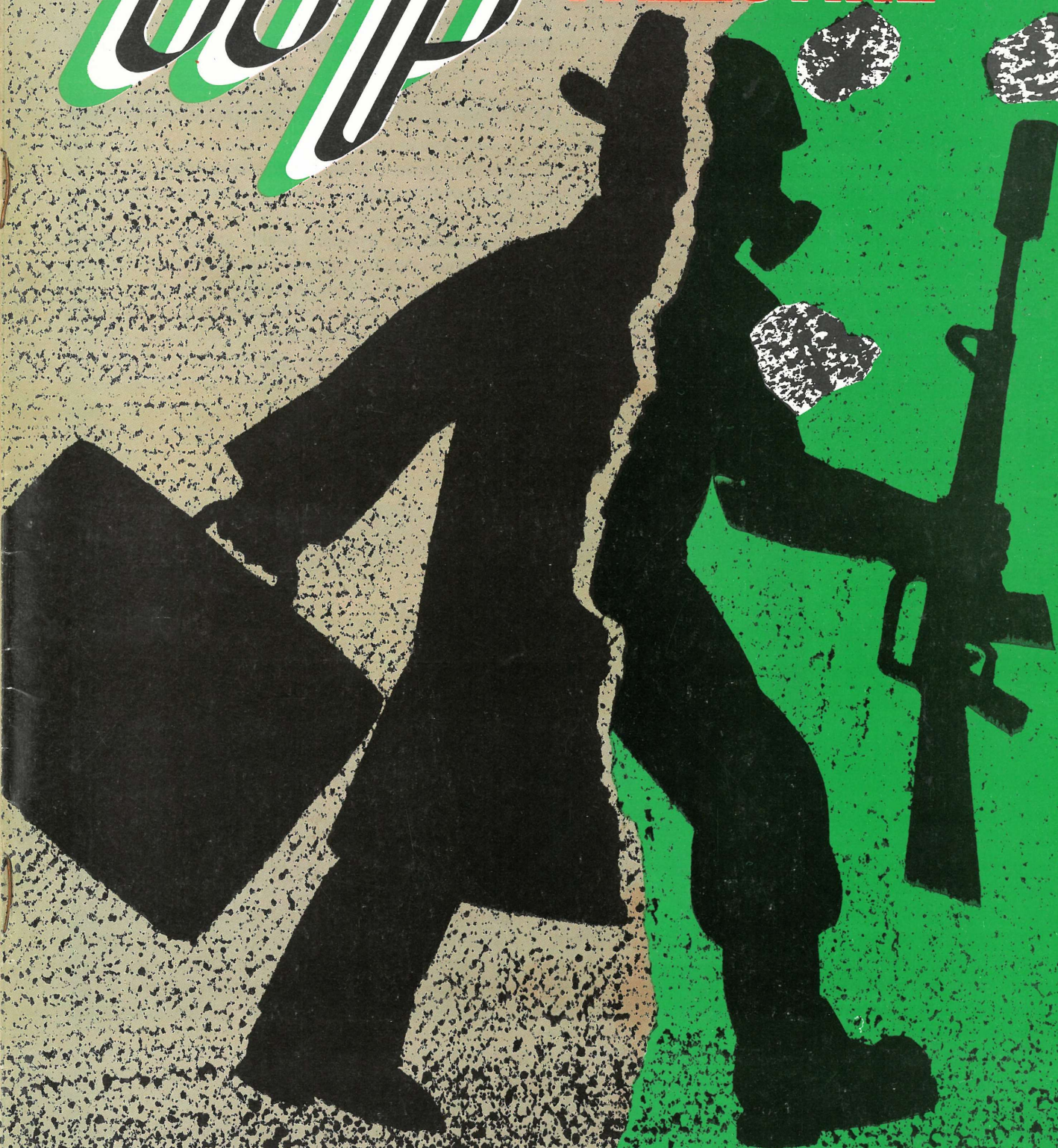


February 1990
No. 37

DEMOCRATIC PALESTINE



Stop the New Immigration



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

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Soviet Jewish Immigration

The mass influx of Soviet Jews to occupied Palestine became a reality late last year. As of January, immigration reached about 5,000. This poses an extremely serious threat to the Palestinian cause in both immediate and long-range terms.

The most obvious effects of the new immigration are apparent in relation to the intifada. For over two years, Palestinians under occupation have been mounting an unprecedented struggle that has called into question the future of the Israeli occupation. As a result, the Zionist state is facing the most serious crisis in its history, the more so since its most prized institution, the military, has been unable to end the intifada. On the contrary, the brutality exerted against the Palestinian masses has increased Israel's isolation on the international level, and elicited condemnation even among its closest allies, such as the West European states.

In the midst of this situation, where there is a real possibility that ongoing struggle, combined with international pressure, could eventually push Israel towards withdrawal and conceding to Palestinian rights, a whole new element has been injected. The mass immigration of Soviet Jews provides Israel with a material as well as moral boost. There is no doubt that the Zionist leadership will capitalize on this to try to alleviate the crisis induced by the intifada, and to divert international and local attention away from the Palestinian issue altogether.

