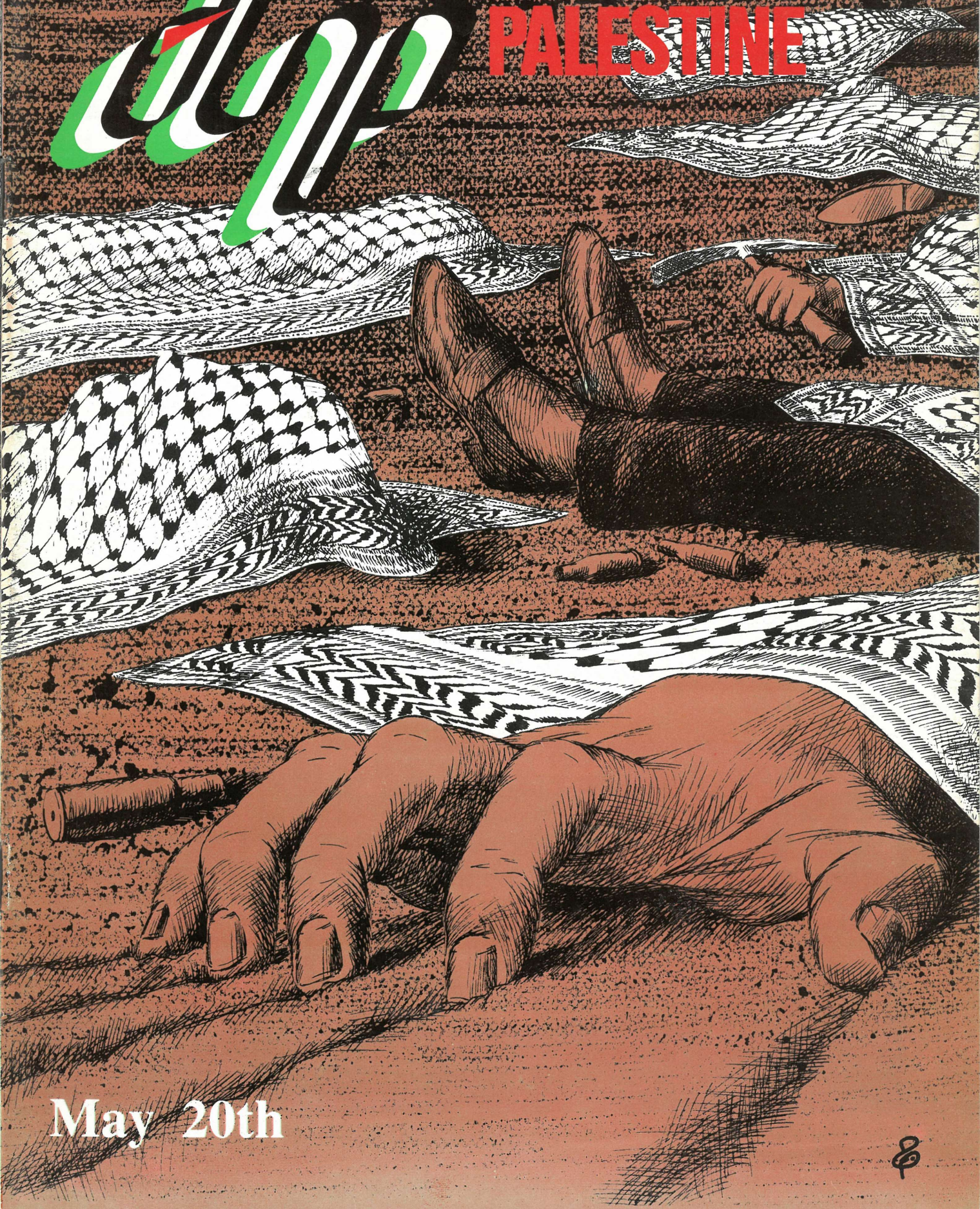


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# DEMOCRATIC PALESTINE



May 20th



*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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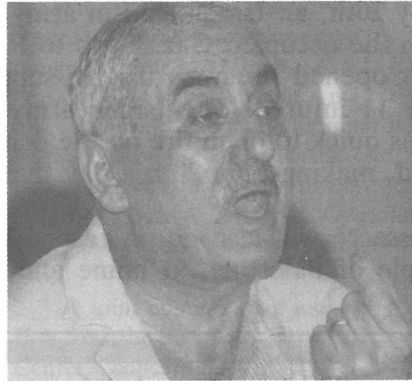
# PFLP Press Conference

The day after the May 20th massacre in occupied Palestine, Comrade George Habash, General Secretary of the PFLP, convened a press conference in Damascus. Below we print a summary of the main points.

Comrade Habash began by delivering a short statement stressing that this massacre demands more than an expression of pain, more than comforting words for the families of the martyrs and wishing a speedy recovery for the injured: «What happened yesterday requires that the PLO, the Arabs and democratic and progressive forces internationally shoulder their responsibility for thoroughly examining the implications of this tragedy and the duties to be carried out in this regard. This bloodbath means that the PLO must have no illusions about the Israeli position on the peace process. This would enable the PLO to begin serious work based on the perception that the intifada is the backbone of its activities. In this case, the PLO would begin to think of using all possible means of struggle to guarantee the achievement of our goals, namely freedom and independence.

«To this end, a new session of the Palestinian National Council (PNC) should be convened as soon as possible. This is especially needed since the influential forces in the PLO as of the 19th PNC, adopted a policy based on recognizing UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338. This policy led the PLO leadership to make more and more gratuitous concessions, thinking thereby to bring the Palestinian state within reach. Now, it is our right to ask where this policy has led the PLO. The answer is all too clear: It has led to more intransigence and arrogance on the part of the Zionist enemy. Hence, it is the duty of any sincere leadership to acknowledge this fact and to adopt another political line - one which makes the intifada the focus of its work. This means to escalate and support the intifada so as to force the enemy to yield to our legitimate national rights.

«The PFLP is calling for a speedy convening of a new PNC to discuss the issue of having HAMAS and the Islamic Jihad, and all Palestinian forces who remain outside the framework of the PLO or the United National Leadership,



join these bodies; at the very least, we must find the best means of coordination among the various Palestinian forces inside and outside of the occupied territories.

«We should support the intifada with armed struggle so as to inflict maximum losses on the Zionist soldiers. I do not mean that the intifada should be converted into an armed uprising, but we must fulfill our task across the borders... Thirty months after the eruption of the intifada, the Arab states surrounding Palestine have yet to fire a single bullet to support it. If the Arab armies are powerless, the PLO must undertake this task as it began doing in 1965.»

Comrade Habash called on the Arab summit to shoulder its responsibilities. He stressed that it is the Palestinians' right to call on the international community, specifically the UN, to provide protection for the masses by putting the occupied territories, including Jerusalem, under a temporary international mandate. «We demand that all the states that keep talking about human rights, and specifically the US which pretends to be the foremost defender of human rights, to impose sanctions on Israel which is totally rejecting the Palestinian people's rights.»

Comrade Habash saluted the masses of the intifada, stressing that: «No force in the world, no matter how powerful, can defeat the will of a people who are determined to achieve freedom and independence.» He addressed the Palestinian

masses in the 1948 occupied territories, pointing out what an effective role they could play in support of the uprising; he called on Jewish progressive forces who have protested Sunday's atrocity to intensify their work to expose the Israeli government's criminal policy. He urged the Palestinian masses in exile to continue to search for new ways of supporting the intifada, meanwhile calling on the Arab masses to take immediate action in solidarity with the Palestinians under occupation and to pressure the Arab governments to take practical measures, exerting their influence to force the US to recognize Palestinian rights.

After concluding his opening statement, Comrade Habash answered a series of questions from journalists. To a question about the role the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA) in the Arab countries should play to support the intifada, he replied: «Above all, the units of this army should be under the PLO's command, not controlled by the states where they are located. In that case, the PLA would participate along with the other forces of the Palestinian revolution in defending the Palestinian masses and fighting the enemy's troops.»

Concerning the reaction he expected to the massacre from the Palestinians in the occupied territories, Habash said that this was a chance to return to the early days of the intifada which were termed «the days of vast mass explosion. It is natural to expect that the mass reaction may reach the point of employing arms.»

Asked about the PFLP's position on states which resume diplomatic relations with Israel, Habash said: «When the largest Arab state (Egypt) does not withdraw its ambassador from Tel Aviv... what can we expect from Greece, Spain or even the Soviet Union? When the chairman of the PLO Executive Committee does not ask the Egyptian regime to sever relations with Israel, how can we ask others to do so?»

The last question concerned the PLO delegation which was visiting Damascus at the time of the press conference. Comrade Habash explained that the delegation had two aims: normalizing relations between Fatah and Syria, and discussing the upcoming Arab summit. «Concerning the bilateral relations... a step forward has been achieved. But concerning the summit, the official Syrian position is known, and I do not think there was any change.» ●

# Zionist Crime Met by United Palestinian Upsurge

Early in the morning, Sunday, May 20th, an Israeli clad in army uniform accosted a group of about 50 Palestinians who had come from the occupied Gaza Strip to Rishon Letzion to wait for work. He demanded their ID cards and then opened fire with his US-supplied M16; seven Palestinians were murdered on the spot and another 11 injured. The Israeli army claimed he was deranged, but the same day Israeli soldiers were just as quick to open fire on the demonstrators protesting the massacre. Seven more Palestinians were killed, making May 20th a day that will go on record alongside scores of other Zionist crimes.

Palestinian fight-back after the massacre will also go on record but in more human terms, showing the instinctive oneness of the people of Palestine, at home and in exile, and their shared determination to regain their rights.

The media described Rishon Letzion as a Tel Aviv suburb, but this is a misnomer both historically and currently. It is one of the earliest Zionist settlements, established in the 1890s, and kept alive by the finances of French Zionist Baron Rothschild until the Zionist movement had gained sufficient imperialist backing to sustain more concerted colonization. Rishon Letzion lies where there was once a small Palestinian village called Ain Qara. Today it is a «slave market,» half-way between Tel Aviv and Gaza, one of many junctions where Palestinians wait for a day's work in Zionist enterprises.

The May 20th massacre was no chance occurrence but indicative of the double victimization to which Palestinians under occupation are subject. Forced to sell their labor power cheap to the occupier who has deprived them of other means of subsistence, they are also exposed to racist attacks which are at once systematic and arbitrary. May 20th can only be viewed as the product of 42 years of Zionist state terror and institutionalized racism. For what other reason is Palestinian life considered not only cheap, but also best done away with?

This massacre could have happened anytime, anyplace in occupied Palestine, especially in the atmosphere of right-wing extremism fostered by Shamir's government which is hell-bent on blocking the peace process, meanwhile encouraging the «transfer» trend for terrorizing Palestinians out of their homeland. It is indicative that the Kach movement said outright that it would not con-

demn the killings, for perhaps some of the Palestinians who died had once thrown stones at Jews.

The stage had been set by preceding events. The five-month sentence handed down to Rabbi Moshe Levinger, leader of Gush Emunim, on May 1st for shooting dead a Hebron shopkeeper in September 1988, can only be understood as a license to kill Palestinians. (He is the second settler to be imprisoned at all for such a crime, although at least 30 Palestinians have been killed by settlers since the uprising began.)

In the context of the Israeli political crisis, rightist MKs had been deliberately whipping up a racist atmosphere. In April, Sharon called the Palestinian Knesset members «Arafat's murderers.» Tehiya's Guela Cohen and Likud's Ovadia Eli called them «agents of Arafat» - a charge equal to high treason in Israeli circles. A little over a week before the May 20th massacre, Jewish graves were desecrated in Haifa, and an attempt made to have it look like an act by Palestinians; incidentally, the same week a Palestinian cultural event opened in the city. Moledet party leader Ze'evi immediately advocated that Arabs who do such deeds be expelled, although a Jewish citizen of Israel was almost immediately apprehended for the crime.

Though Israel's friends had been tooting the lower death tolls in the occupied territories this year, as compared to 1988-89, Zionist repression has not let up, but continues to be tightened in the ongoing effort to strangle the

intifada. On the other hand, the media had busily picked up Israeli statements about the intifada «receding,» but this was not the case either. Though without media attention, the masses of the intifada have all along been steadily engaging in their militant routine of the past two and a half years - throwing stones and molotovs against the occupation troops; organizing protests, strikes and boycotts; and consolidating community organization, social services and self-reliance.

On May 28th, the Foreign Press Association, representing over 200 foreign correspondents working in Israel, protested the restrictions on their coverage of the situation in the territories after the Rishon Letzion massacre, due to widespread curfews and closure orders. In fact, curfews and closures have been the order of the day all spring. The Gaza Strip was either declared a closed area or totally curfewed for at least ten days in the preceding two months. In addition, there was a two week maritime siege on the coast after two political prisoners escaped from Ansar II in late April; this affected the livelihood of over 1,000 Palestinian fishermen. Beit Furik, in the West Bank, was under curfew and/or military siege or closure orders throughout March and April, with the population subject to arrests, beatings, collective punishment, tax raids and confiscation of property at the hands of the notorious Golani Brigade in concert with the regular army. In the village of Anabta, a long curfew was imposed to cover the Golani



Brigade's harassment of the population in April. Nahalin, near Bethlehem, was also declared a closed area on April 12-13th, the anniversary of last year's massacre of five village residents by the army. These are only a few examples.

The real prelude to the May 20th massacre was on April 26th, Eid al Fitr, the Muslim holiday at the end of the Ramadan fast. Residents of Jabalya camp in the Gaza Strip were on their way to the cemetery to pay their respects to the dead, as is the custom on this day. They were suddenly confronted by a military force which fired teargas without warning. In the ensuing clash, three Palestinians were shot dead as Israeli soldiers fired indiscriminately into a crowd of 4,000. Approximately 225 people were injured, about half by gunfire. They ranged in age from 2 to 80 years. On the same day a West Bank youth was shot and killed in a similar march to the cemetery in Qabatyia.

Army Chief-of-Staff Shomron himself supervised the operation in Jabalya, including shooting live ammunition and loads of teargas from army gunships, and

imposed a longterm curfew on the camp. Jabalya's residents are however experienced at defying curfews; 5,000 grouped together and stormed military command posts, giving the Zionist troops an all-day battle and injuring 12 soldiers. The comment of Matan Vilnai, military commander of the Strip, makes one think that the occupation forces had planned the whole thing. As quoted in *Haaretz*, April 27th, he said, «We expected that a matter of this sort would happen. The quiet was suspicious in our eyes. In the end, it exploded.» It is noteworthy that last year at Eid al Fitr, two Palestinians were killed and 150 injured in Nusseirat camp in the Strip.

A joint communique issued by *Al Haq* and the Palestine Human Rights Center concerning the events in Jabalya, April 26th, listed a series of previous incidents involving multiple and indiscriminate killings and injuries: -December 16, 1988, eight Palestinians were killed and 20 injured in Nablus, during a funeral procession.

