows:

- In ten states, Democratic Conventions voted to support a new Middle East policy: Washington, Texas, Minnesota, Iowa, Maine, Oregon, Vermont, California, Illinois and New Mexico all supported self-determination and Palestinian statehood. This is 20% of

the states in the US.

- The debate at the Democratic National Convention had national exposure in print and film and before over 4,000 delegates. There was coverage in the *New York Times* (July 20th), *Los Angeles Times* (July 20th) and the *Washington Jewish Weekly* (July 21st) to name a few.

- In 1984, at the Democratic Convention in San Francisco, there were only four Arab-American delegates. In 1988, there were 46.

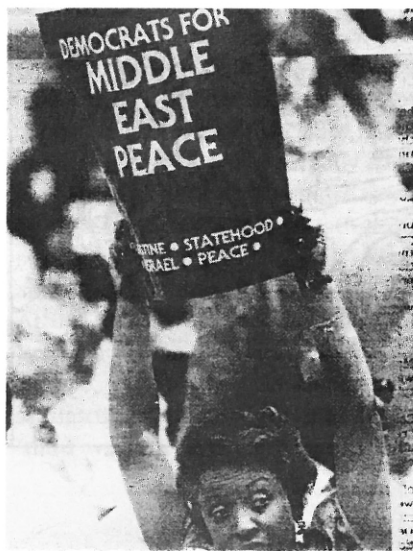
- The Arab-American delegates were successful in introducing and establishing the inclusion of three planks in the final text of the Democratic Party platform: (a) a plank on immigrants' political rights; (b) a strong stand against hate violence and negative stereotyping; and (c) a plank in support of Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence, and calling for a negotiated settlement to the Iraq-Iran war.

- Anti-Arab and other inflammatory language was prevented from being included in the party platform.

- For the first time, an Arab-American held a position on the prestigious Democratic National Committee.

As if to verify these gains and the threat they pose to the pro-Israeli lobby, a memorandum was sent by the President of the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), Edward C. Levy, Jr. on August 3rd, to the AIPAC leadership. This memorandum was leaked; it stated in part: «Despite the fact that this battle was won, we cannot ignore the warning signs it presents for us. We are being directly challenged. For the first time anti-Israeli forces have organized grassroots support... We have our work cut out for us!» This memorandum signals the closeness with which the pro-Israeli lobby is following the movement of the Arab-American community and its entrance into the world of electoral politics.

Arab-Americans have definitely embarked on the road to involvement in electoral politics in order to express their legitimate concern about racism, discrimination and immigrant harassment, as well as to express their concern for peace in the Middle East, a concern shared by all progressive forces. ●



An End to Regional Conflicts?

The effects of the disarmament talks between the Soviet Union and the US are not confined to the northern hemisphere. Rather the new atmosphere of detente is making itself felt around the world, involving national liberation movements and newly independent countries to a crucial degree.

Less than one year after the signing of the INF treaty in Washington, the progress made in the US-USSR dialogue and disarmament process is having a positive impact on the resolution of regional conflicts. A prime example is the Geneva accords between Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Soviet Union and the US. A new element was introduced into the attempts to resolve the conflict in Central America with the ceasefire and talks between the revolutionary Sandinista government and the contras.

The latest advance towards peace has been made in Southern Africa, where negotiations between Angola, Cuba, South Africa and the US resulted in an agreement for South African withdrawal from Namibia, and Cuban withdrawal from Angola. SWAPO's president, Sam Nujoma, termed this the most important stage for Namibia's independence. However, subsequent talks have shown that South Africa is looking for excuses to delay its withdrawal, while the US refuses to stop funding UNITA's dirty war against Angola.

UN-sponsored peace processes are also underway concerning the Western

Sahara, Cambodia, Cyprus, and the Iraq-Iran war. Added to this are the Soviet-Chinese talks which, although they have a different character, are also related to this process, especially concerning Cambodia.

