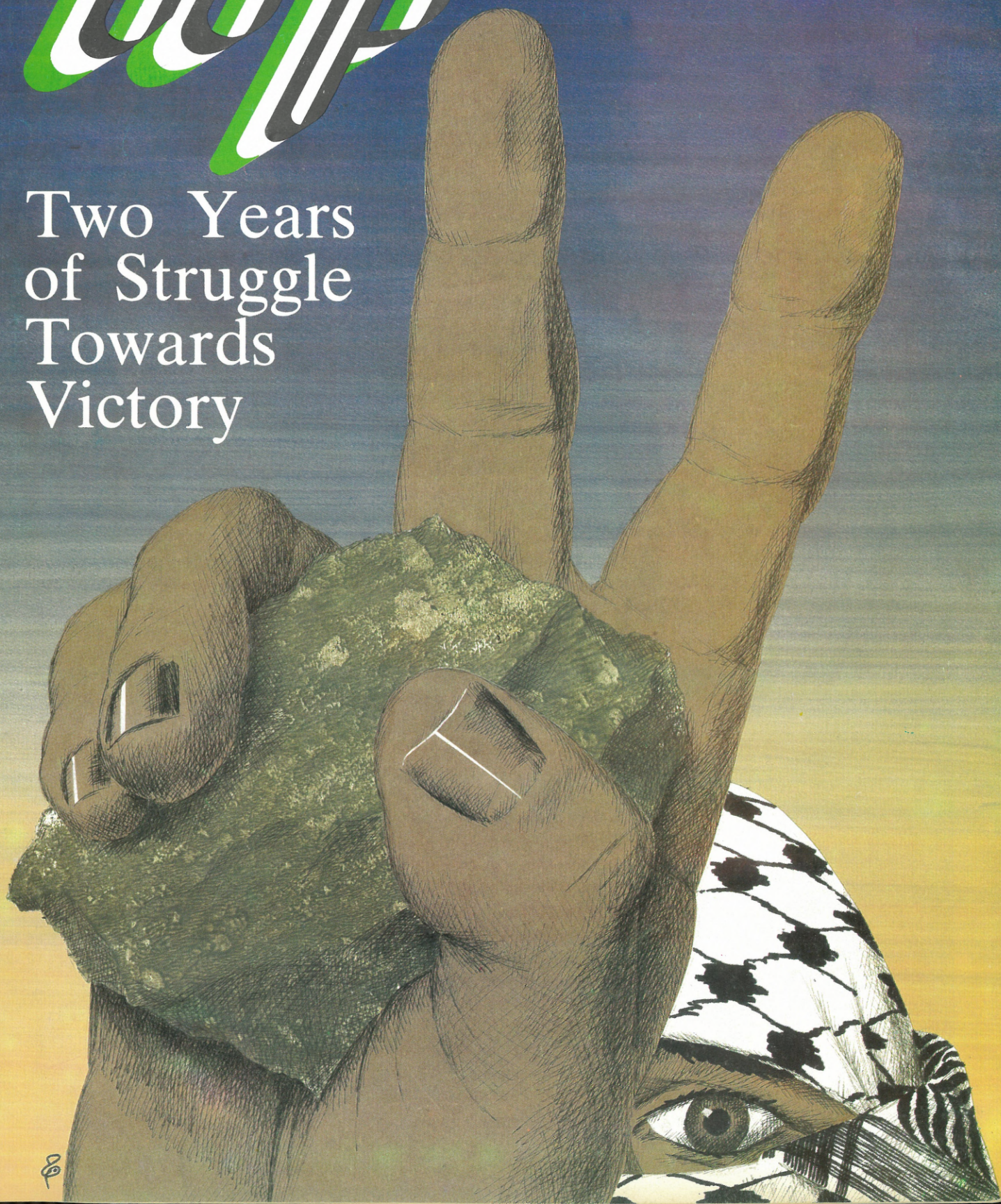


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DEMOCRATIC PALESTINE

Two Years
of Struggle
Towards
Victory





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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Drawing by a fifteen-year-old Palestinian girl in the occupied territories



Two Years of the Intifada

Heading for the 1990's

«The independent State of Palestine is being built on the national soil through the achievement of mass empowerment and unity of action in struggle, as a solid base for the Palestinian national movement in steadfastness and confrontation» - the PLO/United National Leadership (UNL) in the occupied State of Palestine, Call no. 36, March 15, 1989.

What was distinctive about the second year of the Palestinian uprising? Certainly, there were more marches and stones, more heroism and unity, more popular committees, self-sufficiency and civil disobedience from the Palestinian side of the trenches - and more killing and atrocities from the Israeli side. But 1989 was much more than a rerun of the first year of the intifada. While a major achievement of 1988 was comprehensive unity, mobilization and empowerment, the key to the intifada's momentum in 1989 was combining the ongoing militancy with conscious organizing work to regulate the socioeconomic framework of the new way of life that Palestinians under occupation embarked on with the outbreak of the intifada in December 1987. This was a logical development of the thrust of the first year, and required to continue and escalate the uprising in the face of intensified Zionist repression and divide-and-rule tactics.

Above all, the self-regulation was not an inward-looking dynamic, but part of the process of forging the State of Palestine in the furnace of direct confrontation with its opposite - the occupation. In the course of 1989, a well organized, sustained popular revolt was turned into an alternative system. Popular authority proved itself not only in directly challenging the occupation, but also in building a new political and social order. Two main battles typified this momentum - Beit Sahour's victorious struggle against

taxation without representation and the protracted workers' strike against the imposition of computerized identity cards in the Gaza Strip.

Profiling the State of Palestine

The emphasis on internal regulation did not render 1989 short of dramatic displays of mass militancy. In February, the defiance of the masses closed down the police stations in the Gaza Strip, while East Jerusalem residents enacted a successful boycott of the Israeli municipal elections, despite concerted Zionist efforts to attract select Palestinian candidates and voters.

The Israeli press reflected the widespread Zionist fear that the intifada was radicalizing. In the March 23rd edition of *Haaretz*, Ori Nir wrote that direct attacks, in which Palestinian youth confronted Israeli soldiers face-to-face, were becoming more widespread, citing a number of attacks with knives and hatchets. He also noted an incident in Gaza where Palestinians seized firearms from Israeli soldiers, concluding «there is an increasing danger that attacks with live ammunition will become more frequent (as the intifada) comes to resemble the Algerian model». He also noted that «events in the territories over the past week or two are reminiscent in many ways of the first months of the intifada» in terms of mass demonstrations, burning tyres, stonethrowing and Palestinian-manned barricades, admitting that «Full physical control of the Gaza Strip

is only possible when curfews are imposed on all the population centres...and even then there is no lack of disturbance resulting from curfew-breaking.»

Through biweekly calls, the UNL charted a plan for keeping up the momentum at a level which the masses could realistically maintain. While the number of strike days increased in the fall to fight the battle of the imposed IDs, in general they did not rise dramatically as compared with 1988. In fact, the emphasis was on direct confrontation, with the UNL calling for the fall of a martyr to be the signal for more attacks on the occupation forces, rather than a general strike, except in the martyr's home district where due respect should be accorded the family in mourning. The UNL also urged those wanted by the occupation authorities to opt for the status of fugitive rather than succumb to arrest. The underground grew: a new category of highly respected citizens of the occupied State of Palestine, living in the islands of semiliberation among the masses of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

In June, the Israeli press wrote that for one afternoon East Jerusalem looked like «the capital of Palestine,» after 10,000 marched in the funeral of Omar Qassem, Palestine's Mandela, the longest serving political prisoner in Israeli jails, who died due to the Israelis' denial of medical treatment. This was the biggest demonstration in Jerusalem since the 1967 occupation.

A more joyful occasion occurred in Beit Sahour on November 5th; 3,000 Palestinians, residents and guest delegations, marched to celebrate the village's victory in the war of the taxes. The residents of Beit Sahour withstood a six-week military siege, maintaining their refusal to pay taxes to the occupation, despite harassment, beatings, ►

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arrests and the confiscation of about \$8 million worth of personal property, several times more than the taxes assessed.

The UNL continued the general lines of boycotting Israeli products, tax payment and the civil administration, meanwhile strengthening local agriculture and manufacture. The calls of 1989 distinguish themselves by more guidelines for regulating the socioeconomic life. The trade and labour markets were regulated. The UNL issued guidelines to fix prices, rents, and the rates for leasing land and selling irrigation water. It called for raising workers' and employees' wages in line with the Jordanian dinar's devaluation and price hikes. National committees were formed to arbitrate labor disputes between Palestinian workers and employees.

March 21st was set as the deadline

for ending street vending and mobile money exchange booths, for these had often remained outside the intifada's guidelines. March 28th was the last day for merchants to deal with any Israeli product for which there are a local substitute. (The Israeli trade surplus with 1967 occupied territories can be expected to fall even more in 1989, having already decreased from \$174 million in 1987, to \$56 million in 1988, according to the Bank of Israel.) There were efforts to extend the national market in two directions: Palestinians living in 1948 occupied territories were called on to buy West Bank and Gaza Strip products, while the latter two areas were encouraged to buy from the Golan Heights.

This regulation was reinforced with militant acts whereby tax offices were attacked and records burned; accountants who didn't comply with the

boycott were put out of business. The masses were also organized in reconstruction committees to rebuild demolished houses in defiance of the occupation authorities' orders.

Symbolic of the new system being created was the declaration of summer time in the State of Palestine on a different date than that set by Israel. The occupation authorities reacted violently to even this symbolic manifestation of independence, with soldiers running around smashing watches. The concerted attempts to organize an alternative education system, in a year when schools were closed most of the time, met with even more brutality. Teachers and other citizens were harassed and arrested for instructing children in their homes or setting up out-of-school study programs.

Further steps towards independence were taken as people refused to pay



the fines imposed on them by the Zionist judicial system, in accordance with the UNL's directives. Also during 1989, Palestinian lawyers staged two month-long boycotts of the Zionist courts, in protest of the total lack of due process.

Solidified unity

The unity in struggle of the Palestinians under occupation, which enabled the uprising in the first place, was substantially bolstered in the course of this year. The major political trends maintained their unity in the framework of the intifada, despite differing views on the PLO's tactics in connection with the Palestinian peace offensive. In February relations of coordination was established between the UNL and HAMAS, to ensure unity of action. Equally significant was the drive towards unification of the mass organizations. This began in late 1988, with the formation of a coordinating council for the various women's organizations in the occupied territories. In January, the writers' union was reunited in the territories. Later on, higher councils were formed grouping the student organizations and workers' committees. The Higher Workers' Council took on particular significance not only to compensate for the continuing division of the trade union federation, but also on the forefront of the major battle of the year. Their protracted strike, to protest the imposition of new ID cards on the Gaza Strip population, spearheaded confrontation of the most sustained Israeli drive to divide the Palestinians and reassert control over the occupied territories, starting with the Strip.

The efforts to solidify unity not only succeeded in thwarting repeated Zionist onslaughts. They also provided an example to the PLO institutions in exile, as to how internal democracy, collective leadership and proportional representation of the active forces, are key links in mounting a struggle equal to the Zionist challenge. A number of national institutions and unions faced a situation during 1989 whereby the

terms of their administrative bodies expired, but the situation of siege, mass arrests and curfews ruled out holding ordinary elections. The UNL issued guidelines for forming new administrative bodies on the basis of competence, proportional representation and assigning top priority to national unity, while complying with the respective organizations' bylaws.

Political cohesion

Also on the political level, the intifada and the UNL provided an example from which the entire Palestinian revolution can benefit. The calls of 1989 devoted more attention to political issues than those of the previous year. The focus was on registering the progress made by the PLO's diplomacy, and charting the intifada's overall course and tactics in accordance with achieving Palestinian rights. The focus on unity organizational and political - was essential in a year when the Zionists' main target was exactly Palestinian unity, as the means for penetrating, weakening and then crushing the intifada. Call no. 41, issued June 13th, stressed that «our national struggle is facing a critical moment. The enemy has resorted to the idea of defeating the intifada through political means after being convinced that repression alone had failed to affect it.» This was mainly in reference to the Shamir election plan which, while only a rehash of the Camp David formula, was introduced with the intention of deflecting international criticism of Israel, dividing the PLO on how to react, and fabricating an alternative «leadership» in the territories.

Of course, the Shamir plan was rejected by the PLO and Palestinian people, as a fraudulent attempt to market the impossible idea of «free» elections under the guns of the occupation army. However, subsequent attempts to keep this plan alive have been multiple, ranging from the Mubarak and Baker proposals, to Israeli officials meeting with notables in the territories to try and show that

the Palestinians could be drawn into the game. In this situation, the UNL has shown great political firmness and tactical wisdom. The UNL forbid all meetings with Israeli officials, mandating meetings only with Israelis who advocate unconditional withdrawal from the occupied State of Palestine, as well as the Palestinian right to self-determination and statehood. This decision was made in knowledge that the Israeli government would use meetings with Palestinians to show its international allies that there were supposed non-PLO'ers ready to cooperate on the elections. At the same time, the UNL mitigated its ban to allow for the conditions of occupation: Palestinians who were summoned (i.e. forced) to meetings were obliged to report their contents to the public and speak only on the basis of national consensus (the Palestinian rights to repatriation, self-determination and an independent state, via an international conference). By the same token, the UNL announced the reasons that the Mubarak and Baker plans were unacceptable, immediately upon publication of these plans.

Rising Israeli repression

Of course, the Zionist political onslaught did not preclude continued repression. On the contrary, Israeli soldiers, Shin Bet agents and various special forces pursued the activists of the uprising even more relentlessly in 1989; if anything, the occupation authorities broadened the ongoing campaign of collective punishment, especially the total imposed in the Gaza Strip.

Approximately the same number of Palestinians were killed by Israeli soldiers, settlers and agents in the second year of the intifada, as in the first year. Thus, the intifada enters its third year on the backdrop of the martyrdom of over 800 Palestinians. Most telling was the abrupt rise in repression connected with the introduction of the Shamir plan. The Jerusalem-based Database Project on Palestinian Human Rights issued a table entitled «Human Rights

Violation Since Shamir's «Peace Proposal» - April 1 through October 1, 1989,» which documented the following: 178 Palestinians was killed by gunfire (58 of them 16 years of age or younger), while an additional 36 were killed by the other means; 3,387 were injured by live ammunition, of them 1,211 were children, in addition to 12,816 injuries from other causes; 250 houses were demolished in this six-month period, while 60 were sealed; 1,674 curfew days were counted, aside from partial and night curfews, while there were 1,434 arrest raids and 204 tax raids; 37,740 fruit and olive trees were uprooted and/or burned; over 14,000 Palestinians were in prison, 2,124 of them administrative detainees.

In all, 21 were expelled from their homeland, under the emergency laws, in 1989. (Many others were administratively expelled on pretexts of visa violations, despite having been born in Palestine, or lived most of their life there. In the Ramallah area alone, about 150, mostly women and children, have been expelled in this way since the start of the intifada, cruelly breaking up families in a policy of creeping mass transfer.) It is striking that the only human rights violation that was reduced in the second year of the intifada was «official» expulsion - 21 as opposed to 33 in the first year. This, like the opening of West Bank schools, shows that international condemnation does affect Israel. At the same time, it is obvious that Israel hopes to use such token improvements to deflect criticism of its continuing gross violations. Unfortunately, much of the international media has played along with this game, whether intentionally or not, as detailed coverage of the intifada has almost dropped out of the spotlight.

Israel can't penetrate the intifada

There were obvious links between the political and physical attacks, and the attempts to penetrate Palestinian unity. One was the increased use of the border guards, which quickly led to

the unprovoked assault on Nahhalin on April 13th, when the guards and army together killed five residents of this liberated village near Bethlehem, and injured at least 50 others, many of them in their homes. The idea of deploying the border guards against the intifada was to partially relieve the army after its sustained failure to dent the popular momentum. Another malicious intent was to divide among Palestinians themselves, since Druze resident in the Zionist state are recruited into the border guards. In Israeli society, the guards are considered «second-rate» compared to the army; this force is also heavily manned by Oriental (Arab) Jews. So the Israeli Orientalists delighted in finding forces that supposedly know «Arab traditions» - creating the picture of Arabs fighting Arabs.

However, this tactic failed on two counts. The border guards were no more successful than the army against the intifada, despite committing rampant atrocities. Moreover, the attempt to divide various sectors of the Palestinian people failed dismally, especially at the Druze Initiative Committee organized a series of activities to show that the guards are not at all representative of their community. Druze delegations traveled to Jerusalem to donate blood for the injured of the uprising, and women relatives of border guards met with West Bank women to express their solidarity with the intifada. Druze leaders pledged to impose social and religious sanctions against any Druze committing murder in the occupied territories - a method that has previously proved effective in the struggle of the people of the Golan Heights against the occupation. In the end, the tactic only served to accentuate the racism pervasive in the Zionist society. The Israeli press was filled with scandals about the border guards from the perspective that they were substandard and moreover «Arabs» and Kahane supporters, whereby mainstream Zionists would like to claim innocence of their crimes. It is also noteworthy that the deployment of the guards

didn't change the basic ratio of army killings: regular soldiers continued to shoot-to-kill, while the guards were charged with terrorizing the Palestinians in more «weird ways - atrocities against women, etc.

The second intersection between the attempt to break Palestinian unity and the increase in violent repression is related to collaborators. While many collaborators changed their position under the impact of the intifada, those who remained in the service of the occupation began to take an even more sinister role. This was apparent in the number of incidents in which collaborators joined Shin Bet agents in hunting down and summarily executing local leaders of the uprising. In view of this, one can understand the intensified war on collaborators, needed to protect the masses, preserve united ranks and build the independent society and state. Also for this process, the UNL issued detailed regulations.

It was typical that some western journalists seized this opportunity to write about the intifada, after having «forgotten» it for months. This feeds into the atmosphere of promoting Shamir's plan as if it were a reasonable chance to stop the violence, meanwhile neglecting the fact of the occupation's daily violence against Palestinians. In general, 1989 was marked by a dangerous international tendency to focus on what the PLO should do to make a solution possible, while putting to the side the reality of the uprising and Israeli repression. The PLO bears main responsibility for working to correct this situation, by gearing its peace offensive to protecting the intifada and promoting the conditions for its continuation and escalation. But we also call on progressive forces everywhere to increase their solidarity in the political and informational fields. The importance of international solidarity cannot be underestimated. In view of the Israeli government's intransigence, the intifada is heading for a long struggle; it will be a permanent feature of the next decade, in the struggle for freedom and independence. ●

Yasir Abu Ghosh

One of over 800 who gave their lives for freedom

One of over 800 who gave their lives for freedom.

We received this eulogy from a friend in the occupied West Bank. We print it to honor Yasir Abu Ghosh, along with the scores of activists of the uprising, who have been summarily executed by the Zionist forces - martyred in the struggle for freedom and independence.