-April 13, 1989, five Palestinians were killed and 30 injured in Nahalin, fol-

lowing a night raid on the village.

-May 19, 1989, five Palestinians were killed and 46 injured in Shabura, Rafah Camp, following the lifting of a long curfew.

-June 16, 1989, three Palestinians were killed and 40 injured in Rafah.

The statement concluded: «The events in Jabalya indicate that the Israeli army is continuing to pursue a policy of excessive force including the illegal use of lethal force and the wilful and brutal infliction of injuries.»

A further Zionist atrocity occurred after the May 20th massacre. On June 12th, an Israeli soldier hurled teargas into the window of the UNRWA health center in Gaza. Inside were several hundred women, children and infants, waiting for preventive care services. Sixty-six persons, mainly children sustained serious injury. The Zionist soldier was released after a brief detention for acting beyond the scope of his orders.

Shatta Camp - frequently curfewed  
-photo by Tordai





## Palestine - reunited in protest

Within hours of the Rishon Letzion massacre, occupied Palestine was in a turmoil of Palestinian rage and continued Zionist aggression. In a spontaneously organized general strike, later extended to three days by the United National Leadership, Palestinian workers in Israel returned to the territories in cars and buses bearing black flags. The Gaza Strip exploded despite the immediate imposition of a curfew which it took the occupation army all day to enforce. Seven more Palestinians were killed as the army confronted demonstrators in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, bringing the death toll to 14, equaling the highest number killed on a single day previously in the intifada (the April 1988 protests of Abu Jihad's assassination).

In the course of three days, 20 Palestinians were shot dead and over 800 wounded. Meanwhile, 12 Israeli soldiers were injured by stones, four of them seriously enough to require hospitalization. According to an Israeli army spokesman, the «sheer scope and intensity of the rioting has not been seen in at least the past six months» (Associated Press, May 21st).

Palestinians living in the Zionist state immediately declared a general strike, while Palestinian communities from the Galilee in the north to Naqab villages in the south, and the Triangle, Jaffa, Haifa, Ramle and Lydd, took to the streets in protest. The Zionist forces had to take on a nation-wide intifada in what the Israeli media termed unprecedentedly broad disturbances. Nazareth took on the appearance of a West Bank town as masked youth burned tires and threw stones at Zionist police, vehicles and buildings. Protests continued, day and night, for three days, defying curfews, teargas and rubber bullets, and causing Shamir to warn that «Israeli Arabs» had «exceeded the bounds of the permissible» (Guardian, May 23rd).

For the better part of a week, the Israeli army and police were kept busy with having to send reinforcements into a number of places. Even the guard force in prisons was beefed up as Palestinian prisoners, who had been planning hunger strikes to protest their illegal detention, joined in the all-

Palestine protest. Not until May 27th did the army begin to ease its curfew in the Gaza Strip - the longest ever imposed on the whole area. On the same day, the United National Leadership called for a general strike until June 7th in continued protest of the massacre, meanwhile marking the historical Zionist aggressions of June - the 1967 occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and the 1982 invasion of Lebanon.

Palestinian militants in the occupied territories staged several attacks in the week following the massacre: a settler was killed in Jerusalem on May 20th, while a bomb in the city one week later killed another Israeli and injured ten others. In the days between, there was an armed attack on an Israeli military patrol in Hebron.

## Spillover to Jordan

On May 22nd, *Haaretz* reported that Israeli troops had been put on alert for possible intervention against Palestinians in Israel or Jerusalem, for the first time since the intifada began (*International Herald Tribune*, May 23rd). Israeli political and military leaders expressed unease at the spillover of the intifada to Palestinian communities adjacent to the 1967 occupied territories.

Indeed Jordan joined the intifada for three days, with thousands upon thousands demonstrating in the Palesti-

nian camps and major Jordanian cities. Baqaa Camp near Amman and Irbid in the north were the scenes of the biggest protests against the massacre in Palestine, and also the places where two youths were killed, as the Jordanian security forces tried to keep the protesters within bounds. However, it was obvious that the mass anger at the Zionists' atrocities had linked up with the frustrations of people who until a few months ago had no outlet whatsoever for expressing their political sentiments. There was an attempt to storm the US embassy, and cars, hotels and businesses were attacked.

At the same time, groups linked to the Jordanian intelligence, the comprador class, some Islamic forces, and even the Israeli intelligence, were at work. These groups share a common interest in sabotaging the new democracy as well as Palestinian-Jordanian relations on the popular level. This posed a problem for the nationalist forces whose interests lie in developing the new democracy and exhibiting more solidarity with the intifada, not in promoting violence for its own sake.

The government let out hints that it was prepared to send the army into the camps and cities, and as the protests subsided, a week of mourning for the victims of Zionist terror was declared, with black flags hanging in every street of the Palestinian camps in Jordan.

Funeral in Hitteen Camp, near Amman, of Palestinian youth killed by the Jordanian police.







Gaza: Palestinian mother protests arrest of her son.

The outpouring of mass sentiment in Jordan can also be understood on the backdrop of the March of Return organized the previous week by 120 unions in Jordan, on the 42nd anniversary of Israel's creation. Tens of

thousands, Jordanians and Palestinians, marched towards the Allenby Bridge, one of the crossings to Palestine, to stress the Palestinian right of return. A large number of demonstrators rushed passed the main rally held 700 meters from the

bridge, and were faced by the Jordanian security forces who used teargas and fired in the air to hinder their continued march towards Palestine. Over 100 people were injured in the resulting three-hour clash. The authorities seemed to have prepared for this possibility, for army tanks and soldiers were present, backing up the police.

Also in Lebanon, there were massive demonstrations in cities and camps protesting the Zionist murder, and a general strike in all the nationalist areas. In Beirut, 20,000 marched in an enormous display of Palestinian resurgence in the war-torn city. Meanwhile, Palestinian militants stepped up their attacks on the Israeli-occupied zone of South Lebanon.

The Palestinian resistance organizations present in Syria staged an enormous demonstration in Yarmouk Camp on the edge of Damascus, while mass protests occurred in many other smaller camps as well.

### **The battle for international protection**

At a May 15th press conference in Jerusalem, to mark 42 years of Palestinian dispossession due to the creation of Israel, a group of prominent Palestinians

Khan Danoun Camp (South Syria) protests the massacre









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# Viewpoint

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## For a Democratic Palestine

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In May, a symposium was held in Nazareth, Palestine, entitled: «Is the State of Israel the State of All its Citizens and Absentees?» The symposium was organized jointly by the Galilee Center for Social Research and the Scholarship Fund for Publications on Israel. Below we print the discussion paper which was presented by Udi Adiv, a former political prisoner in Israel. It is entitled: «For Joint Israeli-Palestinian Action against the Occupation: Towards a Common Democratic Non-Sectarian State.»

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The central question facing the Palestinian people and the democratic and progressive movements in Israel today is the question of the struggle against the occupation. The focus of this struggle is the intifada of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories. The intifada is today the central factor for the Palestinian national movement under the leadership of the PLO and for the movements in Israel struggling against the occupation and in support of the national rights of the Palestinian people.

The purpose of this paper, however, is to draw an outline for discussion on the possibilities for establishing common Palestinian-Israeli frameworks both in order to act against the Israeli occupation and for a common future in a common state. Our view is based on the possible unity of the Palestinian people and those Israeli democratic and progressive individuals and movements who rebel against the Israeli occupation and the continued repression and exploitation of the Palestinian people. This unity is in our view the correct basis for the struggle against the Israeli occupation and for a common non-sectarian state.

Sections of the peace movement and the left in Israel assume and advocate an Israeli nationalism based on Jewish ethnicity, whose political expression is Israeli citizenship by force of the Law of Return. These sections support the Palestinian national struggle as a means to secure Palestinian recognition of their Zionist Israeli national identity. They wish to preserve their segregated existence - not to struggle for a common future. We submit that this assumption of a separate Zionist Israeli national identity is a barrier to a solution of the conflict and is a primary obstacle to a joint struggle against the occupation and for a common state based on equality and democracy.

We who initiate this paper know from the experience of our own life and our own struggle over many years that a joint struggle for a common goal on the basis of equality and unity of Palestinians and Israelis is the only possible alternative to continued Israeli occupation and repression.

The PLO was the first political organization to put forward the vision of a democratic state for all of its inhabitants: Muslims, Jews and Christians on the basis of separation of religion from the state. Yet, since its establishment in 1964 the PLO carried out its struggle as the organization of the Palestinian Arab people only and did not act consis-

ently to create frameworks for common action with the democratic and progressive public in Israel.

In the past ten years, and in particular after the declaration of independence and the establishment of the state of Palestine, the PLO has recognized the state of Israel on a de facto basis. Following the Palestinian declaration of independence, various political perspectives developed. One important argument says that only the embracing of a political (not ethnic) Palestinian (not Palestinian Arab) perspective as the political foundation for a common democratic citizenship in a common state will make possible the integration of the Israeli democratic and progressive individuals and movements in the Palestinian national struggle. In addition, the argument says that the Palestinian national movement under the leadership of the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, must continue and promote its clear emphasis that its struggle against the Israeli occupation is fundamentally political: Palestinian against occupation regime, and not primarily ethnic (*qawmi*): Arab against Jew. On the basis of this continuing political democratic struggle, Palestinians and Israelis will be able to transcend their antagonistic ethnic-national identities and struggle together in a common organization for the same political goal of independence and liberation for all, based on cultural pluralism on the one hand and a democratic political national (*watani*) identity of common citizenship of a common state without distinction of language, culture, religion, ethnic nationality and gender on the other.

We make a sharp distinction between cultural identity and citizenship. In democratic states where there are more than one cultural identity, there obtains necessarily a clear separation between the distinct ethnic-national identities (cultures) and the common political-national identity (citizenship) uniting all the residents in the framework of the state as equal human beings under the law. It is only in the framework of such common democratic citizenship that the welcomed and enriching pluralism of cultural identities can flourish and blossom without collapsing into sectarian conflict and strife.

It is necessary therefore to distinguish clearly between Arab vs. Jewish ethnic nationalism (cultural identity) on the one hand, and political nationalism (citizenship) on the other. The expression of this latter political nationalism is ►



the struggle against Israeli occupation and colonial policies and for a new democratic order: a common state which will realize and express the freedom, self-determination and common life of all the inhabitants of the country (residents and refugees) - regardless of their language, culture, religion, ethnic nationality or gender - as equal citizens.

We wish to emphasize that this call is consistent and compatible with the demand of the PLO for the establishment of an independent state of Palestine. We consider the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in Palestine as an important step in our struggle, Israelis and Palestinians inside and outside Israel against the Israeli rule of apartheid and segregation and for a common life based on equal rights for all the inhabitants of the unified country and its Palestinian refugees.

Israeli citizenship by force of the Law of Return negates the modern concepts of citizenship as defined and created by the American constitution and the French revolution some two hundred years ago. Against Israeli Jewish ethnic nationalism whose legal expression is Israeli citizenship by force of the Law of Return, we call for a common democratic non-sectarian state based on a common political nationalism for all the inhabitants of the country: Palestinians (the residents of the occupied territories, the refugees, and the Palestinian citizens of the state of Israel) and the Israelis (the immigrant society and their descendants, citizens of the state of Israel by force of the Law of Return) whose legal expression will be one democratic citizenship like American citizenship or British citizenship.

The construction of the common political nationalism which is not based on historical past, ethnicity, language or religion, but on common existence and common struggle for a life together and for a common citizenship is the only possible solution to the contradiction that has been posited between the Israelis and the Palestinians. Essential to the constitution of common political nationalism is the abolition of all legal structures of discrimination (e.g. Law of Return 1950, Israeli Nationality Law 1952, Jewish National Fund Law 1953, Israel Lands Law 1960).

We make a sharp distinction between Judaism and Zionism. The Zionist movement, regardless of the good intentions of many Jews who worked within its framework and those whose lives were saved, was not, and has never been the national movement of the Jewish people. The founders of the Zionist movement came out of a minority of assimilated Jews who aimed to take advantage of the plight of the persecuted Jewish masses in Europe in order to promote their political aims: to build in Palestine under the auspices of the imperial powers an allegedly Jewish settler-colonial state as a claimed solution to the problem of anti-Semitism in Europe. The Zionist movement and the state of Israel which it established in 1948 have not offered a solution to the problem of anti-Semitism. But they did offer, however, the opportunity for this minority of European Jews, who were excluded from the ruling elites in Europe, an opportunity to lead a settler-colonial project based on the expulsion of the Palestinian people from their homeland and their replacement with immigrants defined by the state as Jews. Instead of leading Jewish communities to struggle

against anti-Semitism in their own countries, the Zionist leadership shrank away from confrontation against anti-Semitism. Unlike the Jewish Bund and other socialist and democratic parties who led the struggle of the Jewish masses against anti-Semitism, the Zionist movement accepted the basic assumptions of anti-Semitism, and a part of its leadership also collaborated with the anti-Semitic forces to promote the transfer of Jewish communities out of their homeland countries to Palestine and subsequently to the state of Israel. Opponents of Zionism, e.g., the orthodox Jewish *Neturei Karta*, the Jewish Bund as well as Jewish liberals and socialists, have been correct in their analysis and their rejection of Zionism. The Zionist movement has always been a settler-colonial movement which destroys the humanity of its adherents and places the masses of Jews in unnecessary and unjustified danger. Contrary to Zionist claims, the Zionist political program of mass concentration of Jews in Palestine did not save the Jewish community in Palestine prior to 1945 from the Nazi Holocaust. The truth is that the Jewish community in Palestine was saved from annihilation under the prospective Nazi German occupation of Palestine thanks not to Zionism, but because of the victories of the Red Army in Stalingrad and of the British army in El Alamein. The historical lesson from the Holocaust is not that of an 'essential' or 'eternal' anti-Semitism on the one hand, and a 'chosen' Jewish people on the other. The historical lesson from the Holocaust is that the only solution to the problem of anti-Semitism is the defense of democracy against fascism wherever it occurs in the world; not the Zionist solution of collaboration with anti-Semitism to promote Jewish transfer.

The state of Israel was established in the 1948-49 war as the creation of the Zionist movement (World Zionist Organization/Jewish Agency). The Zionist community in Palestine (*Yishuv*) fought and occupied approximately 75% of the territory of Palestine in order to establish the state of Israel, claiming to do so in the name of the Jewish people. In the first two decades following its establishment, the government of the state of Israel worked to consolidate the dispossession of the Palestinian people in the territories that came under its sovereignty following the 1948-49 war. Most prominently, the resettlement and concentration of the Palestinian population in the south (the Naqab/Negev) in reservation areas and the massive dispossession of their lands and the policy officially known as the 'Judaization of the Galilee' directed to further alienate the remaining Palestinian population in the north from the remnants of their lands.