Each of these conflicts has its own character and specific features which must be taken into account if a truly just solution is to be found. However, there are also common features among a number of these conflicts. The commonality is most apparent in the cases of Angola, Nicaragua, Afghanistan and Cambodia, where US-imperialism and other reactionary powers have sponsored counterrevolutionary forces to fight new progressive governments. In each of these cases, it is the progressive government in question which initiated and sustained the peace drive. The other impetus for peace came from socialist countries offering to withdraw the troops they had sent to support new progressive governments. In the interest of peace, the Soviets are withdrawing from Afghanistan; Cuba has agreed to withdraw from Angola in line with the peace agreement; and Vietnam has offered to do likewise in relation to Cambodia.

In all these cases, it is US imperialism and its local allies who are blocking progress as seen in continued US military aid to the Afghani rebels, and US encouragement of the contras' sabotage of the first round of talks with the Sandinistas. Nonetheless, despite local differences, obstacles and setbacks, a new process is underway, primarily related to the new international atmosphere generated by the Soviet peace offensive. This has forced the Reagan Administration into a position of detente.

Since the Reagan-Gorbachev summit in Moscow, progress in the direction of negotiated settlement has been most obvious in places where the Soviet Union or one of its allies plays an important role. This confirms the impression that the USA's new and partial readiness to resolve regional conflicts is to a great extent related to the new atmosphere of detente prevailing on the international scene. Concerning regional conflicts, the Reagan Administration has behaved in basically the same way as it does on disarmament questions: The Soviet Union and other progressive forces take initiative, while the Reagan Administration has to be dragged along. The US has shown new readiness to agree on bilateral disengagement and stand as guarantor for agreements, but this applies to conflicts where the contra-war it is supporting cannot be expected to achieve decisive victory, and where it does not have to relinquish interests defined as vital. What the US administration has been forced to give up in those cases is the possibility of causing more harm to the other side.

In the Gulf, Middle East and Central America, where the USA has staked out so-called vital interests, the same





SWAPO President Sam Nujoma

criteria cannot be automatically applied. The move to end the Gulf war, for example, stemmed mainly from local circumstances. The US had adhered to the military option despite the common international platform for a peaceful solution created by UN Security Council resolution 598. The Arab-Israeli conflict remains in a deadlock because the US and its strategic asset, 'Israel', refuse to acknowledge the national rights of the Palestinian people. Even under the impact of the Palestinian uprising, the USA continues to adhere to the Camp David course. In addition, the Palestinian question, which is at the core of the Middle East crisis, has a different character, stemming as it does from Zionist colonization, not from a regional conflict. This also applies to the struggle in South Africa, which is formally considered an internal question in one country, but in fact involves the question of colonization and the national rights of the African people.

Also in Central America which US imperialism considers as its 'backyard', the Reagan Administration has from the beginning sought to undermine the regional peace process which was outlined in the Esquipulas II agreement by five states one year ago, and the resulting peace process in Nicaragua. In general, where major US interests are involved, the US will do all to maintain bridgeheads of imperialist dominance. In such cases, Washington clings to its old power games, military interventionism and unilateral diplomacy, trying to keep both the Soviet Union and the UN out of these zones. Even here, though, some modifications have oc-

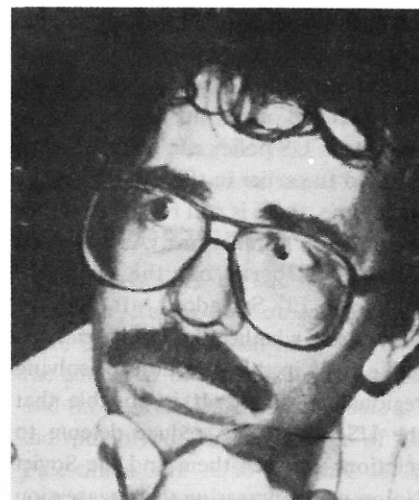
curred, such as the Reagan Administration's formal adoption of the idea of an international peace conference for the Middle East, with Soviet and UN involvement; still, the US idea of such a conference is a world apart from the conference advocated by the Soviet Union, the PLO and non-aligned countries.

The Reagan Administration's old, counterproductive policy has, moreover, brought loss of influence and even scandals, as with the failure of the contra-war against Nicaragua and the recent attempt to interfere in Panama's internal affairs. Thus, tactical changes in US foreign policy cannot be ruled out; nor can the possibility of more successful efforts to resolve regional conflicts.