Wanted: Dead or Alive

The death of Yasir Abu Ghosh was a premeditated, well-organized murder on the part of the fascists in the Zionist security services and their collaborators. Surely, they drew a breath of relief when they heard the news: Finally, they had succeeded in eliminating one of the leaders of the intifada in the Ramallah district.

Yasir was the youngest son of the Abu Ghosh family who are originally from A'mwas village which was wiped off the map in the 1967 war. In its place, the Zionists built Canada Park. After the war, the family was expelled to Beit Liqya, from where they moved to El Bira. In 1981, Yasir's father bought a piece of land in Beitunya and built a house on it. Four years ago, he founded a small brick factory, with the help of his oldest son who works in Saudi Arabia.

Yasir was only 17 years old when he was martyred, but he was already a revolutionary leader. In 1986, the leadership of George Habash's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine decided to allow Yasir to become a member, despite his young age. Already at that time, his great ability and talent for organizing were apparent. During the intifada, he turned out to be a teacher for many of the youth, and a great fighter against the occupation. He became an activist in the popular resistance committees which are composed of different units. One is named after the famous Palestinian writer and spokesperson of the PFLP, Ghasan Kanafani, who was killed by the Zionist intelligence in 1972. Another unit

is named after Khalil Abu Khadijeh, and it was in this that Yasir was an active leader.

The way he was killed is reminiscent of a death squad operation: Zionist security agents, dressed in civilian clothes and driving cars with West Bank licenses approach «wanted» activists and either arrest or shoot them. In Yasir's case, it was quite obvious that they didn't want him alive. According to his family, Yasir had been on the occupation authorities' «wanted» list for seven months. For this reason, he stayed away from his family home; even though the Shin Bet was well aware of this, they raided his and his brother's house eight times, harassing and threatening the family.

July 10th was the 17th anniversary of the martyrdom of Ghasan Kanafani. In the early morning, there were demonstrations. Yasir, as usual, was in the frontline, carrying placards saying: «Death to Shamir's election plan - Long live the independent Palestinian state.» By about 11:30 a.m., he was sitting with a comrade in a coffee shop near Ramallah's main square, when his attention was drawn to two cars closeby. According to eyewitnesses, there was a well-known collaborator in the first car, and three men dressed as civilians in the second one. Yasir recognized them and immediately realized what was going on. He jumped to his feet and started running. Two men got out of the car and chased him with their pistols drawn and aimed. Yasir stumbled and fell. As he tried to get up, he was shot three times in the back. He fell back and, according to eyewitnesses, one of the Shin Bet agents

came up and shot him twice in the head at close range. During the whole operation, *Yasir was not once ordered to stop.* This made it clear that they had planned in advance to kill him. His lifeless body was thrown on a jeep, his legs dangling over the edge. His friends tried to help him, but were threatened; a sound bomb was thrown to keep them away. After a «victorious» tour through the center of Ramallah, Yasir's body was brought to the military headquarters of the occupation army.

The news of his death spread like wildfire. Everyone was shocked. Yasir was well-known and much loved, not only in Ramallah but in the surrounding camps and villages. Women were crying, and the people began to walk in the direction of the Ramallah hospital, hoping he would be brought there. There was chaos at the hospital: People were crying hysterically or venting their rage on the hospital walls.

After about two hours, people decided to go to his house in Beitunya, where many had already gathered. His comrades were hanging up olive branches and pictures of George Habash and Ghasan Kanafani. Palestinian flags were flying all around the house. That day his family had gone to Israel, to visit his two brothers in the fascist prisons - one of them serving a two and a half year sentence, and the other in six-month administrative detention. Hatred and anger at the cowardly murder, added to pain and mourning, led the people into a spontaneous demonstration. About 250 marched through the small village. Then, another comrade was killed: Raja Mohamed Ahmed Saleh, 16 years old, one of Yasir's best friends, and his successor in case something would happen, was fatally wounded when the Zionist occupation forces opened fire on the demonstrators.

When Yasir's mother came home, the woman present in the house went out to meet her and took her into their midst, ►

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ululating and singing national songs. She raised a Palestinian flag and marched in front of the others. All of a sudden, soldiers appeared, firing rubber bullets and tear gas, trying to intimidate the people and force them indoors. Afterwards, they imposed a curfew.

The next day, at 2 a.m., soldiers informed the families that they could

The speech makers were masked, members of the PFLP and the Popular Resistance Committee/Khalil Abu Khadijeh unit. One of them was disguised as a woman and had his shoes wrapped in plastic bags to prevent detection by the enemy. He spoke with great fervor, saying: «Once again, the cowardly bullets of the Zionist army were fired, taking away

to the families of two other «wanted» youth, telling them: «Hand over your son or his name will be written on the walls next to Yasir's.»

One thing has become clearer to me these last few days: With the murder of Yasir, the Shin Bet may have succeeded in dealing a heavy blow to the popular resistance in Ramallah, but it has also



Yasir Abu Ghosh second from right, in one of the murals painted by a group of American Jewish women, who visited the West Bank to paint images of the intifada

bury their sons. So the two comrades were buried: Yasir in Beitunya, and Raja in Naalin. Later in the day, a memorial service was held for Raja in his parents' home. The following day there was one for Yasir in his family's home. Speeches were delivered, paying tribute to Yasir and denouncing the Zionists' cruel oppression of the Palestinian people.

the life of two of our comrades...Yasir, you were always there in the center of the battlefield; you experienced all the forms of struggle; you were a teacher and a leader in the struggle against the Zionist occupation; and before you fell, you succeeded in preparing many other comrades for this struggle.»

After the murders, the Shin Bet went

poured oil on the fire. One of Yasir's friends said something that strikingly illustrates the common feeling among them: «Yasir did not die; we will continue his struggle with more stones, knives and molotovs, until we reach what he was fighting for - a free Palestine.»



Interview with George Habash



Interview with Comrade George Habash, General Secretary of the PFLP, on the occasion of the second anniversary of the Palestinian uprising, and the 22nd anniversary of the PFLP's establishment.

The intifada, its achievements, difficulties and horizons

What progress has been made by the intifada towards realizing freedom and independence, and embodying the State of Palestine?

The Declaration of Independence and the Palestinian state by the PNC in its extraordinary session on November 15, 1988, was a natural and objective response to a set of achievements realized by the uprising in particular, and the Palestinian national struggle in general... The great uprising in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip possesses a set of essential qualities

which give its achievements a qualitative dimension. Thus, the uprising created a number of new facts on many different levels. The uprising shifted the center of gravity of the conflict with the Zionist entity into Palestine, directly threatening the cohesion of this entity. Thus, the uprising put an end to concepts which the occupation has been trying to entrench, such as the eternity of the occupation, Arab-Zionist coexistence, etc. Moreover, it decisively exposed the essence of the conflict as a Palestinian-Israeli one occurring in the context of the overall Arab-Zionist conflict. This rules out the possibility of searching for solutions which ignore Palestinian national rights to repatriation, self-

determination and an independent state, with Jerusalem as its capital. This was consolidated by the determination of a million and a half Palestinians who have shown their unlimited willingness to struggle and sacrifice in order to sweep the occupation out of our homeland. Since the first days of the uprising, they have rallied around the clear-cut slogans: freedom and independence.

Another important achievement realized by the uprising was the Jordanian regime's severance of the legal and administrative ties with the occupied Palestinian West Bank; this signals the retreat of this regime's role in the full sense of the word. Severing these ties dealt a heavy blow to the idea of the Jordanian option, and opened the way for the Palestinian national option to occupy the main frontline position in confronting the Zionist enemy.

The achievements of the uprising also reached the Arab and international levels, revitalizing the Palestinian cause which has become a top priority on the agendas of Arab and international bodies. Official and popular pressure has increased for the realization of Palestinian rights. The best proof of this is the recognition of the State of Palestine by at least 104 countries, and the resolutions adopted in the Security Council (605, 607, 608). These gains would not have been made if not for the persistent struggle waged by the masses of the uprising.

The winds of the uprising have also left their mark on the Zionist enemy, with political, economic and moral effects. A set of phenomena have emerged which, if continued and aggravated, will pressure the racist state. These include the economic losses, international isolation, increased refusal to do military service in the 1967 occupied territories, and the increasing number of Israelis calling for ending the occupation and recognizing the Palestinian state. This trend is still a secondary phenomenon compared to the prevailing extremist, rightist, fascist trend, but a series of positive changes have been brought about by the uprising, and we should monitor them in order to increase them.

The masses of the uprising have made a material gain through establishing the nucleus of popular authority on the ruins of the occupation's authority. It is true that authority was not totally realized, but it has been able to boycott tax payment, Zionist goods for which there is a local substitute, and the customs and traffic departments of the civil administration. It has also liberated some villages, even if temporarily, and formed the popular and specialized committees.

These great achievements spurred the members of the PNC to unanimously declare the independent Palestinian state. This was a historical decision, not an emotion of the moment or an illusion. With the declaration of the State of Palestine, we made great progress towards realizing the aspirations of our people, but the remainder of the way is more difficult and longer; it needs redoubled efforts, struggle and sacrifice. What has occurred so far is the transfer of the slogan of the Palestinian state from the realm of historical possibility into the realm of realistic possibility. Realizing the extent of this change is very important for previously evaluating where we stand and what lies ahead of us.

This was one of the most important gains of the first year of the uprising. The second year of the uprising is distinguished by the crystallization of an official international will supporting the Palestinian people's determination to realize their state.

Based on deep conviction in the historical declaration of the state, the PFLP has repeatedly stressed the great difference between declaring and materially achieving this state. The declaration of the Palestinian state is a project that requires the mobilization of all efforts and resources, for major obstacles remain to its material embodiment. Based on clearly understanding these obstacles, we discount the viewpoint that the state is within immediate reach. This viewpoint is lacking in scientific analysis and leads its advocates to overly hasty diplomatic moves and gratuitous concessions. We are not against diplomacy, but political moves must be based on deep understanding of reality, and the factors which influence it. Otherwise, such moves will bury our people's aspirations.

What are the obstacles delaying the embodiment of the Palestinian state?

1. The Israeli position of stubbornly and categorically rejecting our people's minimal aims. Israel continues to reject the idea of a Palestinian state and the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Israel also rejects the international resolutions which recognize the Palestinian people's national rights.

The Israeli government, parties and leaders still adhere to the expansionist Zionist ideology, which means hanging on to the Palestinian land that Shamir insists on calling «Judea and Samaria» and Jerusalem as «the eternal capital of Israel.» Israel continues to view the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip as a milk cow that has yielded millions of dollars. Israel will not as yet give up this profitable enterprise. The Zionist position reflects the essence of the fascist, racist and expansionist enemy. What, then, can we say about the extremist trend which is fighting Shamir for power? This trend led by Sharon, Levi and Modai is even more racist and fascist, and to the right of Likud there are the parties like Moledat and Tzomet and Tehiya. These forces call for mass expulsion of the Palestinians and more settlements in the occupied territories.

Therefore, it is a problem if some Palestinian leaders are still ignoring the reality of the Zionist enemy which we confront.

2. The US position: In spite of the US administration's decision to open a dialogue with the PLO, its official stand is decisive rejection of the idea of a Palestinian state. The most recent political moves reflect the extent of the US response to the Israeli position. The Bush Administration has given Shamir a guarantee that the US will never pressure Israel to negotiate with the PLO, or accept a Palestinian state. The US Administration is also trying to replace an international conference with bilateral negotiations and a unilateral solution.

These are the main obstacles facing the embodiment of the Palestinian state. Until overcoming these obstacles, the goal of a Palestinian state will remain an ongoing struggle process. What is needed now is reinforcing the struggle by all means and on all levels - Palestinian, Arab and international, to bring about the change in the balance of forces needed to force Israel and the US

to recognize the Palestinian state. We should never plant illusions in the minds of our people who are making daily sacrifices. Our heroic masses should understand the nature of the enemy and that it will never acknowledge our rights until the costs of the occupation become greater than its benefits on the economic, political and moral levels.

The slogan of civil disobedience was raised in the first months of the uprising, but later on there was less agitation for its immediate implementation. Why? What, in your view, are the required conditions for implementing this step?

There was not complete success in implementing the disobedience slogan as it was first raised and as we understood it. However, our masses who are confronting the occupation every moment have applied this slogan in the field. Lack of total success does not and should not cancel the practice of civil disobedience which have been created by our masses, such as refusing to pay taxes, to renew licenses or to open stores on the occupation forces' orders, attending school despite closure orders, organizing popular education despite the occupation prohibiting it, refusing the magnetic ID cards, the resignation of the police and appointed municipal councils, refusing to work in settlements, abiding by the general strike days, continuing to form popular committees in defiance of the military laws, refusing to pay fines or remove barricades or slogans or Palestinian flags, etc. What happened in the heroic town of Beit Sahour is an outstanding example; the people collectively and totally refused to pay taxes in spite of the violence and collective punishment, and the brutal confiscation of their property, during the 43-day military siege. The battle of the IDs waged by the brave workers in the Gaza Strip, is another outstanding example.

All these events point to the progress which has been made by our masses in their daily experience of confronting the occupation. The battle is violent, but when the occupation began to use new repressive means, we notice that the masses are really ready to confront these. The masses were able to practice many forms of disobedience, but not on a permanent basis. Total disobedience was not realized as we had imagined. Why?

As we understood it, civil disobedience means total rejection of the occupation, refusing to recognize its legitimacy, boycotting the civil administration and forming the alternative popular authority.

The incomplete success has various reasons, some objective and others subjective. The objective reasons are related to the occupation and the realities it has created over 22 years. The Palestinian national economy was subordinated and linked to the Zionist economy; for example, more than 90% of the imports of the West Bank and Gaza Strip had been from Israel, including basic materials. The Israeli economy, with its high technical development, was able to deform and contain the weaker and more underdeveloped Palestinian economy. This makes disengagement very difficult, especially as long as the occupation exists.

As for the subjective factor, we in the PFLP consider this to be a decisive factor. The fact is that the Palestinian national organi-

zations did not possess joint conviction about the concept of civil disobedience, and how to practice it. This inhibited a unified national decision for total national disobedience. The other aspect of the weakness of the subjective factor is the PLO's inability to provide the minimum requirements for national disobedience. For example, how can we deal with some 120,000 Palestinian workers who have been working in Zionist territories? Total disobedience is impossible if the workers do not boycott all work in the Zionist economy.

Why do we say that the subjective factor is decisive? Because we have a deep conviction that we can practice civil disobedience if we devote sufficient effort to surmounting the obstacles. The masses have implemented a series of acts of disobedience; they are ready to sacrifice and have plenty of enthusiasm to escalate the struggle against the occupation, but on the basis of a collective national position and the fulfillment of the needed material support. In the PFLP, we feel that this process is realistic and feasible. In order not to push the situation towards adventurism, especially in view of our understanding of the nature of the enemy and the difficulty of implementing total disobedience, we in the PFLP proposed the tactic of raising the civil disobedience slogan in different areas and at different times. This would allow the mass movement to gradually head towards civil disobedience. Gradual disobedience would serve as a rehearsal - for one week, then ten days, then two weeks, and so on, and then return to the previous situation.

This process would lead to self-examination, to knowing the enemy's reaction, to discovering the problems arising from the steps of disobedience and helping us to find solution. In the course of this dialectical process, the economic, political, militant and organizational basis of the uprising would be consolidated. Our masses have been practicing acts of civil disobedience, but provisionally. Now they could begin practicing this in a total and collective way. This in itself would reinforce the confrontation and escalate it, meanwhile strengthening cooperation among the masses.

This is what we have understood when raising the disobedience slogan. What is our evaluation now of this slogan? It became clear that the essence of the slogan was genuine and possible, but it seems that our assessment of the obstacles to its implementation was not precise. In any case, we are raising this subject very clearly. It is necessary to continue the work and propaganda among the contingents of the Palestinian national movement, aimed at applying this slogan, because in our view, it is one of the most important dynamics for moving the uprising to a more advanced level. We must have a unified, serious national decision and fulfill the material requirements in order to implement this slogan.

Why haven't Hamas and the Islamic trend joined the United National Leadership after two years of the uprising? Also, do you expect that the Islamic forces' success in the parliamentary elections in Jordan, will reflect on the Islamic trend's strength in the occupied territories?

A scientific view of the uprising's characteristics reveals its comprehensiveness very clearly. All strata and sectors of the Palestinian people, all ideological trends, are involved within its framework. Our people began to confront the Zionist authority with a unified national will, in order to achieve the main goal of freedom and independence. On the basis of mounting a total confrontation, I welcome Hamas' joining the trend of confrontation against the Zionist enemy. Those who know the history of HAMAS, its slogans, priorities and the problems it has created in the occupied territories, will see that there is a great difference today, and welcome the joining in with the nationalists. There is no doubt that the participation of Hamas and the Islamic Jihad in the conflict is a national gain for our struggle and a motivating force for the uprising. However, the continuation of the uprising calls for this trend joining the United National Leadership of the Uprising. To realize this aim, we should work sincerely to resolve the obstacles delaying this.

What are these obstacles? I am sorry to say that the main reason is Hamas which binds the ideological factor with the political factor without giving the current political moment the weight it deserves in determining alliance and the requirements of the confrontation. According to its vision, Hamas feels that it is a good chance for confronting the Zionist enemy, because this will provide a suitable political moment for competing with the PLO. At the same time, I am very sorry to say that the political line of some influential forces in the PLO, who are giving gratuitous concessions and recognized resolution 242, bear part of the responsibility for alienating Hamas from the PLO. In the light of this analysis, efforts should continue so that Hamas, and all the forces that participate in the uprising, would join the United National Leadership. I appeal to all forces and to the masses to strive for all joining in the UNL.

Concerning the Muslim Brotherhood's success in the Jordanian elections and its influence on the occupied territories, this question entails deep contemplation, especially since this bloc has announced that it is going to ask King Hussein to retract his decision about severing ties with the West Bank. We cannot ignore this danger. As soon as the king had declared this decision, the Muslim Brotherhood issued a statement faulting this step. In contrast, we, along with the masses and all progressive and nationalist forces, considered this decision as a big victory for our people, as it dealt a severe blow to the so-called Jordanian option.

It is very possible that the Muslim Brotherhood's position will affect the position of Hamas in the occupied territories, even though we would not wish for this. But the political position will be decisive. Our masses will be with those who stand beside their aspiration to confront the Zionist enemy.

Despite the importance of supporting the uprising from outside, we notice a reduction of military operations against the Zionist forces across the Arab borders. What has made this task so difficult?

The attempt to support the uprising by military operations from outside has not stopped. The weakness of the military

operations has objective and subjective reasons. The objective reasons are: (1) the intensified measures taken by the Arab regimes and the agents of Israel, and (2) intensified security measures by the Israeli forces themselves. In Lebanon, for example, any commando group should take into account that it will face the barrier of the UN forces, of the Lahd forces and of the Israeli forces, plus some mobile barriers that might be erected at different times and places. There has also been information coming from Jordan about the new measures of the regime to prevent any Palestinian military activities against Israel.