The war of 1967 and the occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Golan Heights are the continuation of the war of 1948-49 and represent fundamental Zionist colonial policies aiming to occupy and dispossess the Palestinian people. The Palestinian national struggle against the occupation on the one hand, and the Israeli policies of settlement and colonization on the other hand, are therefore not a symmetrical struggle between two peoples on the same territory, but the continuation of the historical struggle between the colonial Zionist movement and the state of Israel on the one hand, and the colonized, dispossessed and oppressed Palesti-



nian people on the other.

In parallel, the government of the newly established state of Israel caused the transfer of the mass of Jewish communities in the Middle East and North Africa to Israel to replace the dispossessed Palestinian people as 'hewers of wood and drawers of water' allegedly for the sake of their own redemption.

Alongside the primary contradiction between the occupied Palestinian people and the Israeli government, there is formed inside the Israeli society an additional contradiction between the ruling sections in Israel who predicate their future on the continued repression and occupation of the Palestinian people on the one hand, and those sections of the public in Israel who did not predicate their future on the continued repression and occupation of the Palestinian people, and who are themselves misled by the government of Israel. There are today important divisions between the government of Israel on the one hand and Israeli democratic and progressive individuals and movements who are not Zionists and who rebel against the Israeli

occupation and the continued repression and exploitation of the Palestinian people, as well as the broad Israeli left and the Israeli peace movement on the other. Our aim is to convince these latter sections of the public in Israel, in particular those from Middle Eastern and North African origin (Oriental Jews), that the possibility for a political and social alternative based on equality and unity with the Palestinians is the only way for a solution of their own discrimination and oppression inside Israel.

Throughout the course of human history, people have joined hands in common struggle for justice, equality and peace. Throughout the course of human history, governments have failed in their attempts to criminalize dialogue for justice, equality and peace, and to legislate against co-operation and common struggle. The government of South Africa tried and failed, and the government of Israel tried and failed. Dialogue, cooperation and common struggle against apartheid legislation and for justice, equality and peace are as inevitable in Israel as they are in South Africa.

## Disinformation

We did not expect to start our column on disinformation by attacking the British daily, *The Guardian*. On the contrary, it generally has quite informative coverage of international events in its pages of World News. However, we have not been able to ignore the grossly slanted coverage given to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict by Ian Black, the newspaper's correspondent in Jerusalem. In pre-intifada days, one got the impression from Ian Black's articles that he seldom went off the beaten track to get his story, i.e., he usually contented himself with repeating the statements of official Israeli sources. We noted, however, that the intifada did sometimes lead him to venture into the Palestinian community. Still, his articles did not match those of many other honest Western journalists who, at least at the start, wrote vivid accounts of the Palestinian upsurge against the occupation, and conveyed the human aspects of the intifada as well.

With the intifada «in retreat» according to callous observers and Israeli officials, Ian Black returned to his old habits. Several of his articles this May violated basic standards of honest reporting. A lengthy article on May 14th, entitled «An average day in the war zone,» reached the point of slander against the Palestinians. Black describes what he terms the «bizarre alliance» of the PFLP with Hamas, pushing for more strikes and militancy (see *Democratic Palestine*

38 for discussion of this issue). Black then goes on to say: «Palestinian radicals are urging more and more confrontation because peace in the streets will defeat their goal of maintaining the intifada. Yesterday's desecration of Jewish graves in Haifa - far behind the old «green line» border - may have been inspired by this same dangerous school of thought...» This in effect accuses Palestinians, specifically the PFLP and Hamas of committing desecration, whereas the Israeli police arrested a Jewish man in connection with this crime the same day it was discovered. Ian Black knows this very well. He himself signed a small article telling of the arrest, which appeared two pages later in the same *Guardian* edition.

We long ago stopped expecting that Ian Black would give the Palestinian struggle its due in media coverage, but we do have the right to expect a degree of journalistic honesty and integrity from him and *The Guardian's* editors.

Beit Sahour

Equally dishonest and disgusting were some of Ian Black's comments in the May 23rd *Guardian*. While describing the protests in the Galilee after the May 20th massacre in Rishon Letzion, Black gives some historical background by recalling the events of Land Day 1976 - so far so good. Then he feels called upon to write: «It was at that time that young Arabs began to break away from the twin strangleholds of the Communist Party and jobs-for-the-boys inducements of the Zionist parties.» The Israeli Communist Party, Rakah, is well known to be the party that has consistently defended the rights of the Palestinian Arabs living in the Zionist state over the years. While there are differing opinions as to the correctness of Rakah's political line, it would be difficult if not impossible to find a single Palestinian who would agree to equating this party with the Zionist parties. What gives Ian Black the right to do so?

-photo by Tordai





# The «Greater Israel» Government

On June 11th, the Knesset voted confidence in Prime Minister Shamir's newly formed rightist coalition. The stated priorities of the new government are to «uproot» the Palestinian intifada and to «absorb» the new waves of Soviet Jewish immigration. The formation of this government signals a new stage of Zionist colonization and efforts to drive the Palestinian people from their homeland.

by Farida Al Asmar

Government spokesman Yossi Olmert described the new coalition as a «nationalistic right-wing government but one dedicated to pursue the peace process,» but this only aims to throw dust in the face of the international community. The government is more like a new declaration of war on the Palestinian people and their rights. Its platform pledges to «enhance, expand and develop» settlements in «all the land of Israel» (read: especially in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and whole Jerusalem district). Such settlement-building is considered «the right of the Jewish people» and «an inseparable part of our (Israeli) national security» (*International Herald Tribune*, June 9-10th).

The new platform reaffirms the basics of the previous government such as the Camp David accords and the Shamir plan, ruling out negotiations on Jerusalem's final status as well as any direct or indirect contacts with the PLO. The Shamir plan has been bulwarked against any possible liberal interpretations. In early May, Likud ministers Meridor and Nissin drew up guidelines for the coming government that specifically excluded East Jerusalem from any peace talks as well as from the autonomy plan; it also excluded the 140,000 Palestinians of Jerusalem from voting in the envisioned West Bank elections. The Cairo meeting proposed to lead to a Palestinian-Israeli dialogue was simply not mentioned in the new platform. Instead, the parts of the Shamir plan dealing with talks with the Arab governments and the «rehabilitation of the refugee camps» were reasserted.

Surely this is a government for «Greater Israel,» signalling new political and physical attacks on the Palestinians, more violent military repression in the occupied territories, the definitive resurgence of state-organized settler terrorism and intensified settlement-building. The «Greater Israel» coalition aims to end once and for all any Palestinian claims to Palestine, or even a part of it.

## The settlement-transfer junta

Ariel Sharon, responsible for the Sabra-Shatila massacre, wanted the post of defense minister, but it is no less dangerous that he received the housing and construction portfolio. He also heads a special committee for absorbing new immigrants. Since there is already an Absorption Ministry *per se*, and since Jerusalem falls under the jurisdiction of the Housing Ministry, placing Sharon in this post indicates that the new government wants to fill Jerusalem with the new Soviet Jewish immigrants. The attack on Palestinian presence in Jerusalem's Old City and surrounding districts, already escalated under Shamir's caretaker government, will be waged with new vengeance.

The appointment of Rafael Eitan of the Tzomet Party as Agriculture Minister also echoes Zionist crimes of the past. In Lebanon, in 1982, he was army chief-of-staff and teamed up with Sharon, then Defense Minister, in the effort to annihilate the PLO, with the ultimate aim of enabling Israeli annexation of the 1967 occupied territories. The Agricultural Ministry is pivotal in gaining access to funds for promoting settlements. Sharon and Eitan failed in Lebanon, but they can now team up again for a new colonial invasion, this

time attacking the occupied State of Palestine and its capital, Jerusalem.

Meanwhile, the US-educated veteran of the Israeli arms industry, former Foreign Minister Moshe Arens, resumes the post of defense minister which he held in 1983-4, with the special task of supervising a new Israeli effort to crush the uprising.

In view of the slim majority which Shamir's new government commands in the Knesset, many have questioned how long it can last and how much it can accomplish. But there should be no doubt that it is a landmark in the ongoing shift to the right on the Israeli political scene. The Palestinian intifada has created new polarization in the Israeli polity. Though more Israelis began to see the need for coming to terms with the reality of the Palestinian cause, the stronger tendency in this polarization was towards the right - for more repression and fascism. The new government symbolizes this increased right-wing tendency and will at the same time serve to reinforce it through more aggressive wielding of state power.

The danger of efforts to implement the «transfer» option - mass expulsion of Palestinians - has thus increased. Shamir had, in fact, planned to appoint Rehavan Ze'evi, leader of Moledet, the party which openly advocates transfer, as police minister. This would have given Ze'evi a chance to carry out his promise of «liquidating the intifada» in the Jerusalem area. In the end, Moledet did not join the new government, because its position is even more openly extreme than that of Likud; it rejects Camp David and the autonomy plan as giving too many concessions to the Palestinians. However, those favoring «transfer» are a trend much broader than this one party; they are well represented in the new government which will give much more space to work for this goal. A poll published in Israel on May 29th confirms polls of the last few years concerning the strength of the transfer option: it showed that one-half of Israeli teenagers (tomorrow's soldiers and politicians) are for expulsion of

Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and less rights for «Arab Israelis» than those accorded to Jewish citizens. This shows that the new government is not so much a throw-back to the past, but a model of the Israel of the future, ever more reactionary and racist.

### Simmering crisis

The extended period needed to form the new government, coupled with the events of that period, confirm that the stalemate was symptomatic of a deeper crisis in the Israeli political system that has yet to be resolved. In the last analysis, this crisis stems from the Israeli society's failure to come to terms with the reality of the Palestinian cause as expressed by the intifada. The Zionist state has been unable to crush the intifada and equally unwilling to make any real political overtures in relation to its demands. In the context of this stalemate, a myriad of other issues became the object of broad public protest on the one hand, and intense political maneuvering, backroom deals and squabbling among politicians on the other.

Susan Rolaf, editor of the Labor Party's monthly, *Spectrum*, wrote about the question of electoral reform in the *Jerusalem Post*, contending that reform would not change the influence of the small religious parties, because Labor and Likud leaders would still seek the rabbis' blessings before elections. She concluded: «...only when the tie between the two major blocs is broken - when there will be a majority either for Greater Israel or for talks with the Palestinians and territorial compromise - will the power of the religious parties return to its natural proportions, which in absolute terms is no greater today than it was in the early days of the state (today the religious parties have 18 Knesset seats - 40 years ago they had 16).» Rolaf explained the apparent impotence of the Israeli political system as follows: «the mainstreams in both political blocs are afraid of the possible consequences of the solution which they advocate to resolve the fundamental existential problems facing the state. That is why the Likud mainstream

never seriously considered annexing the territories. And despite all the talk, the Labor Party - even if it could - would be very wary about embarking on any process leading to the trading of territories for peace without a very extensive intermediate adjustment period» (reprinted in *The Middle East Clipboard*, April 5-11th).

On this background, we can analyze the most salient aspects of the internal Israeli political crisis: the mass movement for electoral reform, the credibility gap between the public and the politicians, and the power struggle between and within the Labor and the Likud.

### Electoral reform

The movement for electoral reform blossomed in April and May, exhibiting an unprecedented public consensus on internal political matters. The movement spanned the Zionist political spectrum from Shinui (to the left of the Labor Party) to Tzomet (right of Likud), grouping elements from all political trends except for the religious parties and their ultraorthodox followers. It thus expressed the tension between religious and non-religious Zionists, and the majority of Israelis' resentment that the religious institutions consume large proportions of the state budget, while the orthodox can exempt themselves from army service on religious grounds. It is typical that the movement began with a hunger strike of army veterans outside the Knesset in late March.

A poll conducted by the Dahaf Institute showed that 80% of Israelis preferred changing the electoral law to replace proportional representation (which allows small parties to exert unproportional influence) with the personal constituency system: a 78 to 11 margin supported direct election of the prime minister, also based on the need to limit the influence of the small parties (*Yediot Ahronot*, April 9th). A petition for such reform was presented to Israeli President Hertzog, signed by 500,000 - 22% of the electorate. By mid-May the Knesset had begun debating bills for electoral reform, supported by both Labor and Likud. The fate of these bills is uncertain however, as both the major blocs have dealt

with the issue of electoral reform in terms of their own partisan interests. For example, Shamir presented himself as responsive to the movement's demands during the period he was trying to form a government, but it was actually Likud that blocked the efforts last summer to enact electoral reform. Obviously, the two major blocs will continue to relate to the public demand for reform in an opportunistic manner. In view of the failure of either to gain a clear majority in the past two elections, both need the small parties to form a government.

There are other reservations about electoral reforms. A number of mainstream Israelis, mainly intellectuals with Labor Party sympathies, have expressed fear that making the prime minister less dependent on Knesset support could lead to the rise of a «strongman.» Seventeen university professors issued a warning in late March that reform would unwittingly serve to strengthen the undemocratic right and divert from the main concerns of peace and immigrant absorption.

The more basic problem however, is that the reform movement is after all for making the existing political system more efficient. It has not questioned any of the fundamental premises of Israeli politics, nor addressed the contradiction of maintaining a democratic system in a settler-colonial state. It is telling that another Dahaf poll revealed that 80% of Israelis, the same percentage who want electoral reform, think that the army is doing a good job in the occupied territories. This is an accurate gauge of democratic thinking among the Israeli public.

### Credibility gap

On April 8th, when 100,000 Israelis demonstrated in Tel Aviv for electoral reform, slogans were raised such as: «All politicians are thieves and whores.» Throughout the bargaining for forming a new government, there were displays of public disrespect for the politicians. According to polls throughout this period, most Israelis preferred new elections or a national unity government to one formed either by Shamir or Peres. The public was more concerned about electoral re-



form and the organization of immigrant absorption than about many of the intricacies of the political bargaining going on between various parties. In particular, the public was disgusted by practices engaged in by Peres and Shamir, literally buying defectors from each other's camps, and the readiness of various factions to be bought.

On April 6th, the Israeli daily *Maariv* wrote: «The mountains of dirt amassed over the past few weeks have made the public sick... People are in a state of despair.» The credibility gap was not healed by the formation of the government, as was apparent from the 'happening' organized by the Movement for Political Change as MKs entered the Knesset to endorse the new cabinet. The building was surrounded by dogs, running in every direction and each adorned with a sign bearing the name of one of the new ministers.

However, as in the case of the electoral reform movement, public disgust with the politicians did not lead to any significant soulsearching about the deeper reasons for the political corruption. In the space provided by the credibility gap, Shamir's caretaker government pushed forward quite successfully, laying the foundations for a new right-wing offensive and rampant settlement drive. Fascist tendencies were apparent, not only directed against Palestinians but aimed at impacting on internal Israeli policy. The most obvious case was when Sicarii, the secret Israeli terror group that specializes in attacking «dovish» Jews, threatened President Hertzog and his family after he had prolonged Peres' mandate to form a cabinet (reported in *Jerusalem Post*, April 15th).