The dynamics of the peace processes already underway will also influence the position of the various states involved in or adjacent to regional conflicts, creating new facts which US policy will have to deal with. On the other hand, a backlash against the partial change in the Reagan Administration's foreign policy is already underway among right-wing policymakers, and the outcome of the coming US elections will certainly impact on future prospects for resolving regional conflicts.

HAS US POLICY CHANGED?

Compared to the extreme anti-communism and militarism with which Reagan launched his presidency, and the concurrent US approach to regional conflicts, the administration's tone has become somewhat less primitive after the recent US-USSR summits. Until 1987, these conflicts were seen exclusively as manifestations of «Soviet expansionism» and used to block progress in disarmament. At the same time, the US refused the participation of the Soviet Union or its allies in any negotiations. This policy actually dated back to the confrontation course begun by the Carter Administration in response to the fall of the Shah in Iran and the Afghanistan crisis in 1979/80. At this time, NATO decided to station Pershing II and cruise missiles in Europe, while the US unilaterally escalated its military presence in the 'third world', particularly around the



Nicaragua's President Daniel Ortega

Middle East and Indian Ocean, and created the Rapid Deployment Force, justifying all this with the entry of Soviet troops into Afghanistan.

These moves were further escalated in practice by the Reagan Administration and given a more extreme ideological justification, resulting in the first-strike strategy against the Soviet Union and the concept of global interventionism against liberation movements. Based on the supposed «Soviet threat» but actually to protect imperialist dominance, the Reagan Administration developed the strategy of «low intensity warfare» to besiege progressive governments by funding counterrevolutionary sabotage of their achievements, meanwhile launching direct, but limited military intervention in Lebanon, Grenada and Libya; Nicaragua became the no. 1 testcase for «low intensity warfare.» The more the Reagan Administration promoted «low intensity warfare» and presented this as the southern dimension of East-West relations, the more events in the third world affected these relations. Thus, the danger of an escalation beyond regional boundaries increased. At the same time, the Reagan Administration worked to accumulate an unprecedented nuclear arsenal, dramatically escalating the threat to world peace. US military doctrine was that a confrontation with the Soviet Union or one of its allies in the 'third world' could call for a «horizontal escalation» whereby US forces would simultaneously attack on the central

European front or other fronts.

It was these extreme dangers which the Soviet peace offensive set out to counter, and under its impact, some changes in US policy can be detected as referred to earlier in this article. At the same time, there is still reason to doubt Washington's intentions. As noted by Ricardo Ribera of the FMLN/FDR — El Salvador, «It has to show itself whether the US is ready to make steps in this direction (of solving regional conflicts). It is possible that the US will try to reduce detente to relations between them and the Soviet Union, while increasing their aggression against the revolutionary countries and liberation movements in the so-called third world. Declarations of the Pentagon, announcing higher spending for conventional weapons as well as the intensification of the dirty war - called today the 'strategy of low intensity conflicts', make us fear that this is the

course taken by US imperialism.»

Similar reservations were expressed by Nicaragua's president, Daniel Ortega, at the end of June, about the fate of Sapoá, the provisory ceasefire agreement between the Nicaraguan government and the contras, signed on March 23rd: «Sapoá has been declared dead by the US. Shultz's trip to Central America at the end of June was meant to create new conditions to continue the military aggression against Nicaragua. A direct intervention by US troops is still among the options.»

A report issued in Washington on January 18th, entitled *Discriminate Deterrence*, adds credence to such fears. It was written by the commission on integrated long-term strategy, chaired by former secretary for defense policy, Fred Ikle, a well-known super militarist. The report recommends a shift in focus from Europe to «US security interests» in Asia, Africa and

Latin America. Forecasting that the 'third world' will play a greater role in the US war strategy, the commission recommends increased mobility for US intervention forces and more extensive and flexible US engagement in areas of crisis. It also recommends increased «security aid» for pro-US regimes and contras trying to destabilize revolutionary governments. Published five weeks after the signing of the INF treaty, the report also contains a broadside attack on arms control and disarmament.