There are also subjective reasons for the decline in military support from the outside. Some organizations took a political decision preventing them from practicing armed struggle to support the uprising from across the Arab borders. This is based on their political vision and their betting on the Arab regimes; they intend to open the way for bargaining and improving their own position vis-a-vis international and regional powers that are involved in deciding the future of the Arab-Zionist struggle. Thus, they think that their position will facilitate making political gains from the uprising. This is one of the explanations.

Some have understood that the uprising is an alternative to the armed struggle, while real understanding of the uprising is to see it as a complement to the armed struggle. Political and military support for the uprising are of great importance, and there is no contradiction between the two. Military support to the uprising from the outside is related to the necessity of making a change in the balance of forces in order to make the enemy recognize our national rights, and withdraw from the occupied land.

Political support to the uprising, which has occupied first priority, means protecting it politically, in contrast to military support. This subject has been proved by international revolutionary experience and by our own experience. The political mistake does real harm to the revolution if it aborts the factors which lead to victory. Many times, it was a political mistake which led the revolution to retreat. Even before our contemporary revolution, the Palestinian experience in 1936-39 demonstrated the importance of the political line.

I am not seriously worried about the uprising if the military operations have declined from the outside, but I am very anxious about the Baker plan and other suspicious initiatives aimed at aborting the uprising. Protecting the uprising politically has priority, and the political support is closely related to the military, economic and moral support.

By what means can a change be incurred on the US and Israeli rejection of Palestinian rights?

The Israeli obstacle

The Israeli position continues to be characterized by intransigence and rejection of all of our people's national rights, as well as of all international conventions and a fully empowered international conference. Such rejection exposes the nature of the enemy as being racist, fascist and colonialist. The enemy views the Palestinian people as its own historical negation. Therefore, we are not confronting an ordinary enemy, but one that is armed

with reactionary racist ideology from which it derives justification for inflicting the worst oppression on the Palestinian masses, in Palestine and in exile.

This position is the essence of the policies of the ruling coalition in Tel Aviv. Differences within this coalition are secondary ones pertaining to ways and means, not aims; neither of their policies deviate from the basis of Zionist policy. The Labor Party, that calls for «peace» has waged three out of the four major wars against the Arabs. During the Labor's era, the remainder of Palestine, the Golan Heights and the Sinai were occupied. The Likud, on the other hand, signed the infamous Camp David accords. Labor's Rabin, who is directing the war on the intifada, is not less fascist than his Likud colleagues. Therefore, it is superficial to argue about which of the two blocs is more moderate. In fact, their differences are a competition between the two as to which means are best for achieving their common goals.

Although these differences are secondary, it is our task - as a revolution - to capitalize on them and broaden the gap. In the current situation, transforming the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip into a losing enterprise is an essential factor in widening the gap in the two-party coalition.

When discussing the impact of the uprising on the Israeli political constellation, we must monitor the new phenomenon. It is true that Israeli political life is generally heading towards fascist extremism, but it is also true that the democratic forces calling for peace are growing more than at any other time, despite the prevailing right-wing mainstream in the government and parties. The process of polarization in the Israeli society will have a great impact on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, although it is not the decisive factor. We must not neglect this factor when charting our tactics in the battle with the Zionist government and parties.

Many questions have been raised by a broad circle of Jewish intellectuals and even in the Labor Party. Many Israelis have called for an end to the crimes and crude violations of human rights, that are taking place in the occupied territories. Some Israeli officials, such as Weizmann, the minister of science, have openly called for recognizing the PLO and accepting an independent Palestinian state. Such phenomena should be encouraged.

More important is the probability of a real split in the Israeli government on the issue of the Palestinian independent state, due to the uprising. The continuation and escalation of the uprising and its deep effects on the Zionist entity represents a real threat, in addition to generating Arab and international support for the independent Palestinian state, as a factor of pressure on the Zionist government. Shamir himself pointed to the possibility of civil war (among Israelis). The Israeli government has been able to overcome the crises of the past two years, such as the major conflict over Mubarak's plan, but this situation won't last forever. As the uprising escalates in the future, a split could occur. At this point, we would be much closer to actually establishing the independent Palestinian state, because exactly at this point, one of the toughest links in the Israeli position would be broken.

The US obstacle

Although it seems that the US administration is not in harmony with Shamir's demands, it does in fact respond to the basic Israeli wishes. The US has always facilitated Israel's regional ambitions in return for Israel serving US global strategy. The relationship is one of mutual interests. Israel is no longer merely a tool in the hands of the US, but the US is still the protector of Israel's interests and reputation which is deteriorating internationally. The US worked diligently for Shamir's election plan to be accepted, and pressured the PLO to accept it, trying to snatch more and more concessions from the Palestinians. The US has moreover exercised its veto in the UN Security Council every time there was a proposal to condemn Zionist repression against our people. The essence of the Israeli and US policies is one; both stand as an obstacle to any solution that guarantees legitimate Palestinian rights.

We should use all means to surmount this obstacle. The uprising, if properly used as a weapon, will play a decisive role in this regard. We must consolidate our support and protection for the uprising in order to make it an ongoing fire that would consume the US interests in the area. We must also urge the Arab governments to take a clear position on the US administration in light of its rejection of our people's right to self-determination. The Arab states should be pressured to close their markets to US goods. Creating these factors will guarantee a change in the US position and end its unconditional support to the repressive Israeli policies.

There have been many schemes aiming to abort the uprising: the Shamir plan, Mubarak's 10 points and the Baker proposals. The PLO's position on these was sometimes ambiguous. Some felt ambiguity was exactly what's needed, while others urged the PLO to take more clear-cut positions. How do you evaluate the Palestinian position vis-a-vis these schemes?

First, I would like to emphasize that all these schemes have one thing in common: denial of the Palestinian people's inalienable rights, of the PLO as their sole legitimate representative, and of the fully empowered international conference as the proper solution. They are new versions of the Camp David accords.

If we believe that the US, Israel and Egypt are pressuring the PLO, rather than pressure being exerted on the Israeli government, we will then conclude that the PLO leadership must take a clear position on these schemes. The last Central Council meeting, held in Baghdad, declared a clear position, but often we hear statements by the PLO officials that raise doubts, in addition to the violations of resolutions soon after they have been adopted. These practices lead to confusion in the ranks of the PLO and among the Palestinian people. They moreover encourage our enemies to exert more pressure to elicit further unjustified concessions.

It is important for the PLO to stay in the limelight and not isolate itself from political developments. However, it is more

important that the PLO define its priorities. Our first priority is Palestinian unity - the unity of the masses and their adherence to the PLO and its program. When this is the case, the other links - Arab and international - will not be able to ignore the Palestinian cause. The Palestinian link will give the PLO momentum for entering the international scene. In fact, the achievements realized in the first year of the uprising were made *before* the PLO leadership began to give gratuitous concessions. Due to the Palestinian cohesiveness, for example, King Hussein was forced to sever legal and administrative ties with the West Bank. Many other gains were made such as Security Council resolutions 605, 607 and 608.

So, why don't we stop running after the mirage of the US solutions? Why don't we firmly declare: No to the Shamir plan, No to the Mubarak plan, No to Baker's plan and No to any other plan that doesn't recognize our inalienable national rights? We have the ability to resist all pressures if we preserve national unity and are committed to the national consensus and the resolutions of the PLO's leading bodies.

How has the intifada impacted on the PLO itself? The democratic reform needed to make a qualitative change in the PLO's performance hasn't occurred. What is needed to implement these reforms?

The issue of democratic reform in the PLO has always been a priority for the PFLP and other national and democratic forces. Today, this takes on greater importance in view of the uprising. Our commitment to the uprising requires the process of democratic reform. The formula should be as follows: the uprising in Palestine and democratic reforms in the PLO's institutions in exile. The uprising demands that the PLO institutions be transformed from their present shabby, bureaucratic state into new, militant and mass institutions. What is keeping the Palestinian masses in exile from being mobilized in support of the uprising - politically, materially and militarily? It is the present situation in the PLO. Out of loyalty to the uprising, we are obliged to implement democratic reforms.

Theoretically, democratic reform means developing the relations among all parties in the national front, in form and content. Whenever major political developments occur, there should be a review aimed at resolving any contradiction or discrepancy that may have arisen between the objective factor of the revolution and its subjective factor, i.e., its leadership. Our ultimate goal is to mobilize all the Palestinian masses in and outside of Palestine; at the same time, the various Palestinian organizations represent all classes of the people. Therefore, the reform process should aim at rearranging the ranks and adjusting the internal bylaws in a way that reflects all the changes taking place in the revolutionary process. In this way, democracy and collective work will be consolidated and all forces will be mobilized. Dealing with the uprising with old means and institutions will not contribute to its development. The uprising has spread to all towns, villages and camps in the occupied territories before some of the PLO offices had woken up to the fact. Individualism, the hegemony of the single organization, bureaucracy and corruption are still not being seriously dealt

with. The PFLP, together with other organizations, has been struggling for remedying these negative phenomena. We have presented many proposals - most recently the paper submitted to the Central Council meeting in Baghdad. We have not achieved tangible results, but we will continue our struggle.

More and more forces are gradually seeing the importance of reforms and their direct influence on our national cause. The uprising is developing and is, at the same time, surrounded by conspiracies. The performance of our institutions should not remain incapable of meeting this challenge. The negative phenomena affect the level of support given by the masses in exile to the intifada, and the masses in exile should shoulder their responsibility to bring about reform. Reform should become a mass demand. The PFLP will make democratic reform a priority in the next PNC, with a new membership. The first priority for us will be a critical review of the PLO's policies since the 19th PNC was held in November 1988.

The PLO has restricted its attention almost exclusively to the 1967 occupied territories. How can all of the Palestinian people take part in the battle for freedom and independence?

Achieving the goals of freedom and independence requires mobilization of all our people, everywhere, especially those in the 1948 occupied territories, because they live closest to the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and most importantly, they live in the Zionist entity. The Zionist enemy is most fearful of our people in the 1948 occupied territories moving from supporting the intifada, to participating in it. It is necessary for our people in the 1948 occupied territories to be directly involved in the uprising, yet I do not feel it is possible for them to be fully involved at present. I dare say the PFLP made a mistake when during the first year of the uprising, we raised the slogan of the participation of the masses in the 1948 occupied territories in the uprising. We changed this slogan into advocating more support to the uprising from these masses, as a step towards actual participation. When we say full participation is not possible now, we mean that the objective and subjective conditions for this are not yet ripe, in contrast to the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The Palestinians in the 1948 occupied territories are exposed to many forms of discrimination and repression, but not to the same degree as the masses in the 1967 occupied territories. I want to point out some of the differences between the objective and subjective conditions in the two areas. On the objective level, the enemy has confiscated 50% of the West Bank and over 34% of the Gaza Strip, but about 30% of the land belonging to the Palestinians residing in the 1948 occupied territories. Moreover, the enemy has confiscated over 80% of the West Bank and Gaza Strip water resources. There is also a vast difference in wages, educational systems and political and civil freedoms.

The level of political organization is much higher in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The organizations there are underground and have adopted different means of struggle than those adopted by legal organizations that exist under certain restrictions in the Zionist state.

It is our duty to increase the support of our masses in the 1948 occupied territories to the uprising, and to develop the subjective factor, in order to actually reach the stage where we can say that they are participating in the uprising. The PLO should shoulder its responsibility towards this part of our people, and raise slogans that insure their support to the PLO, and to the interim of strategic goals of the Palestinian revolution.

What is Europe's role in relation to a Middle East settlement, and how can we work to develop the European position on Palestinian rights?

Positive developments have occurred in the position of Western European and other capitalist countries, such as Japan, in relation to the Palestinian question. There is an obvious difference between their positions and that of the US administration. As was clear at the EEC summit in Madrid, Europe recognizes the PLO as a party to any solution for the Middle East conflict, and that the Palestinian people's right to self-determination is a basis for such a solution, in addition to viewing the international conference as a suitable framework. Some European countries have a distinguished position: Greece, Spain, France and Italy now allow official Palestinian diplomatic representation in their capitals. Of course, credit for all this goes to the intifada.

On the other hand, there is the position of the US administration that began a dialogue with the PLO, but still doesn't recognize it as the Palestinian people's sole legitimate representative. Rather, via the Shamir and Baker plans, the US is trying to find alternatives to the PLO. It is procrastinating about the international conference, viewing this solely as an umbrella for direct negotiations, and doesn't recognize the Palestinian people's right to self-determination.

Although the European position is becoming more independent, it has yet to completely free itself of the US pressure. European countries that had a clear position in Madrid, later succumbed to US pressure at the summit of the seven industrial powers, which did not express recognition of the PLO's role nor the Palestinian right to self-determination. It only mentioned the international conference - which means procrastination of this issue.

I don't want to belittle Europe's role. Due to the changes that are occurring in the international balance of power, Europe could play a more positive role. Western Europe is now considered one of the main poles in the world, in addition to the Soviet Union, US, Japan, etc. It cannot be ignored when it comes to reaching a settlement in the Middle East. The idea of the international conference involves the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council, reflecting Europe's importance. In addition, French President Mitterand has called for a European-Arab dialogue, in a situation where it has become even clearer that the US is insisting on direct negotiations, in view of the Shamir and Mubarak plans. Clearly, Europe is working to reassert its role in relation to a settlement.

Thus, we feel it is necessary to increase mutual understanding with Europe. The PLO should struggle to strengthen the European position. I welcomed Mitterand's initiative and announced that the PFLP would participate in a European-Arab dialogue

via a PLO delegation. Efforts should moreover be directed towards European public opinion. This could have significant influence on the position of Western European countries. The British Labor Party, for example, recognizes the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, as well as the international conference and the Palestinian right to an independent state. This is very significant, particularly if this party were to gain a majority in the next British government.

There are two points of view about how to bridge the gap between declaring the Palestinian state, and actually realizing it. How do you evaluate the policies of the PLO concerning the means to achieve the state?

From the first months of the uprising, the PFLP noted that there were two different political views and tactics. I personally experienced this at the PNC's 19th session. The right-wing in the PLO leadership was not counting on the uprising's continuation; they were worried it would stop before any political victories were achieved. This trend is overly hasty and willing to give gratuitous concession, due to the lack of faith in the uprising. Its advocates have fallen into the trap of illusions and exaggerating the effect of the uprising on the Zionist entity and Israeli public opinion. Experience has proven otherwise: after two years, the Israeli position is still completely hostile to the Palestinians' aspirations and legitimate rights. Peres is equivalent to Shamir, and Rabin is comparable to Sharon.

The advocates of this trend are also betting on international detente as an additional factor which increases the possibility of a solution for the Palestinian question. They overestimate the effect of detente on our area. They think that as soon as President Bush phones Shamir, Israel would change its position, bearing in mind the historical example of how former US President Eisenhower called Ben Gurion, ordering an Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in 1956. They failed to notice the development of US-Israeli relations over these past thirty (30) years. The time is past when Israel complied to Washington's orders. Israel is no longer just a follower of the US - It has become a junior partner.

The other trend, led by the PFLP, bases its struggle on the fact that the intifada has reached the point of no return. Despite the repression, it will not stop short of achieving freedom and independence, and our people's rights to repatriation, self-determination and an independent state. This position is based on a serious evaluation of the objective and subjective conditions that led to the outbreak of the uprising. As long as these conditions persist, the uprising will continue, regardless of the costs.

The PFLP's view is also based on knowledge of the nature of the Zionist enemy as being colonialist and expansionist, based on a reactionary interpretation of the Torah. The Zionist entity is heading towards right-wing extremism. The Israeli religious parties are on the ascent, and they are not willing to withdraw from one square meter of Palestinian land. Shamir has threatened to dissolve the government coalition, and warned of civil war, if the Labor Party continues discussing withdrawal

from his «holy Judea and Samaria.» It would be fatal to bet on a qualitative change in the Israeli position regarding our rights. Change is possible, but certain conditions must be met, first and foremost, continuing and escalating the uprising, and inflicting maximum losses on all levels.

Today's international detente is an important factor mitigating for a solution to the Middle East crisis, but understanding the effects of detente on the Middle East, in a mechanical way, leads to inaccurate calculations. The effects of the international atmosphere will always be relative to the local balance of forces. In Namibia, the international factor was effective and the solution became possible, due to the balance of power between SWAPO and the racist South African government.

In our view, the PLO must act so as to change the balance of power. Our daily concern should be continuing and escalating the intifada, using all means, for it is the decisive factor for making the needed change. We must take advantage of the international atmosphere, but not view it as an alternative (to our own efforts). We must also activate the Arab masses and national movements, while urging the Arab states to honor their commitments to the Palestinian cause - financially, politically and media-wise. We must not surrender to the Arab regime's pressure to give gratuitous concessions.

The PFLP's view is not based on the idea that the uprising is able to achieve all our strategic goals, i.e., liberating all our national land. We do not burden the intifada with unbearable tasks. Our slogans are realistic, based on an evaluation that the maximum which can be achieved at this stage is implementing the legitimate international resolutions concerning Palestine. We objected to specifying 242 from among all these resolutions at the 19th PNC, because 242 deals with our cause not as a national issue, but one of refugees. It guarantees the recognition of Israel, and views the problem as one of borders between Israel and the neighboring Arab countries. For this reason, we consider that the insistence of the right wing on including 242 in the PNC's resolutions, was an unjustified concession. This was the start of subsequent gratuitous concessions.

Some say that the policies of the PLO leadership have achieved some positive results, such as the developments in the European and Japanese positions, and the start of the US-PLO dialogue. We say that any policy has positive and negative aspects, but one must judge the overall results.

The intifada and the Arab situation

How do you view the Arab situation in view of the need for support to the intifada?

If we want to analyze the reasons that have so far prevented the Palestinian intifada from a comensurate influence on the whole Arab world, we must take two factors into considerations: The first is the decline of the official Arab order; the second is the aggravated crisis of the Arab national liberation movement.

On the official level

Any review of the Arab official policy clearly reveals the failure of the national program of the ruling strata for liberation, development and democracy. Review also shows that the Arab-

Zionist conflict has fallen from being the top priority to being the last. Of course, this decline is not a result of the current situation; it has its roots in a set of economic and social developments which finally led to the collapse of most of the links of the Arab confrontation against the imperialist-Zionist-reactionary project. This was followed by the official Arab position in the Casablanca Summit, where the Egyptian regime was restored to Arab officialdom, burdened with the Camp David accords and their humiliating terms. This regime can become a bridge for spreading Camp David in the whole Arab area in the future.

The official Arab collapse was also manifested on many occasions during the intifada. Most prominent is that the US has exercised its veto in the UN Security Council six times during the intifada, without having to fear any official Arab reaction to this. On the contrary, the Arab states' imports from the US increased in 1988, as compared to 1987.

Because of this, we apply new criteria in evaluating the present Arab situation and the degree of support to the intifada. The Arab states must define their relations with the US and other Western countries on the basis of whether or not they recognize the Palestinian state. This is the minimum needed to provide the PLO with more weight in the conflict with the US and Israel. The PLO can force these two to give in to the demand for freedom and independence, if the Palestinian people do not have to wage their battle alone, whether in the occupied territories or in the international arena. However, if we apply this yardstick, we will find that the majority of Arab states, if not all, still follow a policy which is below the acceptable minimum.