### **Internal power struggles**

Internal conflict appeared to wrack both the Labor and Likud blocs prior to the formation of the new government. This conflict reflected shades of difference in political positions, as well as the quest of certain individuals for more power.

Ultimately Peres could not form a government because he failed on two counts. He could neither unite Labor's own ranks under his leadership, nor attract factions from both the left and

the right of Labor, relatively speaking, at the same time. Throughout the bargaining, there were well-founded rumors that Rabin would either break ranks to join a Likud-led government or try to replace Peres as Labor's leader in order to form a new national unity government. Not by chance, an internal Labor document was leaked in May, blaming Peres for the party's failure in the November 1988 elections, and indicating that he had ignored polls showing that Rabin had been more popular among floating voters. Some polls this spring also showed Rabin to be more popular than either Peres or Shamir.

On the other hand, a wing of Labor led by MK Uzi Baram formed a lobby against any new partnership in government with the Likud. In addition to the Knesset deputies of the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality, Citizens' Rights Movement, Mapam, Shinui and the Arab Democratic Party, there are an estimated 15 Labor Party MKs for talking to the PLO under certain conditions (that the PLO has actually met). But the Labor leadership is not ready for any such departure from its traditional Zionist principles. Instead, Peres pandered to the religious right - and got slapped in the face. He failed to muster a majority in late April because two Agudat Israel deputies defected: Mizrahi went to the Likud because he opposed any compromise on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, reportedly on the advice of a US rabbi; while Verdiger pulled out rather than vote for a government that would have had the support of Arab MKs. Shinui, on the other hand, had already declined to join any coalition based on what it termed defectors (a reference to the Liberal faction that broke with Likud and was negotiating with Peres) and religious coercion (the religious legislation favored by the orthodox parties).

Even after failing to form a government, and Rabin's call for Peres to resign on May 11th, the latter stuck to his rightist positions. He suffered an extreme embarrassment when he attended the Socialist International meeting held in Cairo, at the same time the May 20th Rishon Letzion massacre occurred. The meeting

adopted a resolution for Palestinian self-determination and statehood. In Jerusalem, the Labor Party quickly issued a statement, saying that: «Peres refused to support the decision draft in its adopted version regarding the right to self-determination and territorial issues linked to the PLO» (Associated Press, May 24th). About a week later, the Labor Party student organization's convention came out against a national unity government with the Likud and for talks with the PLO (Israeli Radio, June 2nd).

Likud also suffered internal problems, as Sharon and other ultrarightists challenged Shamir's leadership and pressured him to form a so-called Jewish national government, rather than reforge the coalition with Labor. It is, however, indicative that the Likud succeeded at last in crystallizing a coherent rightist government. The most reactionary Zionist tendencies are clearly on the ascent, and it is not logical to expect that Labor, from its new position in the opposition, can or will mount a real counteroffensive.

It should be obvious that the internal Zionist contradictions that have been described above are far from being of the sort that could be exploited to Palestinian advantage, and certainly not in the immediate political conjuncture. There are moreover two more basic elements that have been shaping Israeli strategic thinking during this spring of political stalemate. They are even more unequivocally mitigating against Israeli moves to meet the Palestinians even a fourth of the way, and they will be major elements in shaping the Israeli political scene in the future. These two issues are the waves of Soviet Jewish immigrants arriving in Israel and the boost this gives to Zionist colonization; and the parallel attempt to shift attention away from the Palestinian intifada in favoring of addressing the Arab regimes.

### **Does Saddam Hussein scare Israel? Shifting the focus**

The partial realignment in the Arab world, induced to a great extent by the intifada and Israel's aggressive, intransigent policy, has begun influenc-

ing Israeli policy thinking. The most distinct elements in the new regional situation are: united Arab concern about the consequences of Soviet Jewish immigration; the democratization in Jordan, which opens new channels for support to the intifada; and the stated intention of Saddam Hussein to fight fire with fire in the case Iraq would be attacked by Israel. This is not exactly an unreasonable expectation on the Iraqi president's part in view of the 1981 Israeli air strike on the Iraqi nuclear plant (whereby, incidentally, Begin ensured his 1981 reelection). Israel has often sought to overcome its own crises by launching a spectacular first strike or even a major war (1967).

Only recently, Israeli chief-of-staff Shomron said that quick strikes remain among Israel's options. Speaking at a reunion of soldiers who participated in the 1976 raid on Entebbe airport, which he led, Shomron said: «...the IDF can do it again even today ...maybe even better,» citing improved equipment (Associated Press, May 10th). After a Palestinian naval attack on Israel a few weeks later, Israeli leaders spoke of hitting Libya that was accused of supporting the attack logistically.

Saddam Hussein's vow to inflict major damage on Israel if attacked spurred an expected Zionist media campaign trying to resurrect the image of «poor little» Israel beleaguered by the Arabs - the very image that Israel itself smashed by sustained brutality against the unarmed masses of the intifada. But although Israeli officials and strategists took the Iraqi «threat» seriously, few seemed to think Iraq would really attack. According to Deputy Chief of General Staff Ehud Barak, Saddam Hussein «will think twice and more before using chemical weapons against Israel's home front. He has good reasons to do so, and he knows these reasons better than most Israeli citizens» (*Jerusalem Post International*, April 21st).

Writing in *Jerusalem Post International*, April 14th, Harry J. Lipkin wrote that the Iraqi president's «saber-rattling» could even be a prelude to «peace,» noting that Egypt, as the strongest Arab state, had been the first

to make peace with Israel. It is noteworthy that Lipkin is a member of the Department of Nuclear Physics at the Weizmann Institute - the cradle of Israel's nuclear bomb. In the last analysis, this is why Israeli leaders can take the new Iraqi militancy with relative calm, for it is Israel that has the undisputed edge in the balance of terror in the Middle East.

Israeli experts have set about thinking how to turn the new Iraqi militancy to their own advantage. They are reshuffling the cards in the Israeli «security» doctrine in a new effort to divert from the Palestinian intifada and the PLO's peace initiative, using strategic arguments to augment Shamir's simple obstinacy. Typical of this trend is Dore Gold, director of the US Foreign and Defense Policy Project at Tel Aviv University's Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies. Writing in *Jerusalem Post International*, April 14th, he chides the US for having focused on the Cairo dialogue (with the Palestinians) rather than on the part of the Shamir plan that addresses the Arab states. Gold's argument goes as follows: «Should Iraq eventually replace Syria as the primary threat to Israel, such a development could have an enormous impact on the peace process. The greater readiness of many in Israel to make territorial concessions in Judea and Samaria (sic) but not on the Golan Heights has been partly a function of the perception of a more immediate threat in the north and a more remote threat to the east. Jordan's increasing security dependence on Iraq, combined with the latter's recent declaration of intentions, will require a revision of the calculations of the risks Israel faces on its eastern front. Certainly Israel's early warning stations looking eastward from the hill-tops of Judea and Samaria, as well as its air defense deployments there, will become more critical. Defensive positions against Iraqi ground forces that could cross Jordan in 48 hours will become more salient. Israel's strategic flexibility in negotiations over the territories could be altered.»

The *Jerusalem Post* editorialized in a similar vein on «The lessons of Iraq,» saying that: «The priorities of the peace process must be re-exa-

mined... without such progress (in curbing the Middle East arms race and moving towards accommodation between Israel, Iraq and Syria), concessions to the Palestinians would be at best futile.»

On Israeli television, then Foreign Minister Arens said, «I think that something is perhaps understood today that was not understood before Saddam Hussein spoke, that the Palestinian part of the Arab-Israeli conflict is only one of the parts and not the most important one...» Brigadier General Nachman Shai, army spokesman, echoed the same thought, saying: «...the argument is not now on the West Bank... You cannot settle the Nablus riots (sic) and be happy...» (Associated Press, May 3rd).

A parallel thrust is using the «Iraqi danger» as rationale for continued US military and economic aid when, for the first time in history, serious questions have been put concerning the amount of this aid by influential congressional representatives. Israeli military personnel have spoken of the need for buying US Patriot missiles, which were previously considered too expensive, until the Arrow missile system is completed. This merges with the discussion among Israeli strategists about how to fit their interests into the post-Cold War situation. Ostensibly, the new US-Soviet relations removed part of the rationale for massive aid to the Zionist state. On the other hand, the Bush Administration's list of possible forthcoming foreign arms sales totals \$30 billion - almost half of which could go to the Middle East. Many of the US tanks now in western Europe are being sold to Egypt. Israeli experts are concerned about the possibility of increased arms sales to Arab countries, and will surely seek yet more aid to maintain their strategic edge in the new situation.

### **Back into the future Renewed settlement drive**

With the opportunities presented by massive Soviet Jewish immigration, Shamir's caretaker government had already been attempting a return to the settlement drive of the late 70s-early 80s, aiming to ensure the Zionist







New Soviet immigrants living in Ariel settlement in the occupied West Bank.

state's status as an expanded regional superpower.

The settlement junta now in place with Shamir's new government has been in the making since mid-April, when Likud MK Michael Dekel was appointed Shamir's advisor on settlements. Dekel was deputy minister of agriculture in Begin's government and became deputy defense minister in 1985 - both posts being pivotal in the Begin-Sharon land grabs. Dekel was involved in the promotion of private land purchase and settlement-building; he was subsequently implicated in the land scam which came to light in 1985, whereby an estimated 30,000 dunums in the West Bank were acquired through swindle and violence. This became a scandal in Israel - not because Palestinians were being robbed of their land, a daily occurrence under occupation, but because Israelis were sold fictitious plots in would-be settlements; proceeds from these sales went directly to the Likud's campaign coffers.

A record high of 10,000 new immigrants arrived in Israel in April. The government's official stand has been that while Jews have «the right» to settle wherever they want, there is no special effort to settle them in the 1967 occupied territories. This is only rhetoric aimed to neutralize international protests. Already on February 23rd, peace activist Danny Rubinstein wrote in *Davar*: «The statement claiming that only half a percent of all arriv-

ing immigrants reached the territories is irrelevant. Thousands of apartments in the territories are in stages of planning and construction and can be purchased at better conditions than anywhere else. Money for absorbing immigrants from Russia is flowing now through implanted bypasses to the settlements from public funds and donations.»

In its March edition, *Israel and Palestine* magazine wrote about what was an open secret in Israel: «namely - that in the Maaleh Edunim area, a Greater Jerusalem residential area built on former Arab-owned land, the authorities were preparing massive settlement of a considerable percentage of the 250,000 Jews which some Israeli officials claim will arrive from the Soviet Union this year.»

In this light, Gush Emunim's declaration, that it plans to settle at least 10,000 Soviet Jews in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, must be taken seriously. On May 1st, *Haaretz* reported that Shamir had agreed to push a plan to create previously approved settlements, and listed 14 sites being considered. In the same period, the ultrarightist parties were calling for 26 new settlements. In April, settlers moved into the new settlement Allon, billed as an extension of Kafr Adumin a few kilometers away on the road between Jerusalem and Jericho. Less than a month later, settlers moved into Dugit, close to Shatta and Jabalya camps, whereas most settlements

before in the Gaza Strip had been placed some distance from densely populated Palestinian areas.

The most obvious provocation came in Easter week when 150 settlers occupied St. John's Hospice which belongs to the Greek Orthodox Church. This was the biggest single land grab in the Old City since the concerted Judaization attempt began after the 1967 occupation. The government provided \$2 million in funding towards this new settlement in the heart of the Christian quarter. Although the Israeli High Court ruled that the settlers must leave in late April, 20 were allowed to remain, as representatives of the Panamanian company that claims to have leased the building, while the ownership case continues. This caused Patriarch Diodoros I to comment: «The settlers were taken out through one door and in through another» (*Al Fajr*, April 30th).

On May 3rd, with the Palestinians of Nablus under curfew, the military commander of the West Bank, Yitzhak Mordechai, joined Gush Emunim and rightist MKs in celebrating the inauguration of a settlement under the guise of a religious school at Joseph's Tomb. They had obtained High Court approval for this move in advance, injecting a new settlement in Nablus in close proximity to four Palestinian schools.

Another show of Zionist force came on May 23rd, which the Israelis consider «Jerusalem Day» - celebrating the 1967 occupation of all the city in accordance with the Hebrew calendar. That day, Palestinian women protesting the May 20th massacre had been teargassed in Jerusalem. Hours later, thousands of Israelis were allowed to march throughout the city, while the police protected some right extremists in their effort to pray at the Temple Mount, pressing claims to East as well as West Jerusalem. In his speech to mark the occasion, Shamir reiterated Zionist refusal to give up any part of the city and defended the settlement in the Christian quarter, saying: «There is no limit and there is no barrier to (Jerusalem's) expansion and nobody will stop this settlement» (Associated Press, May 24th)

## **The Baghdad Summit**

### **Interpreting the Significance of the Time, the Place and the Discourse**

by Imad Rahaima  
 Baghdad, June 1st

The emergency Arab summit in Baghdad is over, but its effects are not, for the summit was exceptional not only in terms of the Arab League's rules, but also due to other factors which are related to the time and place it was held, and its packed agenda. It was also unusual by virtue of the debate and clamor that accompanied and preceded it. In fact, the very convening of this summit was in question right down to when the plenary session actually opened. It was uncertain whether or not a quorum could be achieved, due to Syrian objections to the site of the summit. The question of where a summit was to be held has never had so many political connotations as was the case with this one. The shift in the leadership of the Arab world, implied by holding the summit in Baghdad, was far from satisfactory to a number of regional and international forces.

#### **The significance of the place**

«Why in Baghdad?» and «Why not in Baghdad?» - this dual question sums up all the inter-Arab contradictions that accompanied and preceded the summit. On the one hand, it symbolizes the differences between the two political currents which dominated the summit. On the other hand, it reveals the depth and seriousness of the supposedly secondary Arab contradictions which the intensive mediation efforts of recent months could not dispell.

Those who supported the convening of the summit in Baghdad view this city as a symbol of Arab steadfastness and victory in the Gulf war. They believe that Iraqi power enables the Arabs to formulate a comprehensive confrontation strategy that does not exclude the military option. They argued that the summit had to be convened in Baghdad to show solidarity with Iraq in the face of the US-Israeli-British campaign, to show that Iraq

was not alone, but that the Arabs were backing its right to possess developed technology for peaceful and defensive purposes.

The opponents and semi-opponents of convening this summit in Baghdad had a different point of departure. They have different views, different considerations and different interests. First of all, there is Damascus that from the beginning expressed its rejection of the place of the summit, publicly and clearly. The Syrian leadership added that the preparations were not sufficient for this summit, so the results would not meet the challenges facing the Arab world. Syria's absence revealed the depth of the so-called secondary contradictions between Damascus and Baghdad.