Right now, the proposals of this commission do not fit into the political landscape, because of the strong public opinion for disarmament in Europe and partially in the USA. However, it is conceivable that this proposed strategy will influence the foreign policy of the coming president, and it is obviously more likely to influence Bush than Dukakis. ●

Ceasefire in the Gulf

The beginning of direct talks between Iraq and Iran at the UN's Geneva headquarters on August 25th, five days after a ceasefire went into effect in the Gulf, raised hopes for ending the grueling, eight-year war. It also heralded the possibility of a new stage in the struggle against Zionist and imperialist aggression in the Middle East.

Iran's July 18th announcement that it would abide by the UN ceasefire resolution no. 598 was mainly due to the military losses incurred by its forces over the preceding year. It was also a reflection of the new tendency in the Iranian government to be more conscious of the need for bettering relations with other countries. Iran hopes to use improved regional and international relations in the negotiations to counterbalance its disadvantages in the military outcome of the fighting.

As of this writing, it is impossible to predict the outcome of the Geneva talks. There is every reason to anticipate that they will be protracted with issues of contention ranging from the international border between the two countries and control over the Shatt Al Arab waterway, to political prisoners.

It is not our purpose here to go into the details of the issues to be negotiated. However, progressive forces everywhere must have a general position that questions which involve compensation between the two countries should not be resolved in a way that inflicts more hardship on the population of either Iraq or Iran. The two peoples have already suffered enough for their respective governments' decisions to begin and then to pursue this war.

One can, however, discuss the implications of the ending of this war in terms of how this will impact on the US military presence in the area on the one hand, and on the Arab-Zionist conflict on the other.

'ISRAEL' OPPOSES PEACE

'Israel' stood alone in all the world,

being the only state to express mainly negative reactions to the possibility of ending the Gulf war. The Israeli foreign ministry did issue a prefatory statement on August 10th, welcoming the ceasefire. However, the Zionists' real position was more accurately reflected in Israeli radio broadcasts and the press, quoting officials who expressed worry about what an end to the war would mean, especially the possibility of Iraq rejoining the Arab confrontation front. As AP reported on July 22nd, «Israeli defense officials on Wednesday stepped up warnings about the potential threat of an Iraqi army left idle by a ceasefire in the Gulf war... 'If there is an eastern front of Syria, Iraq and Jordan, with the assistance of Saudi Arabia, the armored force facing Israel would be equal to the number of tanks of all NATO countries,' Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin said in Israeli radio.»

This was a typical Zionist appeal for more military aid, trying to restore the image of 'Israel' as besieged by overwhelming enemy forces, a myth that has been irrevocably destroyed by the Israeli response to the Palestinian popular uprising. Intense debates in the Israeli cabinet and Knesset followed the Iranian decision for a ceasefire, and

there is no wonder that the Israeli leadership is disturbed by the prospects of peace in the Gulf. Not only does the Zionist state stand to lose an outlet for its arms industry; it loses a primary device for deflecting both attention and resources away from the battle against its own illegal existence, occupation and aggression. As the most prominent Israeli military commentator, Zeev Schiff, remarked, «If the Iraq-Iran war stops, this means the end of eight fat years for Israel.»

US MANEUVERING

The US welcomed the end of the war, but this does not mean that its real position contradicts that of its Israeli ally. Rather, the US has broader interests to pursue in the region and is following a different set of tactics in the diplomatic arena. Under the impact of the Soviet global peace offensive and its own scandals, the Reagan Administration has found it opportune for the UN to have a role vis-a-vis the Iraq-Iran conflict. So, to preface its diplomatic maneuvering, the State Department responded to the ceasefire by terming it «a major triumph for the president's foreign policy,» while other US officials credited the US war fleet with having had a decisive impact on the Iranian decision.

In fact, the US position is double-edged for the possible end of the war has both pro's and con's from the imperialist vantage point. On the one hand, the US had reason to rejoice that the war will probably end with a «no winner - no loser» stalemate. The two combatant countries have been ravaged, leaving no dominant regional power to challenge strategic US control of the oil fields. The end of the war might also lead to the stabilization of the Egyptian-Saudi-Jordanian-Iraqi alliance in a way which would bolster a reactionary status quo in the region.