The Arab national liberation movement

During the intifada, it has become clear that the Arab national liberation movement is suffering an aggravated crisis which needs to be resolved quickly. A comparison between the state of this movement as it was in the fifties and early sixties, and today, reveals the features of this crisis. All of us remember the battles which the Arab masses fought in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and other countries against the Baghdad Pact and other plans which aimed to subordinate the Arab national to colonialism. History is full of Arab victories at that time. We remember the vitality of the masses striving to define their rights and achieve their goals.

Unfortunately, despite two years of the intifada, the situation today is totally different. It is painful to say that the mass demonstrations in some European cities, in support of the intifada, were bigger than those in many Arab countries. The crisis is clearly seen in the weakness of the Arab popular movement, the weakness of Arab theoretical dialogue and the unleashing of secondary contradictions at the expense of the main one, promoting division rather than unity, etc.

In the view of the PFLP, there have been great qualitative developments, from the fifties to the eighties, such as the oil boom and its effect, and the replacement of the old colonialism with neocolonialism, whereby imperialism practices a new mechanism of exploitation. Despite all this, we consider the subjective factor to be the primary root of the crisis, after which comes the effects of the objective factor. By the subjective factor, we mean the ideological and class nature of the

leadership of the Arab national liberation movement. This leadership, with its bourgeoisie nationalism, is no longer capable of leading the Arab mass movement. Although the working class parties are not suffering from this ideological and class crisis, they have committed mistakes which prevented them from becoming the alternative to the bourgeois leadership.

This analysis does not excuse the PLO from its share of responsibility for the present situation on the Arab level. The PLO has given priority to relations with the Arab regimes, while neglecting relations with the Arab masses. Moreover, the ambiguous policy of giving gratuitous concessions has negatively affected the Arab masses' response to the Palestinian uprising. Creating a state of ascent in the Arab arena is the responsibility of all components of the Arab liberation movement. The Palestinian national movement could play an important role in activating the Arab masses, but this doesn't excuse the Arab national movement from its direct responsibility for confronting the Zionist occupation, and supporting the Palestinian uprising.

The overall lack of a sufficient response to the uprising on the Arab level does not mean there were no initiatives among the Arab masses. We have seen movement in some Arab countries - Jordan, Egypt, etc. The Lebanese national resistance has given a positive example of continuous daily struggle against the Zionist occupation.

When we talk about support to the uprising, we don't mean only material support. The Arab masses' activities should aim to pressure the respective regimes into defining a clear position on the US administration, in accordance with the demand that it recognize the State of Palestine and our people's right to self-determination. The biggest favor the Arab masses could do for the uprising is to enforce a change in the US position.

Finally, I would like to point to the need for dialogue among the contingents of the Arab liberation movement, on this central issue. One practical step in this direction is worth a dozen programs (plans). Theoretical discussion is important and so is material and moral support. We hope that the PLO Executive Committee implements the decision of the last Central Council, for reviving the Arab committee for supporting the Palestinian revolution.

So far, we in the PFLP have been unable to provide a supportive Arab environment for the uprising; nor has the PLO managed to activate Arab officialdom to this end. But we must give more attention to this issue. We must define the tasks and obstacles involved in order to surmount them. I dare say it will be difficult to achieve the State of Palestine, without activating the Arab arena on the official and mass levels.

In your view, will the new openness between the Soviet Union and other socialist countries on one hand, and Israel on the other, contribute to giving the Soviet Union a more effective role in the search for a solution to the Middle East crisis?

I would like to preface my answer by noting the distinct difference between the principled position of the socialist countries and that of the US administration. The latter is still refusing to

recognize the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, as well as their national rights, and the fully empowered international conference as the framework for resolving the Middle East crisis. In contrast, the Soviet Union has always recognized the PLO and supported our rights. It is a mistake to compare the two positions, as do some Arab reactionary forces.

We do notice that the Soviet Union has adopted flexible tactics. We understand this flexibility, but we differ on some points, without this changes our principled friendship; having tactical differences with the Soviet Union is not harmful. Our criteria for evaluating these various tactics is based on their results. Some of the differences we have with the Soviet Union are as follows:

First is the immigration of Soviet Jews to Israel, which we feel is harmful to our cause, regardless of the Soviet Union's motives, such as commitment to the Helsinki accord which specifies freedom of immigration. But this immigration augments the strength of the Zionist entity. We must not compare the immigration of Soviet Jews to Western Europe, with their immigration to Israel which is a racist, expansionist state, occupying our homeland and repressing our people.

Second is contacts with Israel such as meetings with Israeli officials, air flights to Israel, cultural exchange and consulate officials' exchanging visits. I would like to ask the Soviet comrades if this will lead to further isolating Israel, or breaking that isolation? Isn't it necessary to tighten the siege on Israel, especially in view of the intifada, in order to force Israel to submit to the international will for peace. When Comrade Shevardnadze visited the Middle East, he said that if Israel continues to reject peace, it will find itself in the position of South Africa - isolated internationally. Then why this openness?

Third is the principle of a balance of interests in solving regional conflicts, that the Soviet Union called for. We understand this in relation to the principle of an equilibrium in the balance of forces which avoids all-out war and total defeat for either side. This principle means reaching a point where each side realizes the necessity of considering the interests of the other. In our situation, it will take the Zionist leaders a long time to realize the necessity of a solution. The Zionist ideology, as expressed by Shamir, stresses that the West Bank and Gaza Strip are part of the «Land of Israel» and there will be no withdrawal from these areas. We must struggle to force the enemy to submit to the will of peace, and in order to achieve freedom and independence and establish our state.

Fourth is the international conference: We and the Soviet Union agree on the necessity of holding an international conference as the proper framework for reaching a solution to the Middle East crisis. This Soviet position, however, has changed; they are now talking about an effective international conference instead of a fully empowered one. We also view preliminary negotiations as harmful in as much as these could lead to direct, bilateral negotiations outside the framework of an international conference.

I want to conclude by confirming that we differ with the Soviet Union, but within the framework of principled alliance and friendship. ●

The Uprising's Impact on Zionist Security

In our last issue we began a study of the Israeli security concept in terms of the Palestinian/ Arab threat, territory/«defensible borders,» settlements, demography, economic considerations and the integrity of the Zionist state. In this issue, we will examine the impact of the intifada on the Israeli security doctrine.

The very outbreak of the uprising was a major challenge to Israeli security. Despite 20 years of intelligence work, the Zionist intelligence services failed to anticipate such an occurrence. The army's accumulation of highly sophisticated weaponry, in the wake of the 1973 war, proved to be useless in facing the enemy in Israel's «backyard». Repression was shown to be patently ineffective in deterring the Palestinian people's readiness to struggle to regain their rights. As noted by Joel Greenberg, Rabin had often reiterated the policy of «fighting terrorism» while enabling the broader population to carry on their lives without unnecessary friction with the army, but with the uprising collective punishment became the norm (*Jerusalem Post International Edition*, February 6, 1988).

New kind of War

The Israeli press was the first to recognize that there was a war on, which could have broad implications. In an interview with *Newsweek* (February 8, 1988), *Haaretz's* military commentator Zeev Schiff said: «We are facing serious security problems.... If there was a war, we would have to keep important forces in the territories to protect the Jewish settlements, roads and military places... Our intelligence network has to be completely reorganized to take into consideration 1.4. million hostile Palestinians. And if we don't act quickly to answer to the demands of Israeli Arabs for equality of rights, the enemy will be inside the country itself. Our security conditions could thus become very precarious.» In contrast, it was not until April 1988 that Defense Minister Rabin admitted that Israel was at war. By summer 1989, when West Bank Commander Mordechai began sending in helicopters to combat the activists of the intifada on a regular basis, this had become an established fact.

In «Gaza: This is no rebellion - it is war,» (*Hair*, December 18, 1987), Makram Khury Makhul described a local leader of the uprising as follows: «...I saw him in action, giving new orders, receiving new information, leading thousands of people against the army. Twice I saw the Israeli soldiers withdrawing.» Thus began the humiliation of Israel's most prized institution. Makhul tells how a group of soldiers were caught between burning tires and demonstrators; the soldiers escaped save one. «The

captured soldier was undressed... They didn't touch him bodily and he was set free with only his torn pants on him. They could have killed him... Some of them began dancing with ammunition in one hand and with the other making the «V» sign... When I asked them what they were celebrating, they replied, «This is the greatest humiliation of the occupation». (*Race and Class*, Spring 1988). If such a thing ever happened in the course of the Arab-Israeli wars, it went unreported.

In operational terms, the intifada moved the borders of the conflict back to 1967. Telling about his experience in the Gaza Strip, an Israeli soldier said, «Twenty-two years have gone by since the Israeli army entered Gaza and took it away from the Egyptians, and the soldiers still treat the place like enemy territory which they are involved in conquering. The fact that «the enemy» is composed mostly of women, old people and children does not attenuate the feeling of danger» (*Haaretz*, July 15, 1989). David Langsam, who stayed in Qabatiya in the summer of 1989, while his nephew was serving in the Israeli army in the same area, wrote: «Curiously, the Israelis - bristling with weapons - fear the unarmed Palestinians far more than vice versa. The tension in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is much greater than 12 months ago despite (or because of) the massive IDF presence and it is clear that Israel does not occupy the territories. Israel occupies small settlements on some of the hills and for moments in time holds the roads between the settlements and the highways as convoys of workers' buses led by jeeps speed through Arab villages. The occupied territories are already Palestine and every soldier I spoke with who has served there, regardless of political affiliation, agrees (*Guardian*, September 22, 1989).

Since the early days of the uprising there have been more troops in the 1967 occupied territories than when they were conquered. That the borders have been moved is also tangibly evidenced by the increased deployment of the border guards within the territories, in addition to elite units like the Givati and Golani brigades, originally conceived as frontline infantry. This occurred after the failure of the army to quell the uprising. Reservists made up the bulk of the troops originally sent into the territories, serving up to 65 days instead of the 47-day, pre-uprising annual average; they were deemed to be easily demoralized and too sensitive to the moral issues involved in combatting civil-

lians. Rabin recently said that 120 had refused service in the territories (*Middle East International*, July 22, 1989); all but four are reservists. According to the Israeli draft resisters organization, *Yesh Gvul*, 90 soldiers have been imprisoned for refusing to serve in the territories (*Al Fajr*, September 25, 1989). In early summer 1988, 12 army officers were removed from their posts in the Gaza Strip. In September 1988, 16 were arrested in connection with a scandal whereby 60 (some report more) wangled their way out of army service.

Sending in special units aimed to counter demoralization, but this generated new phenomena which affect the military's unity - the cornerstone of all Israeli security concepts. Paratroopers and other elite units are reported to be disgusted with the barbaric state of affairs reigning after the increased deployment of the Golani, Givati and border guards (*Al Fajr*, August 21, 1989). More recently, special companies have been established composed of 18 to 21-year-olds, to serve in the territories for three years continuously. According to *Al Hamishmar*, July 25, 1989, army elements describe these as a «greenhouse for exceptional acts,» referring to terrorization of members of these companies by their own colleagues.

By summer 1988 public statements by military officers made it clear that the manpower and resources being employed to confront the intifada were going to affect the armed forces' programs for combat training and weapons procurement. As Rabin was later to admit: «Riot control and running behind children throwing stones is not the most effective way to train a combat soldier» (*Jerusalem Post*, June 8, 1989).

It is clear that demoralization is not restricted to reservists or the ordinary soldiers. The July 1988 edition of *Israel and Palestine* reported that Chief of Staff Dan Shomron had the Defense Ministry translate into Hebrew a book which argues that French army's efforts in Algeria were doomed to failure; he distributed copies to all the generals under his command. Zeev Schiff (*Haaretz*, July 14, 1989) writes that the military sources who continue to say that the uprising is fading «suffer from the syndrome of Vietnam and Algeria, characteristic of armies trying to suppress a foreign population in revolt... There are several additional criteria besides the number of stones thrown at Israeli soldiers by which to examine the military situation. For instance, can an Israeli visit the vegetable market in Nablus or Gaza, as he could before the intifada? The uprising has removed the Israelis from Arab population centers... The deterrent capacity of the Israeli army against the Palestinian population is weakened, and desperate acts by individuals, like the case of the bus to Jerusalem, prove it.»

Decline of the army's stature

In *Haaretz*, July 16, 1989, Schiff wrote about the decline of the army command's stature since the start of the intifada, because it was «dragged into the crux of a political debate against its will and in this debate there can be no winners.» He notes that it is the first time ever Israeli citizens have attacked the army commander (as happened to Shomron at the funeral of an Israeli sol-

dier) and that politicians hint that the army's operational failure is politically motivated, i.e. that it does not want to win the war. Israelis expected that the war could be won in a single, quick operation, but Schiff says this is impossible. «Likewise, the general command is not acting as though it is a war that will have far-reaching strategic ramifications... the problem is treated as though it's a matter of ongoing security.»

Shomron also implied that the problem is related to political considerations when he told the Knesset Defense Committee: «We can isolate the activists, but we must be careful not to destroy the delicate consensus which binds the IDF in its daily battle against civilians» (*Jerusalem Post*, June 24, 1989).

Castigating the army's performance occurs in the highest political echelons. Trade and Industry Minister Sharon, speaking on Israeli radio, suggested Rabin should resign and said: «For 14 months, the security flaw continues, maybe the worst in our history (referring to the danger of a Palestinian state)... not one of us draws conclusions. No one is resigning, no one is sacked and nothing is investigated» (*Bissan Press*, February 3, 1989). Prime Minister Shamir's call for Jewish self-defense, after Israelis were attacked by Palestinians in May, was not only a threat to the masses of the uprising. It was a challenge to the army's monopoly on defense affairs as institutionalized by Ben Gurion when the Zionist state was established. Shamir later elaborated on this in an interview with the *Jerusalem Post*, May 9, 1989: «We hear Jews saying that the state must provide security. I don't like to hear this. It is we who created the state: What is the state, some central body? Times are difficult, and each one must view himself as a partner to the national experience.» While this serves the Zionist right's aims of increasing extremist and settler violence against the Palestinians, it also opens a Pandora's box of questions in a state where the military and security institution has always occupied the pivotal position.

A sober assessment is offered by military historian Martin Van Crefeld of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. In an article entitled «The Era of Conventional Wars has come to an end» (*Haaretz Weekend Supplement*, May 12, 1989), he is quoted as saying, «The Israelis are living in an illusion that they still have an army. But that's a mistake. It's a disintegrating structure that has totally lost its deterrent capacity.» He bases his views on the fact that today sophisticated weaponry is less crucial than the motivation of the soldiers and their willingness to make sacrifices: «Now that there is controversy about our wars, this readiness has decreased, while among the Arabs, from whom we have taken everything, it is increasing all the time. This is an important component in deterrence.»

One cannot, however, conclude that the Israeli army will just fall apart. This is ultimately related to how Israel reacts to the continuation of the uprising and the questions this raises: Will consensus evolve for a political solution, or will Israelis maintain a garrison state at all costs? There are, in fact, indications that the army can continue despite the present dilemma. In the previ-



ously quoted interview, Schiff confirms that reservists are generally still reporting for service, regardless of their political views: «There are many cases in which commanders sent reservists home after finding that more men than expected have reported for duty.» The soldiers themselves continue to do what is required of them. One soldier said after serving in the territories: «The experiences here have pushed the left-leaning soldiers more to the right. Personally, I haven't changed my basic opinions, but on the smaller, more immediate issues of keeping order, I'm more hard-headed» (*Jerusalem Post International Edition*, February 6, 1988). A survey reported by Israeli radio on August 7, 1989, tells something about the composition of the army of the near future. The Education Ministry commissioned the survey to examine the motivation of future recruits, the first of its kind since the uprising began. It showed that 40% of future recruits «hate most or all Arabs;» 90% would volunteer if not drafted; and most high school students believe there will be another Arab-Israeli conflict in the future.

Security reduced to absurdity

At least verbally, the military seems to now be adopting a more long-term approach to dealing with the intifada. In April, West Bank Commander Mordechai declared: «We will act as if the intifada is going to last for 100 years.» In September, army strategists told the cabinet that plans should be made for the military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip at least up until the end of the century.

Whether such plans can succeed is another matter. What the intifada has achieved until now is not so much threatening Israel in the military sense, but reducing to absurdity all previous conceptions of security, deterrence, etc. This threatens the coherence of the military institution which until now has made only tactical adjustments in dealing with the Palestinians under occupation. Although it was proven futile in suppressing the intifada, repression is still the dominant trend in Israeli security thinking about the occupied territories. This is clearly seen in the detention policy. Six new detention centers have been established during the uprising, plus the fact that 13 temporary detention centers, dubbed the chicken coops, are being used to hold people for months at a time. Yet in June, the Israeli press reported plans to open a new center in Khan Yunis due to overcrowding in Ansar II and III. In July, *Haaretz* ran the following headlines: «The IDF plans to double the containment capacity of prisons in the territories...expectations are for 20,000 captives next year according to an estimate that the intifada will continue and even become more dangerous. The annual expense of the 8,600 present captives is 219 million Israeli Shekels.» As the move began to extend administrative detention terms to one year, rather than six months, Rabin announced the intention to increase prison capacity on Israeli army radio, June 10th, saying: «Reality forces us to hold more people because those (in prison) have proved not to be deterrent enough.»

Failure to find new ways of dealing with the problem stems

from Zionism's colonial roots which require covering up all traces of the Palestinian reality in order to justify Israel's existence and practices. In this sense, security has always been a euphemism for suppressing the Palestinian identity, and this concept is so imbedded in the state and its workings as to seem virtually irreversible, despite all rational indications that the present approach is failing. Thus, it is no surprise that a Tel Aviv University poll found that 70% of the Israeli public favors harsher measures against the intifada, even as President Hertzog was saying on Israeli radio, May 9th: «If we damage our democratic system, our very existence is at stake,» referring to the settlers taking the law into their own hands.

Transport Minister Katsav expressed the prevailing concept of security when he said on Israeli radio on May 11th: «The free movement of Palestinians in sovereign Israel has become dangerous.» Ben Dror Yemeni, an Oriental Jewish peace activist, writing in *Yediot Aharonot*, May 15, gave an interesting perspective on the demonstrations that broke out after attacks on Israelis: «Unlike the organizers, the participants in these demonstrations in Ashdod and Ashkelon do not care about Greater Israel, as they do not care about greater Hungary. What they want is to get rid of the constant fear that a son, brother or neighbor will not come home because of a cold-blooded murder. At the bottom line, what they want, even if unconsciously, is to separate ourselves from the intifada, from the assaults, from the murders, the damage which is caused to us and to them» (*Israel and Palestine*, July 1989). One can only note that such sentiments could be channeled into support for either withdrawal or mass expulsion of Palestinians. A report from the Tel Aviv University Strategic Studies Center referred to a poll which showed that Israeli public opinion was becoming more hard-line on short-term issues (increased support to repression vs. the intifada), even while becoming a Palestinian state rose to 25%, compared to 20% at the onset of the intifada). However, despite the failure of a military solution to the intifada, 38% think increased military strength is a better means than negotiations for preventing war with the Arab states, as opposed to 27% who thought so in 1987 (*Guardian*, August 26, 1989).