Almost all observers were sure in advance that Syria would not attend; yet hope remained that the Syrian leadership would change its mind at the last minute. This hope lingered even in the first half hour of the opening session, for Colonel Qaddafi of Libya was in Damascus, and had dispatched a special envoy to Baghdad the night before. Rumors spread about Syria joining the summit; pictures of President Assad were put up in Baghdad, and there was a commotion in the suite of Al Rashid hotel where the Syrian delegation was to stay. Though it was known for sure that President Assad would not attend, there was still a small hope that Syria would be represented, for how else would it be possible to discuss the issues of pan-Arab security, the Arab-Israeli conflict and Lebanon? Even those with the most reservations consider Damascus to be a major player in all these fields.

As the Libyan leader arrived in Baghdad, rumors spread that he had brought a Syrian delegation headed by Foreign Minister Shara, but the rumors faded and the Syrian seat remained vacant.

Lebanon was the second opponent of convening the summit in Baghdad.

Of course, nobody at the summit really cared what the Lebanese officials said to justify their absence. Still, Lebanon's official absence did not prevent the Lebanese issue from being discussed. Resolutions were adopted which were welcomed by Lebanon's President Hawri, Prime Minister Hoss and Speaker of Parliament Hussein.

Three other Arab heads of state did not attend, but sent high-ranking deputies in their place. The first of these was King Hassan II, who hates to attend any summit that he does not host himself (7 out of 19 past Arab summits were held in Morocco). The second of the absentees was Sultan Qabus of Oman, who dislikes by nature to attend such events. The third absentee was President Shadli Ben Jedid of Algeria. His absence left a significant moral void in view of his and Algeria's outstanding role in past efforts to achieve Arab solidarity and reconcile inter-Arab disputes. The unconvincing reasons given for Ben Jedid's absence also had an influence on the summit; many questions were raised about the real motivation for the Algerian decision.

Among those states that had reservations about the site of the summit, and expressed their dissatisfaction ambiguously, the most prominent were Egypt and Saudi Arabia that most probably share the same reasons for their attitude. Neither are willing to recognize Iraq's growing role in the region. Both fear that Iraq's military, scientific, economic and human resources will come to outweigh their own particular political functions. Saudi Arabia, for its part, is accustomed to dominating the Arab scene especially in the 70s and the 80s. Egypt, newly readmitted to the Arab League, is trying to restore the role it lost during the years of its enforced absence following Sadat's visit to occupied Jerusalem and the signing of the Camp David accords.

These two states have their own political line and style which differ ►



from those of Baghdad. It is not surprising that they expressed reservations, and refrained from expressing unconditional support to Iraq. Moreover, due to their regional considerations and interests, neither Egypt nor Saudi Arabia was eager to provoke the Syrian government or to cut lines of communication with it. In relation to the international scene, both prefer to avoid any confrontation with the US, which would have been inevitable if they had joined in the wholehearted support to Iraq.

For all these reasons, Cairo and Riyadh tried to resolve the dilemma of where to hold the summit, and exerted direct and indirect efforts to mediate between Baghdad and Damascus. Meanwhile, they postponed announcing their intentions to attend the summit. However, in the end these reasons were insufficient to keep them away. They were forced to attend the summit, choosing to bypass the obstacle of the place and its connotations in favor of fighting the political battle at the summit.

## The political discourse

The summit was dominated by two major political currents. The first, the current of «moderation,» was led by Egypt and supported by the Gulf states and other traditionally moderate Arab governments. Iraq headed the other current, the «hardline» one, with strong support from the PLO and Libya.

The moderates regurgitated the usual political positions; the speech of Husni Mubarak encompassed all the positions of this group. It stressed the «strategy of peace» which, according to him, stems from «our values, heritage and concern about our interests. In brief, it is the option that conforms with our principles and truly expresses our masses' aspirations... Arab traditions, especially after Islam, have been based on applying reason before taking up the sword... The Arabs have surpassed the world community in this domain.»

Up to this point Mubarak's speech might have seemed okay. But as he continued, the fine line which separates peace from surrender was broken. So was the fine line which sepa-

rates upholding the legitimate, natural rights of the Arab nation with dignity, from stooping to accept any solution and the humiliation of carving out a place for oneself at the price of abandoning all these rights.

The moderates began to shiver and shake from the mere possibility of having to resort to the sword if the resort to reason failed. They began giving advice about how the Arab discourse should be «human and reasonable» in accordance with the values of the times. But they had no answer as to what should be done in the case when pursuing the course of reason only leads to more Israeli intransigence and expansion, more expulsion of Palestinians, further absorption of new immigrants and threats to attack Iraq, and Pakistan if need be, as has been the Israeli response to peace overtures. What should be done if such logic only results in the US administration's continued massive support to the Shamir government? What if the fears of Jordan become a reality, and Israel does occupy more Arab territory, specifically that from the Jordan River and possibly extending to Amman? What if Israel tries to attain what it considers to be its natural borders? These borders are engraved on an Israeli coin showing a Jewish state including all of Palestine, all of Jordan and parts of Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and even Saudi Arabia. What would happen if Israel were to achieve these things, or at least begin working on them? How then would the Arabs deal with this situation? Are we to wait until it is too late and all is lost?

These questions and more were asked by the «hardliners,» but there was no answer because those who have dropped the military option from their calculations, and considered the 1973 war as the last one, are committed only to «peace» and do not want the Arab discourse to include any mention of force. True, the «hardliners» did not pose the military option as the preferable one. True, our experience with Arab summits and their rhetoric is not encouraging, and the Palestinians have paid the price for this in the loss of their land and rights. Yet it is also true that, due to US-Israeli intransigence, the advocates of «moderation» have

nothing to show for all their moderation, in order to convince others of its usefulness. This is especially true in the current situation which is full of tension and even signs of war.

King Hussein's speech at the summit shed light on the reality of the situation. He tolled a bell of warning and pointed to the possibility that Jordan would become the target of an Israeli attack, the battlefield of the coming Arab-Israeli war and the destination chosen by the Israelis for the Palestinians who are to be «transferred.» This option is becoming more and more possible as Shamir seeks to form an ultraright government wherein he himself would appear as a «dove» in contrast to hawks like Sharon, Eitan, etc.

Some Arab leaders viewed the king's speech as willful exaggeration aimed at obtaining more financial support to Jordan which is suffering a serious economic crisis. But the majority were convinced by the speech and conscious of the pending dangers.

Amidst this atmosphere which was not at all pleasing to Cairo, Mubarak's speech sounded like an old, worn-out tune. He had two choices -either to retreat and accept a secondary role, letting the «hardliners» set the pace; or try to force the summit to adopt the direction of recent summits which have marked the decline of official Arab policy. Mubarak yearns for Egypt to regain the leading role it enjoyed in the 50s and the 60s, by virtue of its pan-Arab nationalist line, but this time on the basis of being the leader of «moderation,» moving in the sphere of the Camp David accords and the Baker plan. Realizing his intentions required putting a brake on the line of escalation under consideration in Baghdad.

In this context, it is worth noting the recent cooling-off in the PLO-Egyptian relations, due to Mubarak's insistence on maintaining a super-moderate line. The Egyptian regime's ambitions to lead the Arab world can only be realized when moderation prevails or rather when the Arabs officially adopt a policy of surrender. Egypt wants to maintain a strong regional role for this would give it weight in the international arena. Here it is relevant to note that the US administ-



ration had addressed a 16-page memorandum to the Arab foreign ministers who met in Baghdad prior to the summit, urging them to avoid rhetoric, to focus on direct negotiations (rather than an international conference), to abstain from denouncing the Soviet Jewish immigration and from linking Iraq's possession of chem-

ical weapons with the nuclear weapons issue (i.e. Israel's nuclear arsenal). Indeed Mubarak's positions at the summit were in compliance with this unwarranted US attempt at intervention in Arab decision-making.

Mubarak does not seem to object to promoting Egypt's regional and international status by working to

overcome the «Palestinian obstacle» even if that is to be obtained at the expense of the Palestinian people and their legitimate rights. Going down the one-way street paved by Washington D.C. and Tel Aviv cannot be done halfway; imperialism and Zionism demand that all their conditions be







met, and Mubarak seems willing to oblige even if that means colliding with the PLO and pressuring it. The Egyptian regime seems intent on continuing down this one-way street, heading towards a solution, any solution, if only this would ensure its prominent role and justify the policy it adopted almost two decades ago.

To serve these ends, it was required that the military option be dropped from the final communique of the summit. It was also required to drop the PLO's call for boycott and economic sanctions, letting the US off the hook for its unconditional support to Israel's aggressive policies. In short, it was required to advance the same old line of decline in the official Arab position.

On the other hand, it must be recorded in favor of the Baghdad Summit that there was another political line represented. Its positions can be characterized by two major aspects:

One: Calling for reserving the right to use force when the logic of reason proves futile, and working to attain the capacity to do so. This attitude was expressed by the Iraqi president in his opening speech and in his comments to the speeches of others. It was also expressed by the president of the State of Palestine, PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat, in his decisive words against the US administration and Israel, in his call for economic sanctions against states which facilitate Jewish immigration to occupied Palestine, and those which support continued Israeli aggression against the Arab nation. In a similar vein, Arafat called for convening the joint Arab defense council; he stressed the military option and signalled that the patience of the Palestinian leadership is running out because neither the US nor Israel have made any appropriate response to the PLO's peace initiative.

Two: The political discourse of those espousing this line was logical and reasonable and in compliance with the concepts of the present stage. For perhaps the first time, the expression of this political line has made the link between the logic of force and the force of logic, and herein lies its strength.

## The outcome

After prolonged debate in the assembly hall and behind the scenes, the Baghdad Summit arrived at joint results which to a great extent were in favor of the «hardliners», but without irritating or embarrassing the «moderates» whose weight at the summit was greater. A glance at the balance of gains and losses allows us to assess the summit's results.

Iraq gained from this summit first of all simply because it was held in Baghdad, and a considerable number of the Arab leaders attended. Moreover, this summit took decisions which support Iraq's course on the eastern front in its war and peace with Iran, and in its confrontation of the campaign launched against it by the US, Israel and other parties.

The PLO came out victorious, first of all because the summit was convened in response to its call. Moreover, the summit took decisions that were supportive of the Palestinian peace initiative; it pledged financial aid and promoted Arab solidarity which has not excluded the military option and which stands by the Palestinian people and intifada.

King Hussein got more out of this summit than he expected. It was generally agreed that he succeeded in illuminating the situation in Jordan and why it needs support in the face of external threats.

Egypt and Saudi Arabia came out neither winners nor losers. They lost «the war of words» since the final communique condemned the US administration. But each state got something in return. Egypt repossessed the Arab League, and Cairo was again made the site of its permanent headquarters. Saudi Arabia obtained broad support, including from the PLO and Iraq, for its policy vis-a-vis Lebanon and the activities of the tripartite Arab committee in which Riyadh plays a main role.

The biggest winner at the summit was the concept of Arab solidarity based on upholding Arab rights and confronting challenges to the Arab nation. The Arab summit as an institution was a winner, for it regained its importance with this summit. To make a long story short, the Baghdad Sum-

mit put a halt to the line of decline that had characterized the preceding summits. This was expressed by Colonel Qaddafi in the final session when he said that the previous Arab summits came to nothing, while the Baghdad Summit amounted to something.

It is true that the summit was not completely equal to the challenge currently posed to the Palestinian people and the Arab nation as a whole. It failed to adopt many needed decisions, but at least it was an important step in the right direction. A number of factors contributed to the summit's success, especially the following three:

1. All the Arab leaders seemed to be aware that the conditions generated by the new international situation will not be to their interest unless they adapt to the changes and impose their positions as a major independent power bloc.

2. There was also broad awareness of the intensification of the aggressive, expansionist Zionist policy, its oppression of the Palestinian people, and the potential dangers it poses to Jordan, Iraq, Libya and other countries. The shadow of the Rishon Letzion massacre hung over the summit, as did the dangers posed by the unprecedented tide of new immigrants to Israel. Meanwhile, the Bush Administration seems just as close to Israel as were previous administrations, refraining from exerting any real pressure on it as some Arab regimes had expected. These factors weakened the line of surrender, and supported the logic of those who called for defending Palestinian and Arab rights by all means.

3. With the convening of the summit in Baghdad, the Iraqi leadership spared no effort to make it produce outstanding results that would conform to the regional role Iraq seeks to play. In this regard, the prevailing good relations between the PLO and Iraq were quite useful.

Real evaluation of the summit can only come in connection with the implementation of its decisions. This final judgement must wait for a time. In the interim, we are encouraged by the fact that the promised financial aid was extended to the PLO and Jordan only few days after the summit concluded. ●

# Turkey Ten Years After

## Renewed Repression and Revolutionary Upsurge

Ten years have passed since the fascist military coup of September 12, 1980 took place in Turkey. Recently, developments bearing highly significant consequences in terms of their dimensions and range of influence have been taking place in the domestic and foreign arenas of Turkey's political affairs. A brief look at the period extending from the September 12th fascist coup to the present day, will be helpful in clarifying the actual course of these dynamics and the role of certain events within this process.

by Filiz Cetin

The September 12th coup arrived with a program comprising the following issues: (a) to overcome the political crisis, (b) to overcome the economic crisis, (c) to eradicate the revolutionary struggle, and (d) to restructure the Turkish economy. The political crisis had drained any possibility of a parliamentary solution: The parliament had not been able to elect a president of the state for over a year. With all the deputies moving from one party to the other, in exchange for personal benefits, and widespread corruption, no one had any respect for the institution. The government, with its inability to put an end to the daily killings and attacks, had lost all credibility. The economic crisis had paralyzed the bourgeoisie. There was a great shortage of hard currency; investments had stopped; the country could not pay its debts; lack of hard currency threatened imports; high unemployment and inflation had decreased the buying power of the population; and there were widespread strikes.

The revolutionary struggle was winning ever wider recognition each day in the face of the deteriorating living conditions of the masses and their increasing dissatisfaction. This had to be suppressed in order for the austerity measures prescribed by the IMF and World Bank to be carried out to the letter without any opposition from the masses who would bear the brunt of these measures. The brutal nature of these measures would surely contribute to the development of even closer organic links between the

revolutionary forces and the masses. The bourgeoisie was aware of the potential threat such a situation would pose to the regime.

The division of labor within the imperialist hierarchy had assigned Turkey the new role of opening up its domestic market to foreign competition and adopting the Friedman model as used in Chile. To achieve this transformation of an economic structure where industry was basically oriented toward the domestic market into an export-oriented economy which opens its domestic market to foreign business, finance capital needed to have complete control over all resources. This in turn demanded total submission and silence on the part of the masses who would be suffering under the pressure of soaring prices, fixed wages, increasing unemployment, and official and non-official plunder sanctified under the slogan of activating all inert resources.