On the other hand, the end of the war would remove the rationale for extensive US military presence in the area, and the administration will have to find new excuses. Still, there are signs that a partial scale-down is deemed better anyway to avoid disasters that might lead to public pressure for bringing the troops home. US imperialism surely

prefers to use the situation to try and reassert its old alliance with Iran, by working to change the Iranian leadership or encouraging so-called moderate elements within the present government. The Israeli leadership, incidentally, has similar intentions.

Significantly, the Iranian decision followed close on the heels of the biggest single US crime committed in the Gulf to date - the July 3rd shooting down of the Iranian civilian airliner by the USS Vincennes, killing all 290 passengers. In retrospect, it appears as a classical example of gunboat diplomacy with the US trying to scare Iran into submission. In this connection, one should view the article in *Newsweek*, July 18th, by Henry Kissinger, the notorious former US Secretary of State:

Citing US goals of «freedom of navigation» in the Gulf, preventing «Soviet domination» and preserving «the territorial integrity of friendly states,» Kissinger noted: «Fundamentally, there are few nations in the world with less reason to quarrel and more compatible interests than Iran and the United States. Though the shah came to symbolize the friendship between the two countries in the 1970s, those interests did not depend on him. They reflected political and strategic realities that continue today. This unfortunate accident may provide the occasion to reopen a dialogue with Teheran. As part of the process, the United States could agree to pay compensation to the families of the airline victims - but put the money into escrow until there is a ceasefire in the Iran-Iraq war and American hostages in Lebanon are released.»

When Iran was on the offensive, the US entered into an alliance with Iraq; now it is planning how to put both countries in a new form of dependency. In this light, one can evaluate the State Department's condemnation of Iraqi use of chemical gas as «totally unjustified and abhorrent,» just before the US Congress approved economic sanctions against Iraq for the same reason. While the use of chemical weapons against the Kurdish people - or anyone - merits only condemnation, one cannot but doubt US intentions in view of its selective imposition of sanctions

whereby pro-US regimes committing comparable crimes are often shielded. The US measures are less due to concern for the Kurdish people than a threat to Iraq not to rejoin the confrontation front against 'Israel'.

AN OPPORTUNITY

The possibility of ending the Iraq-Iran war creates new objective conditions in the area, which could influence the course of the Arab-Zionist conflict and the regional balance of forces. It is indisputably to the advantage of the Palestinian and Arab national cause, and in line with long-standing calls from progressive nationalist forces for mobilizing all resources against the main enemy. It has removed all excuses for diverting attention from the main struggle or from the main current question of supporting the Palestinian uprising.

Taking full advantage of the new possibilities requires a political decision on the part of the two combatants in the war, and on the part of all the regimes that have aligned themselves in accordance with this war rather than the struggle against Zionist aggression. The pivotal point here is whether the Arab nationalist regimes can seize the chance to make a strong, new nationalist front which would limit Israeli aggression and US maneuvers in the area. Forming such a front would entail resolving the conflict between Iraq and Syria, and an Iraqi decision to rejoin the Arab confrontation front. Unfortunately, until now, the Iraqi regime has capitalized on the ceasefire with Iran to launch an intense attack on the Kurdish people.

The prospect of ending the war also raises the question of democracy with new urgency. Whereas the war provided an excuse for internal oppression in both Iran and Iraq, and in a number of neighboring countries, its end will give new space for raising the popular demands for democracy and economic justice.

All peoples of the area welcomed the end of the war. The stand taken by each government as to what to do in the aftermath will provide a yardstick for assessing their commitment to the Arab national cause and its core, the Palestinian question, and the struggle to end Zionist occupation. ●

Songs of the Uprising

The uprising has inspired an outburst of popular revolutionary songs by Palestinians in the occupied territories as well as songs of anguish by popular Jewish singers within 'Israel'. Music has always played a historic role in reflecting social realities. In this light, we see singers, musicians and artists utilizing their art to express the current situation in the occupied territories. Pop singers, both Palestinian and Jews, say they simply cannot separate their high-running emotions from their work.

A ballad, released this year by well-known Jewish pop singer Sy Hyman, lamenting Israeli handling of the uprising, was banned from the Israeli Army radio network. Her single, «Shooting and Crying» had the following lyrics:

«When did we learn how to bury people alive? When did
We forget that our children have also been killed?»

After much dissent from radio listeners the network banned the song and mailed back the promotional copies.