In fact, the stage had been set for public acceptance of brutality not only by Zionism's long colonial history, but also by immediately preceding events. In «Occupier's Law and the Uprising,» Raja Shehadeh writes: «It was the report issued at the end of October 1987 by the Landau Commission, the Public commission of inquiry set up by the prime minister to look into the activities of Shin Beit (the General Security Services) in the wake of the (Izzat Nafsu case, that went farther than any previously published official document in condoning on security grounds excesses and practices at odds with international law) (*Journal of Palestine Studies* 67, spring 1988). The commission ruled that a «moderate measure of physical pressure is not to be avoided» when other means fail, justifying the open secret of Shin Beit torture

which was only brought up in this case because the victim was a Circassian officer in the service itself. In a previous case, involving the killing of two Palestinians captured in an operation in 1984, Israeli Attorney General Zamir had resigned because his intention to have the killings investigated was blocked by the government and Peres in particular. An opinion poll at that time showed that 70% of the Israeli public backed Peres against Zamir. «Facing a choice between security and the law, they chose security,» commented the *Washington Post*, June 8, 1986.

The enemy outside

Under the impact of the uprising, previous Zionist security failures have been revived. This is clearest in Lebanon which Israel invaded in 1982, on the assumption that by eradicating the PLO there, mass resistance in occupied Palestine could be easily squelched. This have failed, the opposite now seems to be the case: The uprising has spurred more struggle against the Zionist occupation from South Lebanon, after some years of preoccupation with secondary conflicts. Though not at the level aspired to by Palestinian revolutionaries, guerrilla attacks increased against Israel in 1988, as compared to 1987. In the first half of 1989, UNIFIL counted 98 attacks against the IDF/SLA in South Lebanon. By the summer, Israel was involved in a virtual war with major attempts to cross the border to occupied Palestine occurring roughly weekly, several Israeli soldiers killed and ongoing attacks by the Lebanese resistance. In early August, the Israeli army reported 31 attempts to cross the border in the last two years, claiming only two of them to have been successful.

Israel continued its policy of «pre-emptive strikes,» launching an average of two air raids on Lebanon each month over the past two years. As Syria reinforced in Lebanon in conjunction with the war between General-Aoun and the nationalist forces, the statements of Israeli officials showed that Zionist policy on security had not changed: In mid-August, Likud MK of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, Yehoshua Saguy, stated, «Abandoning Lebanon's air space and coastal waters means a direct threat to Israel's ability to defend its borders.» At the same time, Israel widened its circle of declared enemies in June, by banning Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Hezbollah as «terrorist» organizations on a par with the Palestinian resistance organizations.

At the same time, Rabin has been forced to admit failure to extinguish popular resistance on two fronts: «We have learned the hard way, that it is impossible to uproot terror easily.» According to his count, 30 new anti-Israeli guerrilla organizations have been formed since 1982, while the army budget for fighting insurgents from Lebanon has grown four to seven times (*Haaretz*, September 11, 1989).

The Jordanian front has also become a cause for concern. As of October 1989, there had been nine attacks against the Israeli occupation from across the Jordan River, four of them involving Jordanian soldiers acting on their own, and the rest launched by

the Palestinian resistance. After rockets landed near an Israeli settlement in early September, a prominent settler said on Israeli radio, «It's like we're returning to the situation of 20 years ago.» In September, Israel was reported to be installing an early warning system along the Jordanian border like the one on the Lebanese border, whereas before observation posts and mobile patrols were deemed sufficient.

The uprising has focused the bulk of concern on the previously ignored Palestinian core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, but Israeli officials and experts continue to devote attention to the Arab aspect of the confrontation, though to a lesser degree. An article of the former intelligence officer, Alouph Harevan, of the Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem was written in 1988, but appears oblivious to the ramifications of the uprising. Its main conclusion is that «Israel's strategic situation in the 1980s has been better than in any previous decade» due to the absence of an Arab war coalition (*The Jerusalem Quarterly*, Winter 1989).

During the period of the uprising, Israeli statements about the «Arab threat» have been fewer and usually related to specific things. The January 10, 1988 *Sunday Times* reported that Israel was considering an attack on a «secret Syrian nerve gas factory.» Israeli officials have expressed concern about newly acquired Arab ballistic missiles, Syria's acquisition of a more advanced bomber from the Soviet Union, and the «Iraqi danger» after the Gulf war. In February 1989, Shomron said that «Israel must take the war to the enemy,» threatening a return to the policy of «pre-emptive strikes,» never abandoned in relation to Lebanon. However, the possibility of Israel staging a larger military operation, as a diversion from the intifada is fraught with risks. The failure of Israel's assassination of Abu Jihad to stop or even lessen the intifada, proved that limited surgical operations are futile.

However, advocates of «pre-emptive strikes» remain, as exemplified by Reuvan Pedatzur's July 14, 1988 article in *Haaretz*, which argues for a return to this policy as practiced in 1967, in view of the Arab states' acquisition of more sophisticated weapons, and because such strikes constitute an essential and permanent part of Israel's strategic doctrine. Military production also continues, to enable such options to be realized if decided upon: Israel's development of the Arrow missile in cooperation with the US; the May 1988 test launching over the mediterranean of the potentially nuclear-tipped Jericho II missile; the September 1988 launching of the first reconnaissance satellite in the Middle East; and the May 1989 unveiling of the Markava Mark 3 tank which can be sealed for chemical, nuclear or biological warfare.

Territory - Security drawback

The most immediate and clear-cut effect of the intifada on Israeli security thinking is diminished belief that more territory means more security. This was dramatically highlighted by the May 1988 emergence of the Council for Peace and Security, grouping roughly half the senior officers of the reserves, and headed by Aharon Yariv, former head of military intelligence



and now director of Tel Aviv University's Center for Strategic Studies. These officers call for withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, based on conviction that continued occupation is a security liability, and that peace would better serve Israeli security interests. Most favor demilitarization of the West Bank except for an early warning system and permanent Israeli intelligence facilities on the mountain ridge.

Israeli newspapers were soon reporting that 70-80% of the present general staff believe somewhat the same. Three Labor ministers, former chiefs of staff, including Rabin, were said to concur that the occupied territories are a burden in strictly military terms (*Manchester Guardian Weekly*, July 17, 1988). A poll commissioned by the new council showed that 20% of Likud voters would support territorial compromise if Israel's defense needs were guaranteed. A poll published in September 1988 showed almost 60% of Israelis supporting some kind of territorial compromise, whereas pre-uprising polls generally registered no more than 40% for this option.

There remains, however, a group of senior officers who insist that the 1967 occupied territories are decisive for Israeli security. An example is the former intelligence officer and reserve general, Lavran, who emphasizes Syria's growing air power and other Arab states' acquisition of ballistic missiles. This, in his view, makes it imperative to maintain control of the 1967 occupied territories to provide «strategic depth» that would limit Arab temptation to deal Israel a decisive blow (*Report on the Balance of Power in the Middle East*, 1988).

Such thinking parallels Zionism's historical position on territory, which is today upheld by Likud, as evidenced by Shamir's leadership. He is managing affairs of state so as to maintain the status quo, considering this preferable to a peace settlement that would involve concessions leading to a Palestinian state which is seen as a threat to Israel's very existence. Labor's historical slide to the right and the existence of the national unity government means that this position predominates in practice. This is the most immediate reason that the combined impact of the intifada and the PLO's peace offensive has not evoked any decisive change in official Israeli policy. Speaking on Israeli radio, January 16, 1989, Foreign Minister Arens spelled out why the government would not be affected by the new PLO policy: He said that Arafat's recognition of Israel was contingent on a Palestinian state, self-determination and return, which together mean the destruction of Israel.

Even those who advocate territorial compromise hedge their bets considerably. The generals of the Council for peace and Security prefer that the occupation be superseded by autonomy or federation of the West Bank with Jordan, rather than Palestinian independence. Abba Eban is perhaps the most famous Israeli to have reversed his position on territory. From being the foreign minister of the 1967 war, justifying territorial acquisition on security grounds, he today finds the status quo untenable, and advocates peace and withdrawal. However, an interview with *Middle East*, May 1989, is enlightening. Asked if the PLO was required to recognize Israel's pre-1967 borders in

order to meet Israeli security needs, Eban answered: «You can't guarantee Israel's security needs by newspaper or radio interviews. There has to be meticulous negotiations about every square kilometer, about every hill, about every valley. And the only thing that's quite obvious is that you cannot secure it by any mechanical formula, such as going back to previous lines - because the previous lines, for example, were dividing Jerusalem...I believe Israel would be well advised to make only those territorial changes which do not involve exercising our jurisdiction over additional populations in any large numbers.» Here Eban mixes security concerns with Zionist territorial ambitions concerning Jerusalem, and does not depart from the Alon Plan (Labor's traditional model) which involves annexation of as much as one-half of the West Bank.

Most of the advocates of territorial compromise are somehow tied to the traditional Labor concept, and Rabin's position exemplifies where that leads. Although reportedly viewing the territories as a military liability, he has repeatedly proclaimed that Israel will never return to the pre-1967 borders. His direction of the war on the intifada serves to delay any withdrawal at all costs. According to *Haaretz*, September 4, 1989, he even has a problem with Mubarak's proposal that the army should withdraw from the polling areas during elections in the occupied territories.

Even those prepared for substantial withdrawal and dealing with the PLO under certain conditions (Peace Now, Mapam, the Citizens Rights Movement) have avoided support to those refusing service in the occupied territories. This would be the most powerful means of pressuring the Israeli government towards territorial compromise, but this «left» is still caught up in the Zionist security rationale where the military remains a sacred cow. Crefeld, the military historian previously quoted, wants immediate withdrawal. He says, «Everybody agrees there has to be a great wall between us and them, and the only argument between Ghandi (Ze'evi, the Moledat MK who advocates «transfer») and Shulamit (Aloni of the Citizens Rights Movement) is on the location.» He would prefer transfer himself, but finds it unrealistic, so he is for a wall «located where we choose, so that there are as many Arabs as possible outside.»

Years of Zionist ideology and practice, cloaked in security jargon, have erected a barrier in the minds of even those Israelis who aspire for peace. This leaves a big gap between recognition that the occupation is untenable, and the obvious conclusion of unconditional withdrawal. A few Israelis have written about this problem. Meron Benvenisti, former mayor of Jerusalem, who became famous for his studies about the occupation, says, «...The Israelis cannot acknowledge the fact that there is another collective identity or entity on this land...That is why, whatever is being said in Algiers or Stockholm does not mean anything to the majority of Israelis.» He is not optimistic about the uprising breaking the impasse: «...the uprising has already become a way of life for both Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs (and I include among them Israeli Arabs). The communities in the land are slowly adjusting to the low-intensity inter-com-

munal strife whose dynamics will continue the confrontation but in no way further the...peace process» (*American-Arab Affairs*, Winter 1988-89).

Yitzhak Klein and Joel Peters of the Hebrew University outlined a «Strategy for Peace» in the *Jerusalem Post International Edition*, January 21, 1989, noting :«The reluctance of mainstream Israeli opinion to recognize the Palestinians themselves as Israel's main adversary, and hence its main potential interlocutor, has a logic of sorts. To recognize that the Palestinians are Israel's legitimate opposite number in the dispute means acknowledging that they are entitled to *something* by virtue of their existence.»

Repercussions beyond the military

From failure to end the uprising militarily, and the resulting demoralization and loss of stature of the army, stem all the other questions about Israeli security, pertaining to settlements, international relations, demography, relations to the Palestinians in the Zionist state itself, economic considerations, etc., which we will address below.

Settlements - A provocation

Our examination of settlements in the first part of this study showed that their role in security is ambiguous; they are more related to the drive for control of the land than to defense needs. The uprising, and the international push for a political solution that accompanied it, led part of the Zionist leadership to clarify their position, as when Rabin said on Israeli radio, May 2nd, that settlements don't necessarily contribute to security with the exception of those in the North, Golan Heights, Jordan Valley and Arava, but that they do symbolize the «return to Zion.» However, the overriding phenomenon is polarization on the role of settlements, which parallels the controversy concerning territorial compromise.

Those who continue to oppose any withdrawal also maintain that settlements have a security role. Shamir and Sharon are the most outspoken proponents of this line. In an interview printed in the *Washington Report*, September 1989, Sharon said that the following in answer to a question about self-rule for the Palestinians:«...people must understand, the settlements are not an obstacle to peace. On the contrary, the settlements are a very important factor in our security. Once we manage to accomplish our plan, the possibility of granting that autonomy becomes wider». Here it is obvious that security is doublespeak for demographic and military control that would preempt any concessions to the Palestinians. On May 7th, Arens stated that the settlers are the main obstacle to a Palestinian state.

If such statements are often rhetorical, let us look at what the Israeli government has actually done concerning settlements, as an indication of the importance attached to them. In the first year of the uprising, two new settlements were established in the West Bank, and the year ended with the Labor-Likud coalition agreement - a compromise - to create eight more settlements within a year. In 1989, at least two new settlements have been

established, while the settler compound in AL Khalil (Hebron) was expanded. Throughout the period, the Housing Ministry has pushed for building new houses in existing settlements. While this is clearly a drop compared to previous years, we cannot attribute it solely to the impact of the uprising, for settlement-building had already slowed in the mid-eighties due to economic constraints. This summer there was extensive land confiscation in areas of the West Bank for expanding settlements, and roads to settlements and military outposts, while the government was reported to have a new plan for expanding settlements in Jerusalem.

Ironically, the intifada has actually spurred an attempt to revive the settlement boom begun by Begin's government in 1977. An article in *Haaretz*, September 1, 1989, was entitled:«Despite the intifada. Also because of it.» It reported that the number of Jewish settlers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip grew by 10.3% in 1988; a slightly higher increase is expected this year; and more families have applied for places in settlements than could be accommodated. This increase is much less than in earlier years; still it is noteworthy because of its political connotations. As explained by one of the new settlers:«I'm very fearful, but we came to settle here despite the intifada. The intifada has strengthened our feelings that we have to show the Arabs we aren't afraid of them.» Another family quoted in the article had moved from Hadrea (Israel), because Palestinian Arabs had begun moving into their neighborhood. In the West Bank, they said, «We don't see Arabs and don't have social contact with them.»

Although the uprising was from the start directed against the occupation army, the settlers obviously sensed it as a threat because it reasserted the Palestinian ownership of the land they had colonized. This was seen in a dual response: Settler attacks on Palestinians began four days after the uprising; meanwhile, there was a settler exodus from the Gaza Strip, where many of the settlements serve as weekend farms, and the residents have houses in Israel as well. The second phenomenon contrasts sharply with data from the height of the settlement drive when 90% of applications were for places in the Strip, it being considered relatively safe (*Al Fajr*, June 17, 1983).

In purely physical terms, the settlers have not been particularly threatened; in the first year of the uprising, they killed at least 16 Palestinians and wounded 107 more, whereas three settlers were killed, one of them shot by a fellow settler supposedly guarding her, in the march on Beita village in April 1988. Despite these objective realities, the impact was immediate:«Suddenly it is dangerous to drive on the roads and it is impossible to sell a flat. With more time passing, the situation becomes worse. The settlers suddenly found themselves on the margin of the Israeli society. They are aware that the society is no longer willing to pay for them.» wrote Dan Margalit in *Haaretz*, May 12, 1988. ●

To be continued in the coming issue.

The War for Legitimacy

Despite the signing of the Taif accord, prospects for resolving the Lebanese crisis remain uncertain, as was accentuated by the assassination of newly elected president Rene Mawad. However, the speedy election of Elias Hrawi, to replace him, demonstrated the resilience of the moves towards ending the sectarian war.

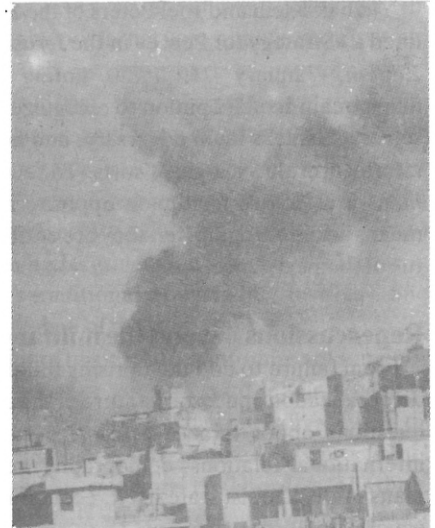
As a consequence of the savage fighting that occurred in August, and a good deal of Arab and international pressure, the tripartite Arab committee announced the resumption of its efforts vis-a-vis Lebanon. The foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, Morocco and Algeria held a meeting on September 13th, at the Saudi Red Sea port, Jeddah, to reassess the situation. It was their first meeting since July 28th, when they had declared the suspension of their efforts, blaming Syria for blocking their mission. At Jeddah, a seven-point plan was announced, calling for an immediate, comprehensive cease-fire and the creation of a Lebanese security committee, and urging the Lebanese parliament to convene in order to draw up a charter for national reconciliation.

Morocco's King Hassan II, Saudi Arabia's King Fahd and Algeria's Pres-

ident Shadli Ben Jedid - the three Arab leaders responsible for the committee - were well aware of the connection between the issue of a cease-fire and the political deadlock. For this reason, their envoys shuttled back and forth between Beirut and Damascus, trying to break through the vicious cycle, so that the Lebanese parliament could hold the proposed meeting. Due to great efforts to return Lebanon to normality, and active support of international power, especially the Soviet Union, the six months of savage shelling finally ended with an Arab League-sponsored cease-fire which took effect on September 22nd.

The Taif accord

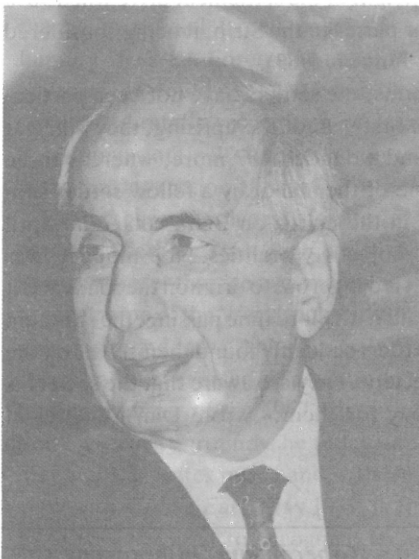
With Lebanese, Arab and international support, 62 members of the Lebanese parliament met in Taif, Saudi Arabia, on October 1st, to discuss the charter of national reconciliation drafted by the Arab three-state committee. This was the second stage of the committee's plan which had succeeded in bringing about a cease-fire in Beirut a week before. Most of the speeches delivered by Lebanese deputies at the opening session expressed the need to replace the language of fire and destruction with that of dialogue. Since the failure of the Taif meeting would have opened the way for renewed fighting, the legislators seemed determined to reach an agreement, adopting the «no failure» slogans raised by the former prime minister, Saeb Salam, at the opening session (*Al Safir*, October 2nd).