Within the framework of this program, all mass organizations were banned, and campaigns of arrest and manhunt were carried out. An atmosphere of pacification, depolitization and defeatism was imposed on the population. Repression was exerted against all centers of influence that could cause the regime problems in its drive to reorganize the country. The nascent armed struggle in Kurdistan got its share of the repression too. By banning all parties and blocking even any bourgeois opposition, the regime tried to monopolize the political life. All this was realized through the employment of systematic state terrorism, tor-

ture and massacres which were to keep Turkey constantly on the black lists of Amnesty International and other human rights organizations. Policies were implemented aiming to create new generations in total compliance with the system, and to strengthen religious and fascist trends among the masses. The goal was to freeze class struggle and to provide the atmosphere allowing the regime to go its own way without any second thoughts.

### What do we see as the tenth year ends?

—The working class has gone out on the streets in various forms of protest and demonstrations. Tens of thousands are on strike, with the number planned to rise to over a hundred thousand in September. An explosion in late January, killing 67 workers in a coal mine, evoked widespread protests all over the country, in factories and in universities. Mine workers, their families and the townspeople refused to allow a state ceremony to be held at the funeral and booed the representatives of the bourgeois parties and the government.

—Peasants, especially the tobacco and tea growers, are very desperate. Ten thousand tobacco producers demonstrated for over a week in the Aegean region in February, protesting the very low prices set by the government. They attacked local offices of the ruling Motherland Party (ANAP), destroyed the shops of tobacco merchants and blocked highways. Whole villages went on hunger strike, protesting the ever deepening poverty.

—In universities and high schools, the youth's democratic struggle is rising against the depoliticizing, reactionary education system, against the presence of police forces at educational institutions, and for the right to establish student unions. Progressive youth are waging a difficult struggle to break open the shell of silence and fear imposed on young minds during the reign of state terror.

—Over a thousand political prisoners are currently on hunger strike in nine ►



prisons, protesting the prison conditions and the increasing repression throughout the country.

—Two leaders of the United Communist Party of Turkey were released from prison in the beginning of May. In interviews published in the Turkish press after their release, they praised the prison conditions and said that they were not as bad as they had thought when they were in Europe. They expressed their intention to contribute to the stability of the democratic regime in Turkey by founding a communist party, contending that the party's illegality constitutes a setback for the regime itself.

—An intifada has broken out in Kurdistan. The guerrilla struggle, waged by the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) since 1984, took on a new dimension with the outbreak of broad popular demonstrations and resistance. The rising struggle in the prisons and the mountains finally enabled the Kurdish people to overcome the barriers of fear; they revolted against the heavy repression and poverty despite the massive military presence of the Turkish state. Young and old men and women, children with nothing but stones and sticks, have started to defy the Turkish army and Special Forces. The events broke out during the funeral of one of the 13 guerrillas murdered in an ambush. The military refused to give him a proper burial. The people of his town, Nusaybin, took to the streets in defiance of the military and made the funeral themselves. One person was killed and scores wounded when the military forces opened fire on the indignant crowds. Sev-

eral hundred were arrested. The masses displayed even greater defiance in the funeral the next day. They attacked government buildings; all the shops were closed down in protest; everyone was on the streets, tires were burnt on roads. The protest quickly spread to many centers in Kurdistan: Cizre, Idil, Erur, etc. Shops closed, and there were mass demonstrations with people openly shouting their support for PKK. In one instance people following the imam out of a mosque demonstrated in the streets chanting: Long live Kurdistan, Long live PKK. Reporters of the Turkish press noted that in the «East» there was the state and the PKK, the parties of the parliament were practically non-existent. Security forces were helpless to stop the masses. They broke shops open with axes. Many journalists were severely beaten by the military. A student of medicine set herself aflame in the town center of Diyarbakir in protest of the repression. This sparked off new demonstrations in several places. Students in the big cities of Turkey demonstrated in solidarity with the Kurdish people's intifada. Similar demonstrations were held on the occasion of the Kurdish Newroz holiday. When the government started to censure the developments in Kurdistan, PKK declared a boycott on the Turkish press, and the circulation of the daily papers dropped by 70%.

The evident organic link established between the guerrilla struggle and the masses threw the entire regime into panic, from the rulers to the parliamentary opposition. They formed an

anti-terror alliance, approached the NATO for help and threatened to attack «the evil at its roots» (Turkish and Kurdish revolutionary forces in exile).

—May First demonstrations were forbidden, but thousands of demonstrators defied the ban and went out on the streets although the police forces prevented them from uniting in a single demonstration. Three thousand were detained; two were wounded by police fire, one young girl being crippled for life. Istanbul was under the terror of added security measures. The population left the streets and preferred to stay at home, turning Istanbul into a ghost-town until demonstrators poured out on the streets in different parts of the city only to be attacked by the police shortly afterwards.

—Boycotts started to be organized to protest the rising prices.

—The two leaders of the United Communist Party of Turkey founded their party officially.

What had happened? Had the regime grown more democratic, allowing more room for dissent and demonstrations?

The September 12th regime had planned to institutionalize itself through a process of soft transition and controlled democratization. A new constitution was drawn up and laws passed to allow for this. A tamed bourgeois opposition was brought on stage. Safety valves were designed to let off tension at times of rising pres-

Cizre, Kurdistan in March





sure from the people, to prevent an explosion.

However, the aggravated contradictions, chained down for many years, quickly grew sharper and came out in the open with the resistance and protests of the Kurdish people, workers, students and peasants. Unrest has broken out even in the army where young officers began to send President Ozal letters declaring they could not get used to his style of government, his methods and various things taking place under his rule. The result was that 1,000 officers were dismissed from the army in May.

Ozal's Motherland Party (ANAP) had succeeded in winning 60% of the seats in the parliament even though it got only 26% of the votes, thanks to the electoral law it passed and revised to its own advantage. ANAP's support is now down to 14%, according to surveys made in April. Despite diminishing electoral support, ANAP uses its parliamentary majority to block early elections and to expand its grip on all posts of authority. Relying on this parliamentary majority, Ozal got himself elected as president. He continues to control ANAP, even though the president isn't supposed to be linked to political parties. He controls the ANAP government too. Scandals involving Ozal's critics keep mysteriously popping up. The political crisis has acquired dimensions which a «democratic» regime could no longer bear.

The authorities' premeditated plans had failed in the face of the rising tide of popular opposition. September 12th had no way out but to repeat itself. Early in April, the ruling ANAP and the opposition (Demirel's Right Way Party and Social Democratic Populist Party) left aside their differences and formed an anti-terror alliance in the face of the popular resistance; the target seemed to be the Kurdish intifada, but in effect it covered the whole of Turkey. The bourgeois opposition gave *a priori* consent to the measures the government would take against «terrorism.»

#### **Decree no. 413: Exile-censorship-special forces- free hand for torture and repression**

The 1981 constitution had created the conditions whereby martial law circumstances could be imposed without having to declare it, which would amount to a break for the «democratic regime.» Decree No. 413 did just this: —All publications carrying «false reports» concerning government activities in Kurdistan, disseminating «false» information or commentaries, or adversely affecting public order in the region, causing excitement among the masses, and/or preventing the security forces from carrying out their duties, would be banned or confiscated and destroyed in the whole of Turkey. —All printing houses publishing such

publications would be closed down.

—«False» and insulting information about the authorities would be punished by very high fines.

—Radio programs concerning the region must be approved by the Ministry of Interior and National Security Council.

—Those suspected of supporting PKK or of carrying out «harmful» activities shall be sent into exile and will have to live in places designated by the Regional Governor.

—Government officials suspected of «harmful» activities shall be dismissed or transferred to other regions.

—The Governor will have the right to stop trade union activities. The Regional Governor is free to take all measures necessary to prevent activities violating the «freedom of work.»

—Governors, authorities and security forces will not be accountable before the law for their practices.

—All sentences have been doubled concerning supporting illegal activities and/or hiding those wanted by the authorities.

—The Regional Governor was given special authority to demand that cases be filed by the prosecutor in the National Security Court.

—The Regional Governor has the authority to evacuate the population from any region it considers necessary and/or to combine several areas into one.

—Applications for transfer out of the region are welcome; jobs will be provided.

Prime Minister Y. Akbulut announced that: «The threat levelled against the indivisible unity of the State as a country and a nation, shall be stopped by arms. There is no other way out. The basic principle is to face armed attacks with arms... They have supporters in the region, though few. This must be admitted. For these incidents have been going on since 1984... Those supporting them must be severely punished when caught... The work of the security forces is growing more and more difficult. Terrorists dress and behave like the people of the region; it is difficult to tell the difference between the two... Terror is not directed against the government but

against the state itself. The basis of all measures is to be victorious in the field of arms against arms...» (April 9th, speaking before the meeting where the decree was adopted). Thus the government with the collaboration of the two main opposition parties, imposed a legally sanctioned regime of terror, censure, exile and repression - not only in Kurdistan, as it is designed to look, but throughout the whole of Turkey, as has been seen in practice.

Since the decree, most student unions have been closed and their leading activists arrested; several strikes involving tens of thousands of workers have been banned; editors-in-chief of 17 revolutionary magazines were arrested in mid-May; they have been on hunger strike since then; revolutionary magazines face great difficulty in finding printing houses to print their issues; May 1st demonstrations were attacked; journalists have been brutally harassed by the security forces; prisoners striking in protest of increased repression are under constant attack; a case has been filed against the newly founded United Communist Party in mid-June; 26 staff members of the 17 revolutionary magazines were arrested as they attempted to travel to Ankara to present the 500,000 signatures they had collected to the prime minister in protest of the situation.

Now that the opposition has quickly grown into one of unpredicted dimensions, all indications of resistance and struggle are fiercely attacked whereas all signs of trying to coexist with the regime or of repentance are rewarded. These developments indicate that after years of torture and repression, the peoples of Turkey and Kurdistan and their revolutionary forces are raising their heads once again. Struggle is advancing as revolutionaries at the same time continue to heal the wounds of the defeat and repression they have suffered. Revolutionary forces are now proceeding, putting to use the lessons of past struggle and defeats. The trends of unity are gaining in strength. Those forces putting their stakes in legal and parliamentary struggle have grouped together. There is also a new coalition of those forces who are determined to

achieve a coordination of the struggles of the peoples of Kurdistan and Turkey, and to radicalize the struggle of the masses in order to create revolutionary alternatives and overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie. They have formed the Revolutionary Unity Platform.

## New regional role

Turkey has always been dependent on foreign economic and military aid, with this dependence increasing in leaps and bounds over the years. Its foreign debts totalling around \$15 billion in 1980, have climbed to over \$40 billion in 1989. Turkey ranks third after Israel and Egypt among US military aid recipients, with \$550 million in 1989. «From the Truman Doctrine of the late 40s to the Carter and Reagan doctrines of the 80s, Turkey has been part of every strategic doctrine devised by Washington» (MERIP, September-October 1989). As a NATO member constituting NATO's southeastern flank, Turkey has always coordinated its foreign policy with the overall policies of the imperialist system.

As the socialist bloc in Eastern Europe has collapsed and ceased to be regarded as a threat, NATO's focus on the Middle East has increased. This has given new strength to the standing US argument that NATO's sphere of involvement should include not only the territories of its member countries, but also those regions having direct influence on their interests, and especially the Middle East. This had been part of NATO rhetoric since 1982, but the West European countries had been reluctant to actually implement it. In line with this shift in focus, there has recently been much high-level US and NATO traffic to and from Turkey. The Turkish government has been informed that with the «Soviet threat» receding as a result of the recent international developments, Turkey must agree to play a more active role in the Middle East if it wants to keep its military aid at the present level.

This «more active role» evidently implies increased military and political activity, as Turkey's economic activity in the region is already quite high.

Turkey is expected to enter into firmer alliances with the reactionary

states of the region, and especially Israel, and has taken steps to fulfill those expectations. An agreement has been concluded whereby Turkey will sell water to Israel, which as *Jerusalem Post* reports, will greatly contribute to solving one of the Zionists' most vital problems: shortage of water resources. The *Jerusalem Post* also notes the coincidence between the deterioration of Syrian-Turkish relations and the development of the Israeli-Turkish relations. Discussions are being held to resume the full diplomatic relations that had been dropped to a lower level in 1981 (as part of an oil deal sought with the Saudis). The Israeli lobby in the US has recently cooperated closely with the Turkish government to undermine the discussions held in the US Congress on the 1915 Armenian massacre.

Recently, on the issue of the «giant Iraqi cannon,» Turkey has not hesitated to act in coordination with the imperialist states, confiscating and returning to Britain some iron pipes destined for Iraq. Moreover, the Turkish prime minister declared that the acquisition of sophisticated military technology by Iraq is a security threat for Turkey. The fact that Iraqi oil pipes pass through Turkey gives the Turkish regime a weapon that could always be used. Incidentally, Iraq is Turkey's biggest trade partner in the Middle East.

Water has been a weapon frequently used as a threat against Syria. Ozal has declared on several occasions that Turkey can always stop the flow of water to Syria if it continues to provide facilities for Turkish and Kurdish revolutionaries - an accusation categorically denied by Syria. It is a widely known fact that Turkey assists the Muslim Brotherhood organization. Starting in February and March, the possibility of cross-border operations into Syria and, for the first time, Lebanon have been publicly discussed in the Turkish press by ministers and military officers. There have been proposals to bomb bases in Lebanon; the responsible of the Special Forces has declared that with a 10-man team, they can easily carry out an operation in Lebanon and kill PKK's leader. As of this writing in mid-June, a Syrian delega-



tion is in Turkey. Discussions seem to be at a stalemate with Turkey pushing on border security matters, and Syria demanding more water and a greater say over the flow of the Euphrates River.

A Turkish government delegation headed by the prime minister recently visited Iraq to discuss the issues of economic cooperation, across-the-border operations versus Kurds, and water. An agreement was reached whereby Turkey will give two credit packages of \$40 million each to Iraq, help reconstruct some factories, and provide technical training for Iraqi personnel. But Turkey has rejected Iraqi demands to increase the supply of water being released from newly constructed giant dams. As opposed to Iraqi and Syrian arguments that the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers are international waterways like the Danube in Europe, the Turkish government holds that they are Turkey's territorial waterways and that Turkey is the sole decision-maker as to how they are to be utilized. In response, Iraq refused to renew the cross-border operations agreement which expired in 1989. With its oil pipelines and water sources within Turkish boundaries, Iraq is obviously at a greater disadvantage in this bargain.