Cassettes are smuggled into Palestine from groups such as Palestine Roots, the Lebanese progressive musician Marcel Khalifa and his group *Mayadine* and the Damascus-based *Ashiqeen*. Meanwhile, underground recordings are made of local groups in Palestine, such as *Firkit Al Fanoun Al Shabia* (The Palestine Popular Art Ensemble), to be distributed there and to Palestinians in the diaspora. According to the *International Herald Tribune* (September 16th), almost every week, Israeli police seize hundreds or sometimes thousands of pre-recorded cassettes, the favoured method of distributing Palestinian popular music, claiming they contain songs with inflammatory lyrics.

Mustafa Al Kurd, a well-known Palestinian pop singer from Jerusalem, said he, too, cannot separate the uprising from his art. Kurd, who mixes traditional Arab songs with modern western tones, released his latest album «The Children of Palestine» in June; it includes songs with such lyrics as:

«From the top of the minarets I will call people, we
will have hope» and «My loved ones walked a journey
from the top of the Mount of Olives.»

Kurd said in an interview in the *International Herald Tribune*, «the intifadah is a very dangerous subject for us. When the words are too direct, they become dangerous. The police say they are inciteful.» Kurd's nationalist feeling was reflected in his artistic activities from the first years of the occupation. He is quoted in *Al Fajr* (July 29th, 1983) as saying, «I am a singer and I will continue to sing for man against oppression, against killing, and I believe this is stronger than the weapons of the oppressor.»

Suhail Ali, another popular singer of traditional Arab music, was arrested earlier this year because his lyrics were deemed too direct. He is presently in jail.

Even during demonstrations we see this art practiced in the chanting of songs by demonstrators. The various chants are used as a form of encouragement to the *shabab* to continue their struggle against Israeli occupation. The chanting is rhythmic and in accordance with the realities the

demonstrators are confronting. They sing in loud voices describing various political stands. These are popular chants, and although not recorded on cassette or albums, are known to all. Below, we print a verse from the song «Stone and Onion» by Mustafa Al Kurd, as it was translated in the *Guardian*, July 11th. The song takes its title not only from the uprising's primary weapon and symbol, the stone, but from the onion, the homemade defense method used by the masses as a protection from tear gas.

From «Stone and Onion» by Mustafa Al Kurd

Dead is the fear that lived in our hearts
that killed the hopes and blocked the paths
that put out the lights
Fear is dead and I buried it with my own hands
Fear was a monster that oppressed us, was cruel to us,
that smashes the jar and spilled the oil
Fear is dead and I buried it with my own hands.



Between Fleeting Words

by Mahmoud Darwish

O those who pass between fleeting words
Carry your names, and go
Rid our time of your hours, and go
Steal what you will from the blueness of the sea
and the sand of memory
Take what pictures you will, so that you will understand
That which you never will:
How a stone from our land builds the ceiling of our sky.

O those who pass between fleeting words
From you the sword - from us the blood
From you the steel and fire - from us our flesh
From you yet another tank - from us stones
From you tear gas - from us rain
So take your share of our blood - and go
For we have to water the martyrs' flowers
As for us, we have to live as we see fit.

O those who pass between fleeting words
As bitter dust, go where you wish, but
Do not pass between us like flying insects
For we have work to do in our land:
We have wheat to grow which we water with our bodies' dew
We have that which does not please you here:
Stones or partridges
So take the past, if you wish, to the antiquities market
We have that which does not please you: we have the future
And we have things to do in our land.

O those who pass between fleeting words
Pile your illusions in a deserted well, and go
Return the hands of time to the law of the golden calf
Or to the time of the revolver's music!
For we have that which does not please you here, so go
And we have what you don't: a bleeding homeland of
a bleeding people
A homeland fit for oblivion or memory
O those who pass between fleeting words
It is time for you to be gone
Live wherever you may, but do not live among us
It is time for you to go
Die wherever you may, but do not die among us
For we have work to do in our land
We have the past here
We have the first cry of life
We have the present, the present and the future
We have this world here, and the hereafter
So leave our country
Our land, our sea
Our wheat, our salt, our wounds
Everything, and leave the memories of memory
O those who pass between fleeting words!