Two main points - political reform and the sovereignty clause (pertaining to Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon), were subject to heated debate among the deputies. Only the section of the peace plan dealing with the necessity of Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon, was unanimously approved without any wrangling.

In reference to the sovereignty clause, George Saadeh, leader of the right-wing Phalangist Party, and the most prominent of the Christian deputies in Taif, said: «We are asking for guarantees, clarifications and amendments on the sovereignty clause. If we don't agree on that clause, the rest of the agreement collapses» (AP, October 16th). Tension eased after the intervention of Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al Faisal who crowned his moves with a successful visit to Damascus. He convinced the Lebanese parliamentarians to postpone reforms instead.

After 23 days of debate, 59 of the 62 deputies present, including the representatives of the Phalangist Party, voted for the accord on October 23rd, despite the opposition of General Aoun who termed it «a crime that legalizes Syria's presence in Lebanon» and «an agreement leading to hell» (*Guardian*, October 24th). In addition



to increasing the number of seats in the Lebanese parliament from 99 to 108, to give Moslems equal representation, the document stated :«The tripartite Arab committee has reached full agreement...with Syria for ending its security duties (in the Beirut area) within a period not to exceed two years» (*Al Safir*, October 25th). It also called on the Lebanese parliament to meet in Lebanon no later than November 7th, to ratify political reforms agreed on, and to elect a new president for Lebanon.

The big challenge

The broad-based agreement in Taif served to accentuate Aoun's isolation and the fact that his «war of liberation» had been a disaster, since he managed neither to win it, nor to turn it into an all-Lebanese war against Syria, as he had planned. Tactically, the general initially announced his acceptance of the Taif talks, hoping they would fail. His dilemma lay in the fact that if he rejected the plan, he would thereby be defying the Arab and foreign states that had backed such an accord. Yet, to accept it meant relinquishing his aims and admitting that the fighting and suffering of the past six months had been in vain. When the accord was adopted, it was obvious that Aoun was the big loser, and he stepped up threats against Christian members of parliament and religious figures who had backed reconciliation. According to Aoun, «The people will not have mercy on those who are negligent» (*International Herald Tribune*, October 16th). His isolation even in the «Christian camp» was further exposed when 24 of the Christian deputies held a private meeting in Taif to discuss Aoun's stance. They issued a statement, saying: «It was a choice between a continuation of the destructive war and peace (the Taif accord)...It was a wise choice if compared with other negative rejections» (AP, October 24th). Aoun rejected George Saadeh's challenge to a televised debate, saying: «There is no need for any dialogue about the Taif

accord. I shall not allow it to go into effect» (*Al Safir*, November 14th).

Due to uncertainty as to what Aoun might do, the majority of MPs stayed out of the areas of his control until the parliament session; East Beirutis delayed their return to Lebanon until the session itself, lest the general hold them hostage to prevent a quorum for electing the new president. When the parliament finally convened at the Qlaiaat air base in northeast Lebanon on November 5th, and elected Rene Mawad as president, Aoun's supporters attacked the residence of the patriarch, Nasrallah Sfeir, the highest Maronite authority in the country, because of his support to the presidential elections. They insulted him and forced him to kneel and kiss a poster of Aoun.

Seventeen days after being elected, President Rene Mawad was assassinated in a bomb attack that killed 23 other people in West Beirut. Many suspect that Aoun and Israel were behind the killing. He had refused to recognize the legitimacy of the new president on the pretext that he himself had dissolved the parliament prior to the elections. Aoun further vowed to block the formation of a new government, warning Christian politicians not to join the government which Mawad had mandated Prime Minister Salim Hoss to form: «No one will form a government of national unity...Those who take part in the Hoss cabinet had better stay in the land of Hoss» (AP, November 15th).

Despite the atmosphere of terror and despair which the assassination was intended to create, the Lebanese parliament reconvened two days later and elected Elias Hrawi as President of Lebanon. A few days later, a broad-based cabinet was announced as the result of Hoss' efforts to bring representatives of the various political factions together in the government, in line with the compromise reached at Taif. Still, Mawad's assassination and Aoun's continuing threats give an idea of the uncertainty which the national reconciliation process is facing. Aoun

continues to refuse to vacate the presidential palace at Baabda, to allow the new president to take up residence there.

Many questions can be raised about the future tasks of the newly formed legitimate government in Lebanon, but there are some immediate tasks that cannot be avoided. Prime among them is the removal of Aoun, who has been officially fired and replaced as Lebanese Army commander, but has yet to abdicate. The new government is charged with determining how to depose him, and this is a task which will enjoy the full support of the vast majority of Lebanese, since it is obvious to all that Aoun is the main internal obstacle to reuniting and stabilizing the country.

Yet however urgent, this task is only a beginning to pave the way for reforms in the unjust, sectarian political system whose disintegration allowed the recurring rounds of violence, and the interference of outside forces, which aggravated the internal crisis. Israel, of course, stands as the external force with greatest interests in Lebanon's disunity and weakness. It was not by coincidence that Israel escalated air attacks on Palestinian positions in Lebanon in the days between Mawad's assassination and the election of Hrawi. In view of Aoun's untenable position in most of Lebanon, there is a possibility that he will embark on more direct coordination with Israel and its proxies in the so-called South Lebanon Army. For all these reasons, enforcing Israeli withdrawal from all of Lebanon would be the greatest single step towards unity and stability that the new government could take. However, past experience shows that enforcing Israeli withdrawal is too great a task to be accomplished by the diplomatic endeavors of the Arab League or Lebanese government alone. This, coupled with the fact that the Taif accord provided for partial reform, but not abolition of the sectarian system, set limits for what the new government can accomplish, despite all its good intentions. ●

Jordan's Elections

An Experience in Limited Democracy

Sixty thousand banners decorated the Jordanian capital, Amman, on October 14th, marking the beginning of the first parliament elections in 22 years. This was called following the popular revolt in April, that was touched off by the mounting economic crisis. The King of Jordan was forced to announce the resumption of parliamentary life. He could not but see that this protest was a clear sign of rapidly growing disenchantment with the regime's policies of suppressing democratic freedoms and obstructing all change conducive to social justice.

Aiming to relieve the mounting political and social tension that had culminated in the April revolt, the regime allowed the elections, having in mind a superficial exercise in democracy. Yet, the very holding of the election campaign served to revive political life in the country. This shows the masses' need for real change on all levels, and their hopes of regaining the democratic freedoms that have been suppressed for decades.

The Parliament's Status

The parliament, being in principle the most powerful institution in the country, has the right to rule on all laws and budgets. By a two-thirds majority, it can override a royal decision. While the King appoints the cabinet and prime minister, the parliament can throw them out - a right it has exercised in the past, such as in 1951, and in 1962 when the parliament withdrew confidence from the government. (In 1951, the parliament was suspended when it objected to the government's program. In 1956, it was suspended after it withdrew confidence from Samir Rifai's government in opposition to its policies. Note: Samir was the father of Zaid Rifai whose

government was forced to resign by the April revolt this year.)

On the other hand, the King has the right to suspend the parliament and rule by emergency powers, as he did for ten years, from 1974 to 1984. The King also has the power to postpone elections - due to be held every three years - for two years. he can thus avoid



having elections when he feels they would pose a threat, as happened in 1986. In 1986, the King extended the parliament for two years, until 1988, whereupon he suspended it just before his decision to sever ties with the Israeli-occupied West Bank. All in all, the legislative body in Jordan has been ineffective for fifteen years. As of July last year, it lost half its members

(Palestinians supposedly representing the West Bank).

Preemptive Measures

In itself, the holding of the elections was a democratic experience for the Jordanian people. The regime, however, diligently worked to keep them from being fully democratic, by taking some preemptive measures.

The decision to allow parliamentary elections was not coupled with the abolition of the emergency and martial laws in force since 1967. This was carefully designed to enable the regime to devastate the election in case the results weren't to its interest, or in case of future differences between the parliament and the cabinet, since the emergency laws give the cabinet the right to suspend the parliament «in times of difficulty.»

With martial law still in effect, political parties remain banned. Thus, candidacy was on an individual basis - in itself a violation of the people's right to organize. Moreover, the law requires anyone who wishes to run for office, to pay 500 Jordanian dinars, non-refundable. It is clear that this measure is directed against the toiling masses: peasants, workers, craftsmen and low-income employees, thus limiting membership in the parliament to bourgeoisie.

In addition, the law prohibits candidates from reaching out to their constituency through public meetings or other means they might choose. The only means are forums organized through government channels. In a couple of instances, even authorized debates between candidates were prohibited. This happened in Al Balqa'a district, when the mayor issued an order on October 12th, forbidding any debates due to the harsh criticism

leveled at Zaid Rifai three days earlier in the Salt district.

The most dramatic of the preemptive measures was the arbitrary arrest of 12 political activists on October 4th and 5th - ten days before the beginning of the election campaign. They were accused of membership in the PFLP, and of providing aid to the PFLP's attack on Israeli targets across the Jordanian borders. It is worth mentioning that none of the twelve detainees are military cadre; all of them had only recently been released from detention. Needless to say, these arrests aimed at depriving them of participating in the election campaign.

Another political activist was arrested on November 1st - one week before the election. Another was arrested on November 6th, as he was returning home from an election rally in Amman. As of yet, no charges have been pressed against them. On November 8th, the day of the election, four people were arrested in Al Baqa'a camp with no charges, and the interior minister denied knowledge of their arrest. There are reports of many others who are still sought by the intelligence. Their homes and their families were ordered to hand them over to the authorities.

The Campaign

Political parties have been banned in Jordan since 1957; accordingly, paragraph E of article 18 of the election law prohibits citizens affiliated to political parties from running for parliament. However, on October 17th, the government announced that it would not enforce the ban for this election, as part of the regime's attempt to give the election a democratic facade. Despite intentions, this contributed to increasing the masses' enthusiasm to get as many as possible of their true representative into the parliament. Out of 662 applicants, 652 candidates were accepted; seven were rejected for legal reasons and three withdrew later. The parliament has 80 seats, and they are allotted by sect. Out of 652, there were

574 Muslims competing for 68 seats, 63 Christians competing for nine seats, and 15 Circassians competing for three seats. Among them were 12 women, who gained the right to run in a nation-wide election in 1974 but were exercising this for the first time, since no elections have been held since 1967.

On the other hand, for the first time since 1950, citizens of the West Bank neither voted, nor had candidates in the Jordanian elections.

A broad range of candidates demanded an end to martial law, legalization of political parties, amendment of the election law, and greater democratic freedoms: freedom of the press, and of movement and to form trade unions. On the economic level, many called for developing an independent national economy, fighting unemployment, and prosecuting officials responsible for the drop in the dinar's value and the price hikes that eventually led to the April revolt. On the international level, some candidates demanded confronting the imperialist schemes in the area, and not submitting to the conditions of the IMF and other world capitalist centers; they called for more cooperation with the socialist countries. Support for the Palestinian uprising was unanimously voiced by all candidates.

The Islamic movement, headed by the fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood, was well organized and highly motivated in this election. In addition to the slogans above, they raised others such as «Islam is the solution», as well as their infamous antagonism towards socialism and women. As a solution to unemployment, the Muslim Brotherhood called for barring women from the work force.

The dispute between the Islamic movement and the women candidates and other pro-women's rights candidates was highlighted when the former filed a court case against Toujan Faisal, one of the 12 women running for offices, charging her with apostasy. Later the court dismissed the charge.

The above-mentioned measures

taken by the regime make it clear that this election could not have marked a radical departure from the prevailing system, regardless of who won seats in the parliament. However, even within these confines, the election campaign gave an unprecedented occasion for public debate. The results give a relatively representative gauge of public opinion to be carefully studied by all those forces aspiring to mobilize the masses for genuine national democratic change. This is the case because the elections themselves actually proceeded in a democratic manner. The surprise was that although 16,000 security men were deployed throughout the country, they did not interfere with the citizens' voting; nor was there falsification of ballots.

Results

Fundamentalist Islamic forces, mainly the Muslim Brotherhood, won 32 seats - almost half the parliament. Leftist and nationalist candidates won 16 seats. Nine former ministers and MPs won seats in this parliament. Of the remaining seats, the majority were won by the young educated elite which is replacing the traditional figures of the past. Most of them can be assumed to be loyal to the regime, although there are also a number of independents whose positions are as yet unclear.

Though the outcome is disappointing for the national democratic forces, it is far from a surprise. Besides being the largest single organized group in Jordan, the Muslim Brotherhood is the only organized force that has been allowed to operate all these years. It has built up a mass base chiefly via the religious institutions, spreading its thinking through the mosques, etc. Moreover, it is a cohesive, internally united force. In these elections, it fielded more candidates and conducted a more high-powered campaign than any other force.

In contrast, the leftist and nationalist forces have been the main target of the regime's repression over the years, ►

right down to the recent arrests. The parties are banned and the public forums in which they work, such as trade unions, are themselves subject to restrictions, banning and other harassment. Moreover, some of these parties have suffered from internal problems, and both before and during the election campaign, coordination between the leftist and nationalist forces was minimal or non-existent.

With the Muslim Brotherhood controlling almost half the parliament, it can obviously exert a significant influence on legislation and government policy if it so chooses. The goal of the movement was clearly stated by Sheikh Hammam Said: «We will work hand-in-hand...to make this country an Islamic country in all means and to make Islam the source of all its laws» (AP, November 6th). This has led some to raise the question of whether the Muslim Brotherhood will constitute the opposition, or whether it will work to destroy the relative democracy that brought its candidates into the parliament. In actual fact, however, the Muslim Brotherhood is the reserve force of the regime, serving to keep the society conservative and thus underpinning the monarchy. Past experience shows that, despite radical-sounding rhetoric, the Muslim Brotherhood will not oppose the regime on significant national issues concerning the conflict with Israel, or the Palestinian question. Certainly, their program is contrary to the measures needed to resolve the economic and social crisis in Jordan, and there is a danger that they will work for social legislation that will restrict the masses' social rights, and be used by the regime to suppress the progressive forces. Already, during the election campaign, the Brotherhood was the main responsible for whipping up conservative attitudes whereby no woman candidate was elected.

The other pole to be evaluated is the leftist and nationalist forces. Though they failed to gain sufficient seats to exert much influence on policy, the elections have created a new situation

for their work. They have new opportunities to use their voices in parliament to raise public debate and consciousness concerning domestic and regional problems - from the need for radical economic reform to Jordan's role in relation to the Palestinian question in the era of the intifada. There are new somewhat broader margins of democracy for work among the masses, in unions, etc. Concurrently, there is a new chance to structure the coordination among them in order to pursue parliamentary and mass work more effectively.

The new situation has a dual nature: On the one hand, the regime was forced into the elections by the combined impact of the April revolt and the Palestinian intifada, forcing it to reevaluate its policy in a number of fields. On the other hand, the regime is trying to turn this to its own advantage, developing a more democratic facade in order to enhance its own stability and prestige. The ability of the nationalist and leftist forces to chart a course that utilizes the new democratic opportunities to press for fundamental change, is a crucial factor in the coming period.

The parliament convened on November 27, in order to elect its president. The independent MP Suleiman Arrar won over MP Yusef Al Mubaideen who was nominated by the Muslim Brotherhood. In this session, a committee was formed to respond to the king's speech.

The Council of Notables (Senate) - which includes forty prominent figures (retired officials, officers and heads of leading tribes, etc.), appointed by the king, also convened to elect a president and form a similar committee to respond to the King's speech. This council functions as a supplementary legislative body. Its main function is to discuss issues of concern to the parliament and give its opinion.

After parliamentary life was revived in Jordan, the Council of the Nation - which includes members of both the parliament and the Notables' Council - held its first session, where the King

gave his speech. In it, he promised to lift the ban on political organizations. This decision is conditioned on the fact that lifting the ban is not contrary to the new national charter which in turn must conform to the constitution. He mentioned that a royal committee will soon be formed to write the text of the national charter, which will then be ratified by a popular referendum.

The king said that the new government would revive the existing laws that have become an obstacle to social progress. This will provide the special courts sufficient leeway to exercise their duties more efficiently. He confirmed that the government will combat corruption, economic crime and criminals.

On the political level, the king justified severing ties with the West Bank by saying that the uprising had begun a new stage in the Palestinian struggle: The Palestinian people have declared their adherence to the land and their struggle for their just cause. The decision was also a result of the Arab wish to accentuate the Palestinian cause as a people's struggle for national independence. The Palestinian leadership has welcomed it. He emphasized that the Palestinian leadership has diligently worked to advance the peace process, and that Israel is the party that is putting obstacles; he reaffirmed Jordan's commitment to an international conference.

It was noteworthy that martial law was not annulled, even though the revival of parliamentary life means that the country could very well be administered without it. The king promised to punish those who commit economic crimes and are proven to be corrupt. This in itself is positive because it's a popular demand, but what about those who contributed to the deterioration of the economy, and the present economic crisis?

In general, the speech sounded good, but the point is whether it will be put to practice. The future will be the judge of how sincere these promises are.

Palestine at the UN



Since the onset of the Palestinian intifada (December 9, 1987), the United Nations has adopted more resolutions concerning the question of Palestine than in any other two-year period since April 1947, when the question was first raised by Britain. Within the first six months of the intifada, three Security Council resolutions were passed condemning the brutal Israeli practices in the occupied territories. The Zionist state has been faced with more international criticism of its human rights violations and total disregard for international law, than in any other period since its admission to the UN on May 11, 1949.

Originally, the UN was viewed by Palestinians as having a largely negative role, primarily due to the fact that

it adopted the plan to partition Palestine, whereafter the projected Palestinian state never materialized. The establishment of UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency) in 1949, was seen as an attempt to passify the Palestinian people via refugee aid, without dealing with their national identity. At the time of Israel's admission to the UN, the power base of this international organization was essentially in the hands of the US and other imperialist countries; this picture was to change later.

The positions of the UN General Assembly have changed over the years, primarily due to the change in its composition. Many former colonies achieved independence and became full member nations of the UN, thus

changing the balance of power. Complementing this was the establishment of the non-aligned movement in 1961, which played a role in affecting the character and stands of the UN. In this context, the development of the Palestinian liberation struggle enabled the PLO to influence UN positions on the Middle East.

In November 1974, the UN General Assembly defined the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people in resolution 3236, which have been reaffirmed each year since then; it also granted observer status to the PLO. UN agencies also benefit the Palestinian people. As of late 1983, UNRWA was aiding 1.9 million Palestinians, and employing a staff of 17,000, most of them Palestinians. UNESCO has supported beneficial programs for Palestinian children, while it was in the framework of the UN that the meetings of non-governmental organizations on the Question of Palestine, began.