At this juncture, with Turkey aspiring to play a more active role in the Middle East and in line with its national interests, Turkey would not risk breaking relations with the Arab countries. However, with the strategic control it has over vital water sources, Turkey will have a considerable leverage for pressuring Iraq and Syria. A more active military role for Turkey implies the use of the close to 30 US military facilities in Turkey for direct intervention in Middle Eastern affairs in compliance with the old-new NATO approach to the scope of its activities. These bases, which were directly used by the US in its 1958 invasion of Lebanon, and in connection with Black September 1970 in Jordan, are now allegedly used solely for NATO purposes. There is also a discussion of replacing the older Turkish weapon systems with weapons to be removed from Europe, in keeping with the new disarmament treaties. The Turkish regime's claims that its southern

neighbors have become hotbeds of hostile activities against it ominously complement the NATO attempt to expand its sphere of involvement. This was shown when Turkey took the matter of the intifada in Kurdistan to NATO, as a foreign threat against Turkish territory; NATO and the US expressed deep concern over the developments. It is clear that an aggressive reactionary Israeli-Turkish axis is in the making discreetly, though it will need the participation of an Arab state to become an overt force in the Middle Eastern arena.

### **Broader implications of the revolutionary upsurge**

Turkish and Kurdish revolutionaries are proceeding against the tide in view of the retreat of socialism in the international arena. The general strengthening of world reaction and imperialism certainly has adverse effects on the struggle of the peoples of Turkey and Kurdistan. It is a fact that Turkey and the Middle East, like Latin America, are not among those areas where tension will be reduced.

Especially with the new mission given to Turkey with NATO shifting its emphasis from Europe to the Middle East, the revolutionary developments in Turkey and Kurdistan are of great importance for the oppressed peoples of the Middle East.

Turkey is a country with a relatively developed capitalist structure, class struggle and working class, and a strategic bastion of the imperialist system in the region. Thus, the advance of the revolutionary struggle in Turkey and Kurdistan would affect the balance of forces in the Middle Eastern arena in favor of the forces of national and social emancipation. Such a change has the potential to throw the imperialist system into a turmoil. It could activate dynamics that would give a new impetus to the world revolutionary process. The fascist Turkish regime and imperialism are aware of the broad potentials of the revolutionary upsurge in Turkey. While engaging in new massacres and terror to block the progress of this struggle, they are censoring all related news, while highlighting some so-called democratic practices to mislead world public opinion.

The Palestinian intifada has found its echo in Kurdistan. Castro's cry of «Socialism or Death» has found its echo in the struggle of the Turkish and Kurdish revolutionaries swimming against the tide in spite of all setbacks. The revolutionary struggles of our region have compiled a wealth of experiences that should be shared by all. There has always been mutual interaction between revolutionary struggles in various parts of the region. Now, in the face of the coming imperialist attack, consolidation of such cooperation and solidarity is a must.

To conclude this article, we will quote part of a call addressed to the progressive international public opinion by the Turkish and Kurdish organizations constituting the Revolutionary Unity Platform:

«Just as the peoples of Turkey and Kurdistan were pulling themselves out of the swamp of the fascist September 12th junta, they are being forced back into the abyss of a new «Decree of Silence.» The rights and positions won by revolutionary forces through struggle are now being wiped out by the all-out attacks of the fascist regime in the form of special warfare. The ruling classes consider this to be a question of «to be or not to be» and have launched an all-out attack against even the smallest crumbs of freedom... Our peoples will take action in self-defence in the face of these brazen violations of their right to live in Turkey and Kurdistan. The brutal methods employed by the ruling classes motivate our peoples to engage in broad armed resistance... Today there is a stark human problem in Turkey and Kurdistan. This deserves the attention of all progressive humanity and requires a sensitive approach on their part. No demagoguery can conceal the fact that the initiators and propagators of terror are not the revolutionary forces. On the contrary, these forces are acting in righteous self-defence in the face of state-sponsored massacres and attacks directed against themselves and our toiling peoples. There can be nothing more natural and more necessary than the resistance of our people by all means against this period of inquisition. This is the duty of those who claim to be modern and democratic people. We call on progressive humanity to shoulder its responsibilities.»

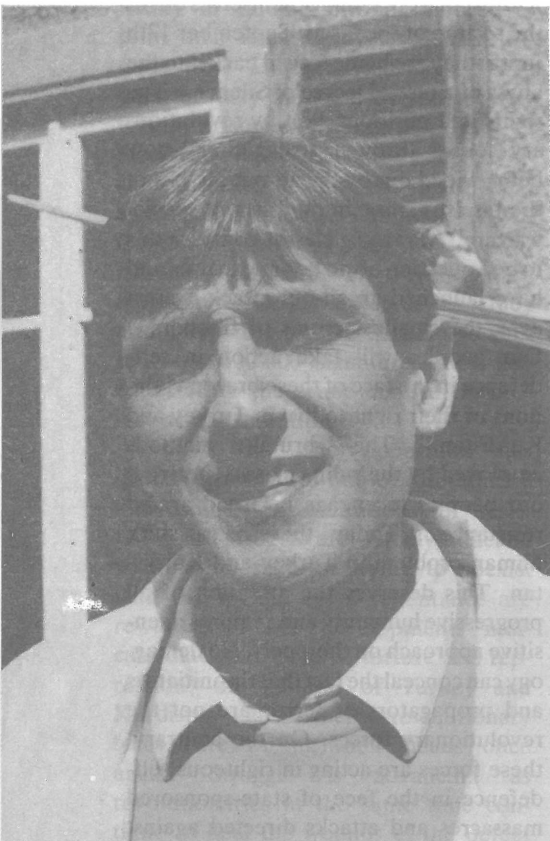
## Solidarity with the Intifada in Europe



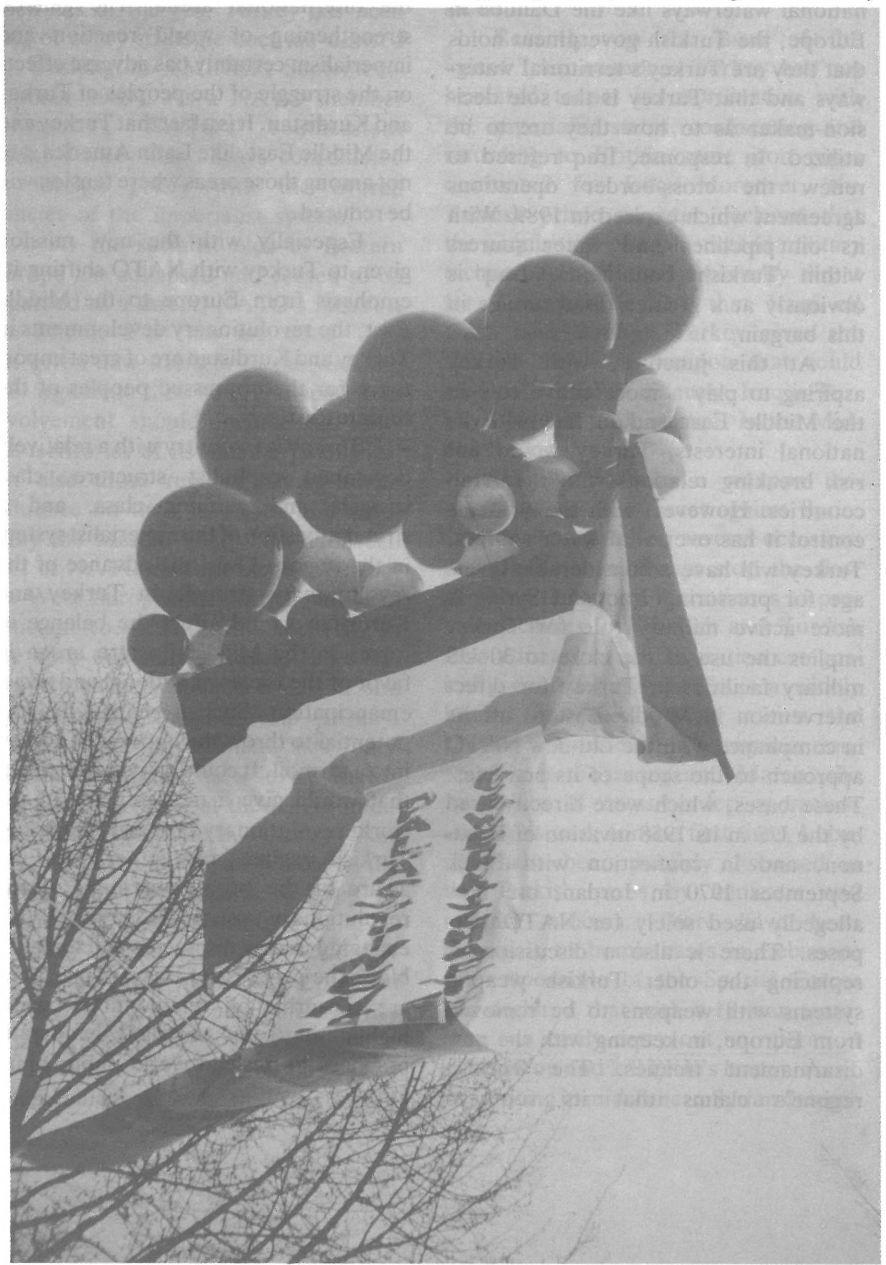
*Demonstration in Milan, Italy*



*Supporting the intifada, Hamburg, West Germany*



*On this page, we want to commemorate Raban Würth, active in the solidarity movement in Switzerland, who died one year ago (July 24, 1989). Raban was known for his enthusiasm in the political work; in his own words: «Love as a feeling and revolution as a feeling are identical.»*





## Letters from Political Prisoners

March 13, 1990  
Turkey

Dear comrade,

I got your address from one of the American political prisoner comrades who is of Lebanese origin. And I became happy because I get the possibility to correspond with Palestinian comrades.

I am a Turkish political prisoner charged with being one of the founders of our organization - Popular Liberation Army/Front of Turkey: Marxist-Leninist Armed Propaganda Union; and of participating in the operation of our organization in which Abraham Elazar, Mossad agent and director of El Al in Istanbul, was killed.

I was sentenced to death. Our appeal has been before the Supreme Military Court for five years, and can end in June 1990. My capital punishment too can be reversed. Our trial began in 1981 and ended in 1984, but our case has been pending with the Supreme Military Court since 1984.

I am very happy to get your address and to get the possibility of corresponding with Palestinian comrades. It is very important to follow the Palestinian revolutionary movement closely, because I am interested in the struggle in Palestine at least as much as the struggle in my country. Simply put, Palestine is my second homeland... When I was in Lebanon, I had many Palestinian and Arab comrades...

I have a request if you could possibly help me. I want to read all Palestinian revolutionary magazines in English... Another request: I have heard that a book was published about the life and struggle of one of the PFLP leaders, Dr. Wadia Haddad. Can you help me find that book?...

Revolutionary greetings,  
We will win,  
Struggle until liberation,

Sadek Suleyman Oge

*Editor's note: We have responded to Sadek's letter and are waiting for news about his appeal. To our knowledge, there is no book published in English on the life of the martyr, Dr. Wadia Haddad, who was a member of the PFLP leadership up until the mid-70s.*

May 22, 1990  
Marino, Italy

Dear comrades,

I got the last number of *Democratic Palestine* and the book of the calls of the intifada. Thank you.

I want you to know that I was moved from Rebibbia jail to Marino jail, so you should send the next issue to my new address.

Your periodical is always very interesting and useful. We can know better the situation in occupied Palestine and the debate inside the Palestinian revolutionary movement. From number 37, I have already translated some articles («The Theoretical Questions...» and the two about the Soviet Jewish immigration), because we found many new and important points on what is going on in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Now the book, «No voice is louder than the voice of the uprising,» gives us the original voice of the uprising. Good! In Italy there is a lot of interest among the leftist militants, and you can see in the big cities, meetings and demonstrations in support of the intifada. An increasing debate... and a strong solidarity.

In this direction, I think that it is important to read in Italian the calls of the intifada, because with reading that book everything is clear: the meaning of the liberation struggle, the new mass organization... and the need for international solidarity in the long-term struggle against the Zionist enemy. I think it is possible for us to translate the book and to have it published in Italian. I want to know if you agree with this. Of course the book will be published, we hope, by leftist militant publishers.

Dear comrades, in the last days we saw a sharpening of the struggle after the massacre of Palestinian workers, and we send all our militant internationalist solidarity to the heroic people of Palestine. We are close even from this jail!

Revolutionary greetings from Italy,  
Giovanni Senzani

*Editor's note: We welcome any efforts to spread the calls of the intifada in other languages. After all, they do not belong to us, but to the intifada itself. If you publish the calls based on the English translation published by Ibal Publishing Ltd., please note this in your edition. Of course, anyone translating the calls into another language must themselves be responsible for this translation.*



# Return Conference in London

by Itimad Musa

What is the practical significance of the Palestinian right to return? This was the theme of the Return group's conference held in London on June 9th. The Return group is an independent forum of anti-Zionist Jews and non-Jews whose aim is to promote a critical discussion of Zionism in theory and practice. The conference, entitled «The Palestinian Right to Return: Dream or Practical Politics?», brought together a variety of discussants who shed light on the many important aspects of the Palestinian right to return.

The long arm of the Zionist «security» apparatus also made itself felt at the conference. Chairman Don Betz pointed out in his opening remarks that it was necessary to have two separate tables for the discussants to protect the Israeli citizens participating in the panels from the Israeli «anti-terror» law which makes it illegal for them to share a forum with a member of the PLO. There were other more severe restrictions from the Israeli authorities affecting the conference. Maha Nassar, director of the Palestinian Women's Committees, was not granted a laissez-passe by the occupation authorities, preventing her from traveling to London to participate in the conference. Ms. Nassar's absence was doubly noticable as she was the only woman scheduled to formally participate in the conference. Michel Warschawsky, director of the Jerusalem based Alternative Information Center, was also unable to attend as the appeal to his conviction of providing typesetting services to an illegal organization is still pending (see DP no.38).

Mr. Betz, who is also chairman of the International Coordinating Committee of the UN Non-Governmental

Organizations on the Question of Palestine (ICCP), also addressed the issue of his participation in the conference, as there were unnamed parties who opposed it. In this regard, Mr. Betz stated that although the ICCP advocates a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, its work is guided by UN resolutions, including the one providing for the Palestinian right to return. In addition, he expressed his belief in the importance of forums such as the Return conference where people with differing views on the conflict and its resolution can engage in dialogue.

The first speaker was the representative from the PLO office in London responsible for foreign relations, Bassim Al Jamal, who relayed greetings to the conference from the PLO. Mr. Al Jamal emphasized the centrality of the right of the Palestinian people to return to their homeland, for without this right independence, freedom and democracy are empty words and meaningless ideas. He also pointed out the significance of the conference being held «under the shadow of Soviet Jewish immigration» to Palestine, which he characterized not as people freely choosing to live in a certain country, but rather a compulsory migration entailing replacing the Palestinian population with Soviet Jewish immigrants. «Such a strategy is no less than a blatant attack on our very existence as a Palestinian people, and cannot fail to inflame tension and hatred between the two sides,» he said. He ended by saying that without ensuring the Palestinian right to return there can be no peace in Palestine, and on this basis affirmed the need to struggle together to achieve peace.

Introductory remarks were made by Roland Rance, editor of *Return* magazine. Mr. Rance read out the Return group's platform which states:

—the Palestinian people, at whose expense the state of Israel was established and continues to exist, have the right to return, to self-determination and to their independent state on Palestinian soil;

—the Palestine Liberation Organization is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people;

—the state of Israel does not represent all Jewish people, neither legally, morally, nor in any other way;

—the Zionist structure of the state of Israel is at the heart of the racism and oppression against the Palestinian people, and should be dismantled. He then explained that this was the second conference the Return group has organized, the first one having been held in 1988 under the title, «The Case against Zionism: Zionism and Jewish Identity.» That conference covered one part of the Return equation, dealing with Zionism as it relates to Jews and Jewish identity. This conference was meant to cover the other part of the Return equation, dealing with the effects of Zionism on Palestinians.

Picking up on the point made by Don Betz concerning ICCP's support for the conference, Mr. Rance pointed out that although the Return group does not necessarily favor a two-state solution, such a solution does not necessarily conflict with the right to return. And it is ending the injustice done to the Palestinians, particularly those refugees in the diaspora and the occupied territories, which will put an end to the conflict. To illustrate this point, Mr. Rance mentioned a letter received by the Return group from a liberal rabbi in Israel who supports a two-state solution. His letter expressed dismay at the Israeli left for ignoring the issue of the right to return, which they mistakenly view as in conflict with their advocacy of a two-state solution. This only serves the purpose of the extreme right-wing in Israel by denying a major injustice.

In addition to the discussion panels, a small collection of anti-Zionist publications was exhibited at the conference. The collection, including articles from *Israel Imperial News*, *Matzpen*, *Khamsin* and *ISRAC*, was a miniature catalogue of the history of anti-occupation and of anti-Zionist thought in Israel dating from 1967. As

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Editor's Note: In the last issue of *Democratic Palestine* we mistakenly reported that Michel Warschawsky is a political prisoner in Israel. In fact, the appeal of his conviction is still pending. We regret this error.

the commentary accompanying the exhibit pointed out, history has proven their critique of Zionism correct.

The first panel speaker was Marwan Darweish, a Ph.D. candidate in the School of Peace Studies at the University of Bradford. Mr. Darweish, a native of Um Al Fahm in the Galilee, spoke about the effects of settler colonialism on Palestinians, particularly those inside the green line. Clarifying that the term settler colonialism applies equally to recent Soviet Jewish immigrants as it did to the various waves of immigrants before and immediately after the founding of Israel, he outlined the ongoing transformation of the Palestinian economic, political and social structure. Beyond further land confiscation and proletarianization of Palestinian peasants, the asymmetrical relationship between settlers and Palestinians in their separate economic, residential and educational spheres will be further entrenched by the recent settlement drive. In addition, Soviet immigrants will inevitably become part of the state security apparatus used to oppress Palestinians.

This colonization process is creating new areas of hinterland by immigrants who settle in and around Palestinian communities and who exploit the human and other resources available to them. As a result, the Arab villages inside the green line will become dependent on these hinterland settlements for medical care, employment and access to government offices.

Another aspect of the settlement drive is the accompanying dehumanization of Palestinians in an attempt to justify their displacement. Slogans of the past such as «a land without a people for a people without a land» are likely to reappear, in effect making Palestinians invisible.

The internal effects on Israeli society are manifested in increased daily incidents of racism, creating a situation in which there is no safety for Palestinians. This situation has created an atmosphere in which the concept of transfer is now legitimate, Israelis in general having lost their sense of outrage about it. Underpinning all of this is Israeli state policy which feeds this phenomenon, as do vaguely disguised

threats made against Palestinians by various Israeli officials across the political spectrum.

In his closing words, Mr. Darweish gave a chilling account of the disappointment expressed by neighbors of the man responsible for the Rishon Letzion massacre that he only managed to kill seven Palestinians as one indication of the growing racist attitude of Israelis. This in the context of the judicial system which sentenced Rabbi Levinger to five months in prison for killing a Palestinian, while he would risk one year imprisonment for sitting at the same table with the PLO.

The next speaker was Michael Palumbo, an independent researcher and author of *The Palestinian Catastrophe*. Mr. Palumbo discussed the nature of Zionism and the Zionist movement before 1948 as being based on expulsion to accommodate new Jewish immigrants. These realities form the historical precedents for present day immigration and dispossession, which serve the same purpose as they did over 40 years ago.

Continuing his discussion of the Palestinian dispossession, he criticized the apologists for Zionism who maintain that because there was never a formal blueprint for the expulsion of the Palestinians, Zionism is therefore not guilty of committing an historical injustice. He pointed out that rarely in history does injustice occur in such a mechanical way, yet this by no means exonerates the perpetrators from «sin.»

Turning to the war between the Arab states and Israel in 1948, Mr. Palumbo touched on some of the myths surrounding it. For example, the alleged Arab radio broadcasts which were said to have encouraged Palestinians to leave their homes were actually propaganda tactics employed by the Haganah. In fact, Arab states were threatening Palestinians not to flee. He also discussed the use of terror by Zionists to «encourage» Palestinians to leave, and made the case that concentrating on the few known cases, such as the Deir Yassin massacre, misrepresents the reality of what was happening at the time. That the world knows of only a few villages where massacres occurred gives the false impression that

they were isolated incidents when, in fact, they were frequent.

Ending his remarks, Mr. Palumbo reiterated the historic continuity to the present day threat of transfer, and expressed his pessimism about the future of Palestine.

The afternoon panel was led off by Dr. Uri Davis, director of the Jerusalem and Peace Service consultancy office and one of the founders of the Return group. In his remarks, Dr. Davis discussed the meaning of return, emphasizing that it is fundamental to any discussion of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He maintained that resistance to the Palestinian right to return is rooted in entrenched racism and the knowledge that Israel can't accommodate the economic restructuring Palestinian return would necessitate, as the state was constructed to benefit Jews only. In addition, speaking from a purely moral aspect, it is untenable to advocate democracy and then accord rights only to Jews.

As the right to return would entail radical changes in many spheres, its meaning needs to be clearly understood in order to make it a viable reality. What the right to return does not mean, according to Dr. Davis, is that the original Palestinian inhabitants of a destroyed village would displace the present day inhabitants. What it does mean is that the former inhabitants would have equal access to present facilities and receive compensation for lost property, as provided for under international law. Clarifying the meaning of return is essential to dispel the false polarity that victory and return for the Palestinians means Jewish expulsion and misery. In a truly free democratic Palestinian society, Jews could find a political home.

In ending, Dr. Davis criticized those who advocate a two-state solution as a final settlement as accommodators of Zionism, interested in protecting a racist system of separation. Joint struggle is based on joint values to achieve victory, he said.

Raja Aghbariya, secretary general of the Abna Al Balad movement, made the next presentation, focusing on return and the Palestinians inside Israel. Mr. Aghbariya criticized some elements in the PLO leadership for

backing down from their position concerning the right to return to clear the way for proposed US-sponsored «peace talks» with Israel. Although promoted as «realistic,» this position is anything but that, ignoring as it does the plight of exiles and refugees who have played a crucial role in the Palestinian revolution.

Moving to the issue of Palestinians inside the green line, he emphasized that all Palestinians - refugees, exiles, residents of the 1967 occupied territories - «belong to one nation and one homeland», and have a linked political destiny. In turn, their destiny is linked with that of Jews in Israel. It is on this basis that Abna Al Balad calls for the building of a democratic secular state in all of Palestine for both Arabs and Jews.

Although prevented from attending the conference by the occupation authorities, Maha Nassar's speech was read by Les Levidow, a member of the Return group. Ms. Nassar's speech put forth the right to return as a consensus in the Palestinian community, and emphasized the unity of Palestinians inside and outside their homeland through the intifada. One of the goals of the intifada is the right to return, the acute necessity of which is experienced particularly by the refugees, who bear the brunt of Israeli repression.

Ms. Nassar criticized the Israeli democratic forces whose position on the Palestinian state and the right to return is unclear. She outlined Palestinian rights as the right to return, self-determination and the establishment of an independent state. These rights necessitate increased international pressure on Israel to achieve them.

As two of the scheduled speakers were not in attendance, a few members of the audience were asked to make short presentations. The first of these was Prof. Norton Mozvinsky of North Connecticut University. Prof. Mozvinsky addressed the issue of religious fanaticism and the need to criticize ultraorthodox racism. He pointed out that recent comments by various religious authorities in Israel that the lives of non-Jews are less valuable than Jewish lives should be viewed as a clear political position. These statements underlie others issued by

ultraorthodox leaders that Israel should return part of the 1967 occupied territories. Although cheered by some for their seemingly liberal bent, these statements are based on the view that the failure of the Israeli army to crush the intifada endangers Jewish lives, and it is only because of this that Israel should withdraw. Clearly racist in nature, these statements should be recognized and condemned as such.

Mohammad Hawari of Matzpen took the floor next, his words focusing on the process of political change now going on in Palestine. He reiterated the point made by others that an independent state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip would not meet the aspirations of the refugees, nor would it accommodate them physically. In connection with this, he said that the question of return is alive in the hearts and minds of Palestinians inside the green line too. And although they reject the idea, even Jewish Israelis know the importance of return to Palestinians. Given this, he outlined the need to present Israelis with an alternative political framework so they can accept the idea of return. This would entail raising the consciousness of more Israelis, especially young ones, about the contradiction between the idea of a Jewish state and a democratic one. Mr. Hawari emphasized the need to bring the abstract concept of return into specific reality in political praxis. To do this he proposed activists taking up the cases of specific villages whose indigenous inhabitants were driven out, and discussing how they can practically return to or be compensated for their land.

The last of these speakers was Udi Adiv, a former Israeli political prisoner. Mr. Adiv also drew a fundamental link between the Palestinian right to return and solving the conflict. He criticized the Israeli left for failing to deal with this issue, and asserted the need for what he termed «Palestinian democracy,» free of the constraints of both Jewish and Arab nationalism. In his view, nationalism of these sorts work in opposition to democracy, and relinquishing them would trigger a metamorphosis leading to a democratic state in Palestine.

Concluding remarks were made by Mohammad Al Khalil speaking on behalf of Abu Ali Mustafa, member of the PLO Executive Committee and head of the Department for the Affairs of the Returnees. In his remarks, Mr. Al Khalil reviewed the historical experience of Palestinians under Zionism, emphasizing its racist, settler colonialist nature. Citing the failed history of settler colonialism in this century, he noted that this does not bode well for the two remaining bastions of this phenomenon: Israel and South Africa.

Touching on the historical falsity perpetrated by Zionists that they purchased 78% of the land gained in Palestine, in actuality the purchase figure was only 6%, with the rest being gained through aggression. Racist isolation, expulsion and massacres were employed against the indigenous inhabitants to remove them to accommodate Jewish immigrants. A corollary to this tactic was aggression of various sorts against Jews in other countries to «encourage» them to immigrate to Israel.

The present day reality descended from this history is one defined by seemingly endless concessions extracted from Palestinians, including the demand that the oppressed recognize their oppressors. But the question put on a strategic level cedes the conclusion that the present situation is untenable, and the only kind of independent state feasible is a secular, democratic one for both Jews and Arabs.

Obviously, the PLO has a central role to play in achieving this goal. One of the aims of this national liberation movement is to secure the right to return, for without this no comprehensive peace can be attained. This not only entails securing this right for Palestinians, but taking steps to curtail the threat Soviet Jewish immigration poses to the goal of peace and security. For it is clear that one group cannot enjoy human rights at the expense of another.

In defining the second PLO aim of self-determination, Mr. Al Khalil pointed out that many accept this notion on a theoretical level, but in practice they reject it. What this means



is that Palestinians themselves will determine their own destiny, without the interference of other Arab countries or imperialist nations, particularly the US. Ongoing attempts by the US and Israel to split the Palestinians and fragment their rights are destined to fail. Denying that the PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians and rejecting self-determination only delays the achievement of a comprehensive peace.

The third aim of the PLO is to increase the number of countries who recognize the declared state of Palestine, particularly the members of the

EEC who accept the idea of self-determination. This would further isolate Israel and the US in their rejectionist stand.

The future rests in the escalation of the intifada, which is the only way to move towards the realization of Palestinian self-determination. While the US rejects a fully empowered international conference and denies Palestinian national rights, it pressures the international community to do the same. Meanwhile, it supplies Israel with the means to suppress the intifada.

But the historic trend in the 90s is

towards democracy. And there is hope that in the international community the Middle East conflict will be part of that trend. The need is to unite against racism and fascism, so that both Jews and Arabs will be liberated from the confines of Zionist ideology.

The importance of the Return conference, bringing together as it did over 150 participants from some 14 countries, was its placing the Palestinian right to return firmly on the political agenda of activists in the international community, as well as in Palestine.

## New Book

# The Calls of the Intifada

Ibal Publishing Ltd. has come out with a book, *No Voice is Louder than the Voice of the Uprising* in English, which contains calls 1-47 of the United National Leadership of the Uprising in the Occupied Territories/State of Palestine. Covering the period from January 1988 until October 1989, this collection of the calls provides a first-hand document of the daily struggle and political positions of the Palestinian intifada in its first two years. The text of the Palestinian Declaration of Independence is also included.

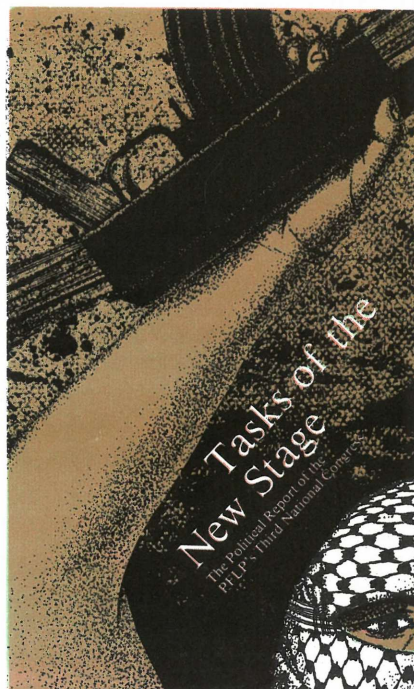
We have sent one copy of this book to all our subscribers, which will be counted as your receiving one issue of *Democratic Palestine*. You can order additional copies by writing to: *Democratic Palestine*, Box 30192, Damascus,

Syria. Please specify the number of copies you wish and enclose your payment in an international money order. Each copy of the book is \$5.

Copies of the PFLP's 4th Congress *Political Report and Tasks of the New Stage* (Report of the PFLP's 3rd Congress) are still available, if you want to order them at the same time. They are priced at \$5 each.

Payment for the books you order can be made by international money order or by depositing the amount in our bank account as shown on the inside front cover of this magazine. Sorry, we cannot accept personal checks for amounts less than \$20.

No Voice is Louder  
than the Voice of the  
Uprising



Political Report  
of the PFLP's  
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