44th session

The 44th session of the UN General Assembly, which convened its essential debates from September 26th until October 12th, spent three weeks listening to speakers from approximately 154 nations, and reviewing the past period's events with the aim of arriving at international consensus.

Many of the topics addressed in New York were on the agenda only weeks before at the ninth non-aligned, 102-nation conference which began on September 4th. The topics on both events' agendas were varied: The Middle East, the environment, international debts, the war on drugs, Namibia's transition to independence and so on. UN committees and subcommittees also convened.

In light of the current changes on the international level between the US and the Soviet Union, the 159 diplomats and officials making up the UN General Assembly looked forward to making progress on issues previously left unresolved.

The Visa Revisited

Among the issues raised prior to the convening of the General Assembly was the question of whether or not the US should grant Yasir Arafat, President of the State of Palestine, a visa in order to attend the 44th session. In fact, Arafat hadn't requested a visa to the US, but nevertheless, with the turmoil which ensued last year over Shultz's refusal to grant him a visa, on the pretext that the PLO is backing anti-Israeli «terrorism,» and the subsequent transferring of the UN debate on Palestine to Geneva, it was a topic uppermost in many minds.

Many pro-Israeli organizations lobbied against a visa claiming that, «Mr. Arafat has not been cooperating with American Middle East peace efforts» (*Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, October 1989). This excuse is, of course, ludicrous since the PLO is trying to facilitate the peace process. If the denial of visas is based upon this criteria, then the majority of Israeli officials would be denied visas. Shamir blatantly violates US wishes and international consensus by continuing to build Israeli settlements in the occupied territories; he has excluded residents of East Jerusalem from his election plan and yet he is *cooperating* with the peace process? Another provocative question is simply that if the US can hold political talks with the PLO, then why can't it grant Arafat a visa?

Meanwhile, 136 members of Congress (58 members of the House of Representatives and 68 Senators) urged US President Bush and Secretary of State James Baker, to deny Arafat a visa if he should seek one to address the General Assembly. Claiming that Arafat has not lived up to his promises of last December to renounce terrorism and recognize the right of Israel to exist, they stated, «The PLO is on a collision course with the peace process. Arafat and the PLO must reaffirm and implement in deed and in word, the statement of just nine months ago» (AP, September 27).

Subsequently, the US State Department approved many visa applications for PLO officials. The play-up of the visa issue dominated the press due to US and Zionist efforts to use the concept of terrorism in an attempt to discredit the intifada and the PLO at the UN; and promote the Shamir plan.

Resolutions

Three resolutions concerning the Palestinian question were passed in the recent period. In late August, the Security Council adopted a resolution deploring Israel's expulsion policy, after the expulsion of five Palestinians from the occupied territories. The resolution passed 14-0, with the US abstaining.

A second resolution was passed by the General Assembly on October 6th, condemning «Israel's escalated brutal measures against Palestinian civilians» in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The resolution was passed by a vote of 140-2 (the US and Israel voting against) and six abstentions. The resolution also expressed «profound shock at the escalated brutal measures taken against Palestinian civilians, the indiscriminate killing of unarmed Palestinian civilians and the recent actions of ransacking the houses of defenseless citizens in the Palestinian town of Beit Sahour» (AP, October 9).

The third resolution was passed by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), concerning economic development in the occupied territories (later in text).

Yet another resolution was taken up at the UN while the General Assembly was taking up the annual report of the credentials committee. This committee is the one which recommends the seating of all members of the world body. Libya raised a point of order, saying that Israel's credentials should not be accepted. This has been brought up annually since 1982 by different Arab countries, contending that Israel should be expelled since it is an international outlaw defying UN resolutions that call for withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories.

But rather than this point of order being discussed, Denmark submitted a resolution that there should be no discussion on this. The vote on the Danish resolution was 95-37, with 15 abstentions, as reported on October 17th. Last year's vote was 95-41 with seven abstentions. Although only the 15-member Security Council has the authority to expell or admit a new member, the General Assembly can bar a nation from participating in the assembly's work, as is the case with South Africa.

Still another resolution was submitted by Kuwait to the UN Security Council on November 7th concerning Israeli repression in the occupied territories. The resolution called for international delegations to the occupied territories to see first-hand the Israeli practices against the Palestinian residents. It also stated that Israel's actions are in violation of the 1949 Geneva Convention which calls for the protection of civilians in times of war. Citing examples of inhumane Israeli practices, the resolution named the siege of the West Bank town of Beit Sahour. The resolution called for Israel to return the confiscated property. The vote was 14-1, with the US using its veto to block the resolution.

The US has historically used its veto power to protect Israel from international isolation, and Israel has used this backing to totally disregard UN resolutions. The US has exercised its veto power 29 times since 1973, to block condemnations of Israel in the UN Security Council. The UN General Assembly has the power to pass resolutions, but is powerless to implement them. Nonetheless, UN resolutions are of immense importance in terms of moral support to the Palestinians on the international level.

UNESCO

Another arena of struggle, alongside the UN General Assembly's 44th session, was the month-long UNESCO (United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization) conference

which was faced with a PLO request for admission as a full member state; currently the PLO holds observer status. UNSECO's Director-General Federico Mayor tried to avoid this debate, stating that UNESCO should limit itself to increasing aid to Palestinians living in the occupied territories. Therefore, prior to the 159-nation conference, UNESCO's executive board recommended that the request be postponed until 1991. Shortly thereafter, the general conference, which is the highest decision-making body, confirmed this decision, but ruled to give the PLO a bigger role in UNESCO.

Israel objected to the decision, saying that the issue of Palestinian membership should be completely removed from the agenda, while the US and Britain said after the conference they would review their decision about returning to the body. The US stated that if Palestine (which over 100 nations have recognized as an independent state) was admitted, that would remove any possibility of its return. (Both the US and Britain quit UNESCO in the mid 1980's, claiming that the organization had become too politicized, spent too much money and was poorly managed under the former director.)

FAO

Coinciding with the opening of the UN debate on Palestine, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization held its conference in Rome. On November 29th, the FAO approved a resolution which called for (1) cooperation with the PLO in distributing food to Palestinians in the occupied territories, (2) the PLO to assist with economic development in the occupied territories, (3) opposition to the Israeli confiscation of Palestinian land and expropriation of Palestinian water resources, and (4) the FAO to include the occupied territories in future programs. The vote was 96-2 (Israel and the US), with 14 abstentions.

The US threatened to cut off funds to the FAO if the resolution were

to pass. This resolution can be viewed as a PLO victory, particularly in light of the pressure and monetary threats which the US has historically resorted to.

Upgrading the PLO's status

Two days before the debate on Palestine was to begin, the PLO announced that several Arab countries planned to introduce a resolution in the General Assembly that would upgrade the PLO's observer status to observer nation. Presently, the Vatican, North and South Korea, Switzerland and others hold this status. If this resolution were to pass, the PLO would still be unable to vote or address the General Assembly unless invited to do so.

The PLO's announcement elicited an immediate US reaction: The State Department threatened to cut off \$216 million (one-fourth of the UN budget) which the US is obligated to pay annually. The US also owes the UN more than \$500 million in unpaid regular budget dues and payment for peacekeeping operations.

The resolution was formally introduced on November 29th, which not only opened the UN's debate on Palestine, but is also the UN-declared international day of solidarity with the Palestinian people, as well as the date of the UN decision to partition Palestine in 1947. The vote on this resolution was postponed on several different occasions.

Eventually, the PLO and the Arab countries postponed indefinitely the resolution for several reasons. First and foremost was the unprincipled US threat to cut off funding to the UN, which is used as a lever to pressure the international body, and in turn the PLO and the Arab countries, in order to have them withdraw the resolution. Another reason for the postponement was that Egypt and Morocco were not in favor of the resolution, thus not presenting a united Arab front, even at the UN.

In general, the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, particularly

over the past two years, have been basically politically solid, condemning Israeli repression and supporting the Palestinian cause on various levels. On the other hand, UN Security Council resolutions have been limited to the most blatant Israeli violations of human rights, such as expulsions. This in large is due to the negative role the US plays in the Security Council and its use of the veto.

Concerning the Arab position, many Arab countries have proposed resolutions in the world body, but much more can be done on the international level. For example, the struggle for upgrading the PLO's status demanded a united Arab stance, but the historical link between US imperialism and the reactionary regimes led some of them to take negative stances vis-a-vis the question of Palestine. The Arab countries have not been effective enough in meeting the requirements of the intifada. What is needed now, more than ever, from the Arab states and the international community is to work for the isolation of Israel, as is the case with South Africa. This type of punishment is only fitting since Israel has displayed flagrant disregard for UN resolutions.

With increasing international consensus on the convening of a fully-empowered international peace conference, and awareness of the plight of the Palestinian people, the intransigence of Israel and its ally, the US, remain as stumbling blocks. This alliance is being exposed consistently at the UN. With increased condemnation of Israel by the international body, and resolutions such as 43/177 of December 1988 citing the usage of Palestine in place of the designation PLO throughout the UN system, the Palestinian people and the intifada are achieving more and more gains internationally, compounding Israeli isolation. Without a doubt, these gains are due to a large extent to the Palestinian intifada in the occupied territories; with its continued escalation, more can be expected.

This is the continuation and conclusion of the Mahmoud Darwish poem which we began printing in our last issue. It was written in March 1989 and published in Arabic in *Al Karmel* no. 32.

Tragicomedy of Daffodils and Silver



Can we build our temple on one meter of the world?
Can we pray for the creator of
All names, enemies and the hidden secret in a fly?
Can we bring back the past
 To the margins of our present,
 To kneel in worship on our rock
 For the one who recorded time
 in the gospel without writing?
Can we sing a song on a heavenly rock
 To remain firm with the myths
 which we couldn't change but by altering the clouds?
Can our watery mail come on the beak of a hoopoe?
Can it bring back our message from Sabaa,
 To make us believe in fables and mysteries?
...In exile, there is no room for steeds souring up
 To peaks, falling down to the abyss
There is room for horsemen urging nights
All nights are dark
Death is murder by night.
... You anthem! Take all the elements!
Raise us epoch after epoch
Let's capture from man's history
What may bring us back
From this long, illogical journey
 To the place - our place.
Raise us on saber tips to look at the city,

You know the place better,
 You know the strength of the elements in us,
 You know the times better...

Lead me to a rock!
 I want to sit near the distant guitar!
Take me to a moon!
I want to know how much remains of my exile!
Take me to a chord
 Pulling the sea to the wandering land!
Take me on a trip
 Not full of death!
Take me to a rain
 Falling on the tiles of our lonely house!
Take me to myself!
 I want to attend my funeral on my birthday
Take me to my duty as a martyr
 Shrouded in the violet of martyrdom!

Come back they did
 But without me...
Take me there, there, far, far away!
...Come back they did
 To the houses of their images.
Restore they did
 silky steps over bright lakes
Restore they did
 What dropped from the lexicon;
Rome olives in soldiers' dreams;
The Torah of Canaan buried under
 the temple ruins between Tyre and Jerusalem;
The path of incense to Qureish
 coming from Sham of the flowers;
The eternal deer married to the northern rising Nile,
 To the savagely virile Dijle
 While rendering Sumaria immortal.
They were together
They were together: fighting, defeating, being defeated.
They were together: marrying each other,
 giving birth to opposites, to the insane tribe.
They were together: Allied against the North;
 Raising a bridge over hell
 For the transcendence of the spirit in all of them.
Return they did to war over reason.
Whose faith has no logic, no spirit...

Can we inherit creativity from Golgatesh
 who failed to find the reed of immortality,
 and from Athena thereafter?

Where are we now?
 The Romans have to detect my essence in marble,
 Have to retore the world's center to Rome,
 Have to give birth to my forefather
 from the exellence of the sword.
 Still we have taken from Athena
 What makes the ancient sea our anthem
 Our anthem is a stone rubbing the sun in us,
 A stone that kindles our ambiguity,
 How to catch what is forgotten!
 Christ came back to the holy supper,
 as we wished.
 Mary, too, returned to him
 With her long braid to cover our Roman theater.
 Does the olive carry enough sense?
 To fill his palms with peace,
 his wounds with mint,
 To flood him with the light of our souls?
 ... You anthem! Take all the meanings
 Rise with us, wound by wound
 Bandage oblivion
 Rise as high as you can towards man
 Near his initial tents
 Brightening the cooper-covered dome of heaven
 To see
 What is not seen by his heart
 Rise with us, fall with us to the place
 You know the place better
 You know the time better.
 ... In the passages, they are ready for the siege,
 Their camels went dry of thirst
 They milked mirages...
 Milked mirages to drink the essence of prophesy
 from the image of the South
 In each exile, there is a citadel
 with broken doors
 To shut them in...
 Each door opens on a desert stretching
 along the long course of travel
 From wars to wars
 Each desert thorn has its Hajer
 who fled to the South
 They passed by their names
 engraved on metal and stone
 They were not able to recognize their names
 Victims never believe their guess...
 Names went unrecognized
 Erased by sand here,
 Covered by sunset plants there,
 Our history and theirs are one,
 Nations would unite their paths of thought
 But for different birds on banners!
 Our end is our beginning
 Beginning is end

And Land
 like language
 inheritable is...
 If the double-horned were single-horned,
 If the universe were bigger,
 Orientals with their stone tablets would go farther
 Occidentals much deeper
 If Caesar were a philosopher
 The small world would be his mansion
 Our history is our history...
 The palm tree of the bedouin can extend to the Atlantic
 On the way to the Atlantic to quench our fatal
 thirst for rain.
 Our history is their history
 Their history is ours
 But for the difference on the date of doom!
 Who could unite destinate land
 without the sword decorated by ardour?
 Nobody...
 Who has returned from a journey to flowering infancy?
 Nobody...
 Who has written his autobiography
 removed from its opposite and from heroism?
 Nobody...
 An exile with gems of memory...
 Reducing eternity into a time-embracing moment,
 Is a must
 ... Who knows?!
 Maybe they wrote their names on their names.
 In the silver of the olive
 Remember they did
 The first poet who tempered their sky.
 You, Aegean Sea, take us back!
 Family dogs have howled
 They want to take us along the wind...
 Victory is death,
 Death, victory in Hercules...
 Martyrs' steps are home.
 We are the ones who came to come and win...
 Soothsayers referred to the North...
 They asked not of our wives.
 The dead are dead,
 Who remembered his house
 killed further numbers of
 old women and girls
 Threw the infants of the city
 into the terrible abyss
 To come back in time
 from Satan's Troy.
 Did we betray our conscience?
 Why then did our wives betray us?
 Steady conscience was our crossing bridge,

A vessel full of incense and perfumes
 of the charming Helen for the wives.
 Victory, like defeat, means death;
 Crime may lead to virtue
 You sea, hark!
 You decorate the victims with their murderer,
 You old sea!
 Take us back to the dogs barking in our first land.
 you old sea, continue adventures looking
 for what's lost of our fleet,
 for the old fishing boats,
 for the men who have become
 coral reefs on the bed.

And we?!
 Take us back from wars of defending royal thrones
 To the beds of our women,
 To the green poplar tissue in ash
 or in the visions of our poets.

We need a beach to land by the hazel tree at home,

Light - such light is not enough
 to pick mulberries.

...Over there they were
 In dialogue with the waves
 They wanted to look like victors
 coming back from battles
 under the Arch du Triumph.

Exiles were never in vain
 Ours, too, was not in vain.
 The dead have died with no regret.
 Entitled are the living to inherit
 all peaceful winds.
 To learn opening windows,
 To see what the past has done to their present,
 To weep in quiet lest enemies
 hear their breaking chinaware.

You martyrs were right:
 Home is more beautiful than the way to it,
 In spite of the flowers' treason.
 Yet windows never open the heart's heaven...
 Here and there, exile remains exile.
 Never in vain were we exiled
 Our exiles never went in vain
 Land
 Like language
 Inheritable is!

...They were not like captives,
 They didn't pretend to own the martyrs' freedom
 They didn't get rid of their summer solitude.
 Why then did they set the fire of their solitude
 to the far-off mountain?
 Why then did they disappear when there were no
 paths running down to the vales?

The echo may attract the initial shepherd;
 These may find the traces of their voices,
 of their clothes,
 of the age of their arms,
 of the tunes of their flute.
 On every nation they built an epic
 to look like the heroes;
 In every battle one of their heroes fell;
 Yet rivers have their ways.
 The past is no longer the same
 To inherit a little up...

...Upon high waves, the waves of seas
 and deserts,
 They used to raise islands for living.
 Having defended my fatal journey,
 I defend my anthem is the shattered shade
 of palms,
 Out of my non-existence, I'll walk again
 towards existence - their poet says.
 Come back they did.
 I'll leave to the far off,
 to the lemon blossom,
 the rain-broken bridges over Azraq.
 Hurry up! Cross, you anthem reciters!
 If you can restore the horses' neighs.
 Cross, then, singers!
 Breathless horses chase my heart
 which is jumping out of hand over dams.
 Behold! We are ourselves!
 Who can alter us?
 Come back or not
 We remain within...
 A single day with no death
 A single night with no dream,
 Enough to make us reach the port
 burning with the last rose
 As if come back,
 The sea lies near their finger tips,
 by the bed
 They saw their houses beyond the clouds,
 They heard their bleating goats,
 They felt the horns of fairy deer...
 They made a fire on the hill
 They exchanged cardamon seeds
 They made cookies for the holiday.
 Remember? Don't you?
 These days of exile there?
 They danced beating the bags
 Ridiculing the story of the far-off exile
 and a country to be deserted by love.
 Do you remember the siege of Carthage?
 The Fall of Tyre,
 of the western kingdoms on the

Syrian coast,
 The big death in Dijle
 when ashes flooded both city and ages?
 «Look Saladin! come back we have!»
 Look for your children!
 From the very beginning the story was pushed
 back into the ages of farce
 One day tragedy may turn to comedy,
 comedy to tragedy...
 Among the daffodils of tragedy
 They ridiculed comic silver.
 They went on wondering:
 What dreams will remain for us
 Knowing Mary is a woman?
 They used to smell of plants
 Sprouting from the walls in spring
 Renewing their wounds,
 Bringing them back from all exiles,
 The sting of buckthorns
 is like the serpent's bite
 The scent of mint is exile coffee...
 An outlet for sentiments at home!
 Arrival!
 Applaud they did:
 Their barking dogs,
 Their bleating goats,
 Their tale-telling grannies,
 The ancient ploughs,
 The sea caressing clusters of
 onions hanging over old weapons.
 What happened happened.
 Husbands jested with mourning widows:
 Stop the tears of mourners, dancers, weepers!
 Let's talk of racing hearts with flying steeds
 towards the tempest of memories,
 Let's talk of Hercules' firmness
 in the last drop of his blood,
 in the madness of mothers,
 And let's be him!
 Let's be anti-Ulysses when the sea is raging
 Let's keep on telling, whenever we tell,
 about the Kurdish leader's call
 to the hesitant Arab:
 Give me a sword!
 I am ready to pray for the prophet,
 for all his kin and wives,
 I am ready to pay the tithe in full.
 ...Much did they laugh:
 Prisons may look nicer than exile gardens
 They saw their windows approaching
 their jesting,
 With roses of fire along the banks
 What happened happened,
 They are ready to jump down stairs;

to open memory safes, chests of clothes
 To brighten door handles now
 prepare the rings then
 With days fingers grew thicker,
 eye sockets redder
 Their faces are no longer there
 on the rust of mirrors and glass
 All right!
 When they arrive after a while
 before the anthem,
 The garden will grow wider
 They will look back:
 We are still ourselves!
 Who can take us back to the desert?

We'll teach the enemy a lesson:
 In agriculture, how water springs from stone
 In the warrior's helmet we'll plant peppers
 On every slope we'll grow wheat
 For wheat is always broader than
 the borders of stupid empires
 at all times...
 We'll follow the habits of our dead;
 We'll wash years of rust
 off the silver of the trees...
 Our country has no choice but to be ours,
 We have no choice but to be hers
 but to be her fauna, flora and stone
 Our country is our birth
 our grandfathers, our grandchildren
 Lovely kids lightly walking over soft feathers,
 Let's make a violet fence
 around her fire and ashes
 She is ours
 We are hers
 She is heaven
 She is hell
 No difference -
 If we can, we'll teach the enemy pigeon-breeding.
 We'll rest in the afternoon under the
 shady vines
 Surrounded by sleeping cats
 among splinters of light
 Along with dreaming horses,
 with drowsily ruminating cows
 With cocks alert
 For the wind is still full of hens.
 We'll take a siesta under the shady vine tree.
 How tired we are!
 How tired we got of desert and sea air...
 ...On their backs
 They dreamt of arrival
 Because the sea freed their fingers
 and their dead



Then suddenly they saw
 The myrtle of the hero lying at
 his last step.
Is it here, by his gun, on the green,
 near his last threshold,
 That he dies?!

Here, does he die here?
Here and now, at noon sharp?
Now, when with the final sign of
 victory his fingers shook
 the gate of the old house
 and the walls of the island.

Now when he directed the last steps
 towards the door...
 and concluded the journey
With the return of our dead.
Beneath the windows of small houses
 the sea slept

... You sea! We have not sinned much
You ancient sea, listen!
Don't give us more than the others!
We know that the sacrifices are much more.
We know that the waters are clouds at the end.
... They remained the same.

They used to return and ask grim fate:
Does growth of vision, increasing the
 stars on our banner by one,
 require the death of a hero?

They failed to add a rose to the end,
They failed to alter the course of the
 ancient myths

 The anthem remained the same:
No choice! A hero has to fall
 on the verge of victory
 when the anthem is at its peak.

... You hero... a little patience!
Live another night!
Let's reach the end which bears an
 incomplete beginning crown;
Live another night!
Let's complete the bleeding dream-journey,
You crown of thorns, you crowned fairy dawn,
With an endless beginning...
A little patience, you hero!
Live another hour!
Let's begin the heavenly dance of victory!
We haven't won yet
Wait you hero, wait a bit
Why leave
An hour before arrival?
Wait!
You hero
In all of us
Wait!

... They still carry from their exile
 the autumn of recognition.
They still maintain a path to exile...
 Rivers running with no banks
There is still in them the feeble
 Narcissus, afraid of dying

Still they maintain what can alter them
If they came back and failed to find:
 The same red anemones
 The same soft fuzz of stubborn quinces
 The same daisies
 The same apricot tree
 The same tall ears of corn
 The same elder tree
 The same clusters of dried garlic
 The same oak tree
 And the same alphabet.

... They were about to approach the
 atmosphere of their houses...
Of what dream do they rise?
Of what dream are they dreaming?
Through what way do they enter
 gardens with gates
 while exile remains exile?

... They know their way to the end
 They kept dreaming,
Come they did from tomorrow
 to their present and they knew
What would happen to the songs
 in their throats...
 and they dreamed

Of the roses of the new exile
 on the house wall
 and they knew
What would happen to hawks
 after settling in palaces,
 and they dreamed
of their daffodil's battle with
 Paradise converted to their exile,
 and they knew

What would happen to the swallow
 when burnt by spring,
 and they dreamed
of the spring of their image
 which comes and doesn't
 and they knew

What would happen when the dream comes
 from a dream
 When the dreamer realizes
 that he was dreaming;

They know, they dream, they return,
they dream, they know, they return,
they return, they dream, they dream, and
they return.

PFLP Anniversary Celebration

On the fourteenth of December, 1989, about ten thousand people gathered at the Palestine hall in Yarmuk camp in a festive atmosphere amidst an array of Palestinian flags and banners to celebrate the twenty-second anniversary of the founding of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and the second anniversary of the intifada.

Present were representatives from the Palestinian resistance movement, the socialist countries, represented by

Cuba, Arab and international movements and the Syrian Baath Party.

Solidarity speeches were delivered by representatives from the Arab Socialist Baath Party, the Lebanese National Resistance Front, North and South Yemen, and the Socialist Countries.

The keynote speech was delivered by Comrade George Habash, the general secretary of the PFLP, the following are excerpts:

Habash began his speech by «conveying his greetings and the greetings of all those attending, to the heroic Palestinian people in Palestine, to the «children of the stones», to the people in the steadfast city of Beit Sahur, and Gaza, to the «Red Eagles» and «Black Panthers» in Nablus, to Palestinian workers, peasants, merchants, students, in every city, town, village, and camp in Palestine, to all those heroes who have redeemed to the Arab peoples their dignity and self-esteem, which was squandered by Sadat and others who succumbed to the Zionist onslaught, and to imperialism.

«We join hands with these militants, and raise together the banner of freedom, and march together with firm determination until the attainment of the goal and slogan which was raised two years ago--the slogan of «freedom and independence», and establish an independent sovereign state in Palestine, which would forge the beginning of a profound historical march encompassing the entire Arab nation.

Such events (anniversary celebrations) are opportunities to visualize with clarity the political situation which would enable us to determine a correct and precise political line, as well as the tasks, in order to utilize our full potential and mobilize our resources to carry out these tasks.

Now two years since the intifada began, how do we assess the intifada during these first two years? What are the obstacles which stand in the way of the establishment of a Palestinian state, and the achievement of self-determination and the right of return? What lessons can we draw so far, and specifically during the last year after the nineteenth Palestine National Council meeting? What are the direct tasks? What are the short-term tasks? What are the long-term tasks?»

The intifada unmasked the true nature of Zionism

In answering these questions, Habash indicated the «historical gains made by the intifada whereas the world has now come to know the true nature of Israel and Zionism, as well as the situation of the Palestinians, and the fact that any solution to the Middle East crisis cannot ignore the Palestine question...the intifada has compelled the Jordanian regime to sever its ties with the Palestinian West Bank,

which put the Israeli Labor party and the US administration before a new reality--only the Palestinians can speak about the future of the Palestinian occupied territories...We can summarize the many and important gains made by the intifada, in that it has transcended the slogan of the Palestinian state from the historical viability to the realistic feasibility...however it is also our duty in addition to recognizing the gains, to also point out the obstacles before the realization of the slogan-freedom and independence.

We should keep in mind that the long road still ahead is more arduous, when the PFLP said that the Palestinian state has become a realistic possibility, we were careful not to give the masses false hope. When we made that declaration, it was with the understanding that this entails a lot of hard work and a program to guide this work in the coming years, in order to bridge the gap between declaring independence and the establishment of a Palestinian state in Palestine.»

Habash alluded to Israel's intransigence, «No to recognizing the PLO, no to a Palestinian state, no to self-determination...Yes to establishing more Israeli settlements...» and the official US policy reflected in the strategic alliance with Israel and the US's refusal to take any step towards a settlement without Israeli approval.

Convening a new PNC

He added by saying, «In light of this dangerous and precarious stage, and in order for the PLO leadership not to give anymore gratuitous concessions, we in the PFLP call for the convening of a new Palestine National Council meeting in order to appraise the developments since the convening of the last PNC and the present critical stage, and to draw lessons so that this twentieth PNC will advance the intifada.

...We are in a dire need for such an assessment which should be conducted on the basis of consolidating the intifada and bolstering national unity. We should concurrently review the PLO's strategy during this period, and in particular in the diplomatic arena which constitutes the core of its activity. Although we in the PFLP feel that diplomatic

and political work is important, however, we feel that it is not and should not be pivotal.

Changing the balance of forces

...Our central task should be to induce a change in the balance of power on the local and regional levels which would compel Israel to change its stance, as was the case in the wake of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 when the Israeli army was forced to withdraw from Southern Lebanon as a result of the incessant struggle of the Lebanese National Resistance Front.

Affecting such a change in the balance of power can come about through first and foremost the continuation, anchoring and intensifying of the intifada through national unity, whereby the Palestinian people can confront the occupation forces as one...despite our harsh criticism of the present strategy of the PLO leadership, and our fear of the consequences of this strategy, we will nevertheless remain within the framework of the PLO and amidst our masses.

When we say intensifying the intifada we mean the United National Leadership (UNL), to safeguard it, and to give it the prerogative to lead the struggle of our people in the occupied territories, this leadership which exists in every city, town, village, and camp, with its various committees in every neighborhood, The UNL should be the umbrella which encompasses all of the unions, the unified workers union, the unified students union, the unified women's union...etc...a solution should be reached regarding the organizations which still remain outside the framework of the UNL including HAMAS.

Intensifying the intifada also means inflicting economic losses on the enemy, whereby the occupation will become a losing enterprise, although we should not expect Israel to change its strategy vis-a-vis the occupied territories as a result of economic losses, Israel was forced to change its strategy in Lebanon after suffering human losses which it could not sustain. I don't want to be misunderstood, for I do not agree with transforming the intifada into armed warfare because this will give Israel the pretext to commit mass genocide against the Palestinian people. On the other hand this does not negate armed struggle but complements it, which brings us to the subject of opening the borders of Arab countries surrounding Palestine to the Palestinian resistance.»

Habash cited the important role played by the Palestinians in Israel and Israeli democratic forces, in supporting the intifada, and discussed at length the issue of democratic reforms within the PLO, «Palestinians in diaspora constitute an immense force which could provide more support to the intifada on the political, military, informational, and financial levels. The PFLP will emphasize this issue in the upcoming PNC and for the first time will give the issue of mass participation precedence over the political issue.»

Regarding the prevalent political climate in the Arab world he said that «this situation is not eternal, we should look forward to the future,» and praised the developments in Jordan, namely the parliamentary elections which were

conducted in early November as a step forward which will undoubtedly have a positive effect on the intifada.

He warned Mubarak from continuing his conspiring against the Palestinian resistance, and stressed the importance of restoring the Palestinian-Syrian alliance, and called on the leadership of the PLO to give this issue priority since Syria is an Arab country which borders Palestine and whose own territory is occupied by Israel, this constitutes an objective basis for an alliance.

He also emphasized the issue of solidarity and alliance with the Lebanese Nationalist Movement, as well as the Islamic resistance.

Habash reiterated the PFLP's view vis-a-vis a solution to the Palestinian question through a fully-empowered international peace conference, «where we can realize the right of return, self-determination, and the establishment of an independent state.»

Habash concluded his speech by saluting «the Palestinian masses and the intifada on its second anniversary, the martyrs, the detainees in Israeli and Arab jails, the wounded, the United National Leadership, the popular committees, the strike forces, the Palestinians in the 1948 territories, and throughout the diaspora, Palestinian militants in resistance, the Syrian masses in the occupied Golan Heights, the militants in the Lebanese National Resistance, the Arab masses, the Arab National Liberation movement, the national liberation movements throughout the world, the people in the socialist countries, the peace movement, and progressive forces throughout the world, and to the true revolutionary and internationalist, comrade Fidel Castro.»

The first solidarity message was delivered by Ahmed Durgham, member of the national leadership of the Arab Socialist Baath Party (Syria).

Durgham began his message by saluting the PFLP on its 22nd anniversary, and the intifada on its second anniversary. «On the 22nd anniversary of the founding of the PFLP, the intifada enters its third year, stronger than ever...it is indeed a miracle to see unarmed young people challenging a fascist military institution.»

Durgham added, «We struggle for a just and comprehensive peace which would guarantee liberation of the occupied land, legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, including the right of return, self-determination and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state under the leadership of the PLO.»

Durgham was followed by comrade Mohamad Shatfa, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen's ambassador to Syria. Speaking on behalf of both PDRY and North Yemen, comrade Shatfa began his solidarity message by congratulating the PFLP on its 22nd anniversary adding that «the emergence of the PFLP in 1967 has brought about an important and prominent transformation in the course of the Palestinian national struggle, gaining the respect and admiration of all nationalists and militants. The PFLP has played a historically critical role in consolidating Palestinian national unity within the PLO and in consolidating the PLO's anti-Zionist and anti-imperialist struggle, as well as

the important role it plays in the daily struggle of the Palestinian masses in the occupied territories, as a major participant in the United National Leadership of the intifada.» Shatfa concluded his message by urging the Arab countries and Arab nationalist and progressive forces to shoulder their responsibility vis-a-vis the intifada.

The Lebanese National Resistance Front gave the next solidarity message which was delivered by comrade Nadim Abdul Samad. Abdul Samad began his message by stating that «the heroic intifada of the Palestinian people has put the Arab peoples, governments, and nationalist and popular forces to the test...in order to pass this test we must organize our efforts and pool all our resources in support of the intifada, until the realization of its goals of freedom and independence, and the establishment of an independent

Palestinian state under the leadership of the PLO.» He then called for the establishment of a united Arab front in support of the intifada, with a tangible program of action, which would be a nucleus for an international solidarity movement with the intifada. He added, «The Arab popular forces, when organized can force the Arab governments to lend the needed support to the intifada, and to consider it as a priority and a strategic issue.»

Abdul Samad indicated that «sympathy with the intifada alone will not deter Israeli barbaric atrocities...We believe that the continuation and escalation of our resistance against Israel in Southern Lebanon is the best way in which we can express our solidarity with the intifada.»

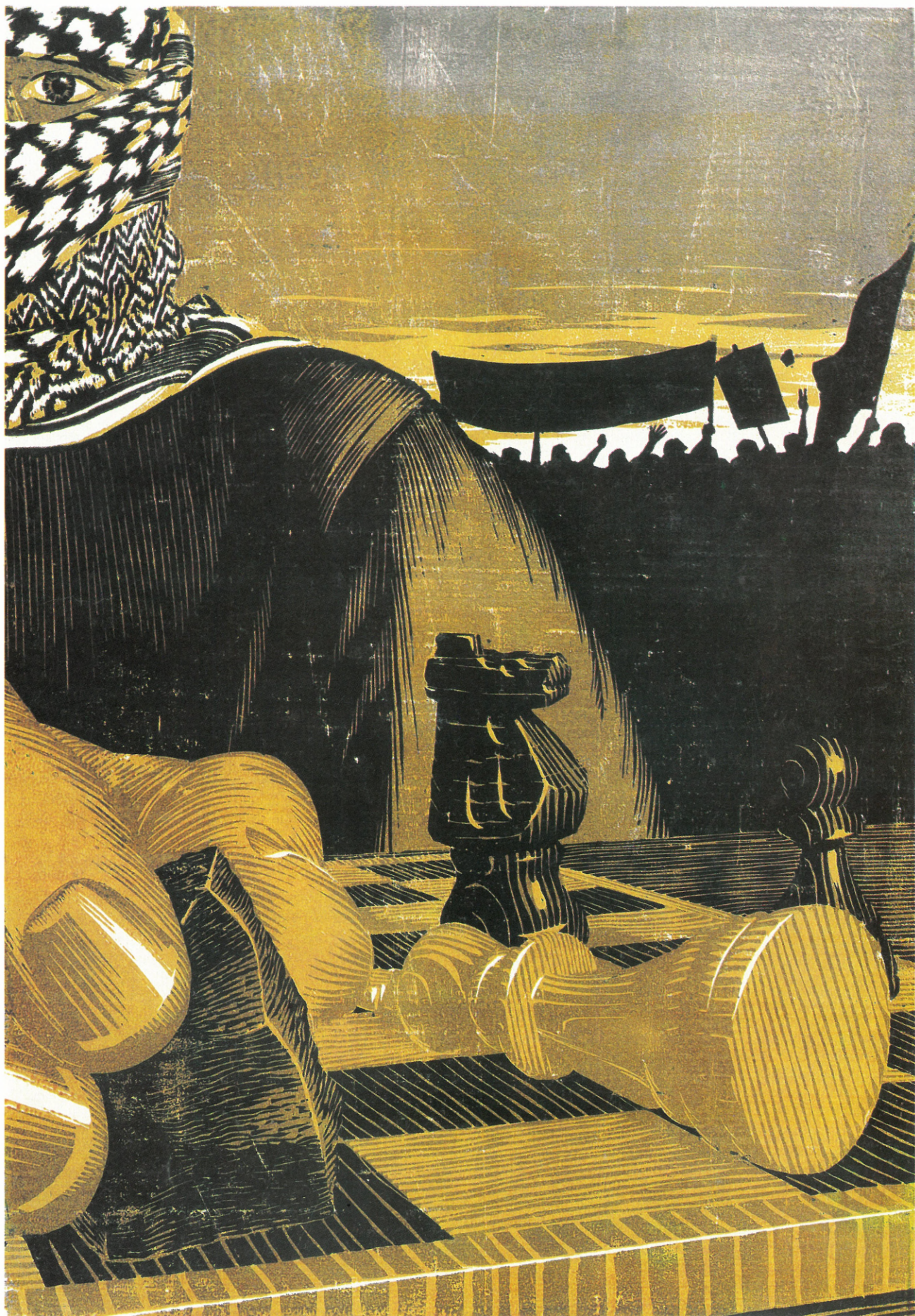
Concerning the Lebanese situation Abdul Samad pointed out that «the major stumbling block before resolving the issue of General Aoun's insubordination and unifying Lebanon has been and still is the stand of Western governments including the US administration, and Israel which is directly responsible for Aoun's existence and hence the continuation of the present state of affairs in Lebanon.»

Abdul Samad concluded his message by saluting the PFLP and the intifada.

The last solidarity message was delivered by Comrade Jesus Barero. Barero commenced his message by saluting the PFLP on the occasion of its 22nd anniversary, and the intifada on its second anniversary, and talked at length about the implications of these two events and their ramifications on the Palestinian arena. He reiterated the «unequivocal stand of the Cuban people in supporting the just struggle of the Palestinian people to achieve their inalienable rights, and particularly the establishment of the independent state.»

Barero added that «despite the escalation of Israeli repression, the Palestinian people have proven that there is no force in this world capable of forcing the Palestinian people to acquiesce or forsake their legitimate rights...the intifada has become a model for resistance, this model has proven the impossibility of defeating the Palestinian people.» ●





Woodcut by Jihad Monsour on the occasion of the 22nd anniversary of the PFLP