Shamir's own statements bear ample witness to this. On January 14th, he told a Likud gathering: «What is clear is that for a big immigration, we need a big and strong state» (*Guardian*, February 6th). Earlier, the prime minister had characterized the Soviet Jewish immigration as follows: «This is one of the great historic opportunities that has been presented to our nation since 1948. Such immigration will have a great impact on the economy, the development, security and demography of our country» (AP, January 8th).

Only when Israelis begin to see that peace would better guarantee their security than war, will there be an Israeli

consensus for withdrawal and dealing with the Palestinian question in terms of the Palestinian people's legitimate rights. The new immigration mitigates against the creation of such a new Israeli consciousness, and it is in this sense that it poses a major threat to the intifada and its goals of freedom and independence. The Israeli leadership has been granted a respite, delaying the time when it will be forced to come to terms with the reality of the Palestinian cause.

The new immigration also increases the danger that the Zionists may opt for «transfer,» i.e., mass expulsion of Palestinians from their homeland as a «final solution.» The Palestinian right of return is further jeopardized, for with the increased immigration, the Zionist leadership is escalating its drive to have already expelled Palestinians resettled in the Arab countries.

Israel has received a new reserve force for the occupation army. This will ease the burden on the soldiers who have already been doing time in the war on the intifada, and thus lessen demoralization in the army, whereas the increase of discontent in the army could be developing into a significant factor mitigating for withdrawal. No less important, Israel is getting a new injection of professionals and other skilled workers who will be useful in further development of industry.

In this context, it is a matter of secondary importance whether the new immigrants are settled in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Of course, new settlers augment the facts created by the Zionist movement aiming to retain permanent control of the 1967 occupied territories. But the structural ramifications of the projected influx of Soviet Jews are much more profound than the question of whether the new settlers live in the Zionist state, or the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The new immigration is the Zionist leadership's first victory in the demographic battle since emigration from Israel began to exceed immigration over a decade ago. This added to the Zionists' fear of the higher Palestinian birth rate which threatens the dream of a «pure Jewish state» and portends the erosion of

the Jewish majority in Israel itself in the next century.

Today, with the convergence of two quite different impulses on the international level, the Zionist movement is making great leaps in the demographic battle which some estimate to be the most fundamental aspect of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. On the one hand, the US administration's compliance with the Israeli wish, to close the door to Soviet Jews wishing to immigrate to the US, is the decisive factor promoting the new immigration to Israel. On the other hand, one of the effects of the new thinking in Soviet policy has been allowing increased numbers of Jews to emigrate. Whereas prior to 1989, about 90% of Jews leaving the Soviet Union chose a destination other than Israel, with the new US policy, the ratio is reversed. Now, 90% of Jews leaving the Soviet Union are virtually forced to go to Israel, in a situation reminiscent of that prevailing at the end of World War II, when most Western countries closed their doors to holocaust survivors who were channeled to the Zionist state-in-the-making.

In this light, the new immigration not only violates Palestinian rights in their own homeland, but also violates the right of Jewish individuals to choose where they want to live. Once again, it is shown that Zionist immigration policy and US support to this are not determined by human rights considerations, but by the need to have a strong Zionist state in the strategic Middle East.

Based on all these problems, the PLO has called on the Soviet Union to reconsider its policy concerning Jewish emigration. Stemming this new attack on the Palestinian cause should be a prime concern of all those forces who advocate a just peace on the Middle East. The peace efforts exerted so far have revealed that it is Israeli intransigence that is blocking the way. Accordingly, the top priority should be creating the conditions which would induce Israel to withdraw its occupation army and recognize Palestinian rights. Supporting the Palestinian intifada, so that it can continue and escalate, is the main means for enacting such a change. ●

Israel vs. the PLO

Who's Serious About Peace ?

For months now, the Israeli government's refusal to even talk peace has been smoothed over by US-Egyptian diplomacy. The resulting impasse requires the PLO to rethink its current policy.

If anyone thought that Shamir's election plan was a real peace proposal, subsequent events have proved otherwise. Since it was put forth in the spring of 1989, almost a year has gone by with the US, Israel and Egypt quibbling about procedures for furthering what they call the peace process. There has been tons of pressure on the PLO and continued Israeli brutality to eradicate the intifada, but literally no pressure on Israel, only expressions of minor vexation. This is despite the fact that a number of PLO leaders have expressed flexibility about the means of getting Palestinian-Israeli talks underway.

Israel categorically rejected Egyptian President Mubarak's 10 points which aimed to market Shamir's own plan; it accepted US Secretary of State Baker's 5 points of October 1989 only conditionally after insisting on a series of amendments. As of this writing in late February, it was still impossible to convene a meeting of the US, Israeli and Egyptian foreign ministers to discuss the possibility of an Israeli-Palestinian meeting.

Most recently, Israeli officials tried to blame the impasse on the February 5th attack on an Israeli tour bus in Egypt, in which nine Israelis were killed and another 21 injured, but this pretext is too transparent to be taken seriously. The projected US-Egypt-Israel meeting had already been delayed until after a Likud Central Committee meeting originally planned for February 7th. It is to be remembered that last summer's Likud caucus imposed an interpretation of the Shamir plan that ruled out any efforts to develop it in a way that might be minimally acceptable to the Palestinians.

The peace process has been stalled for months, ostensibly due to procedural matters such as: What Palestinians can be included in a delegation to talk to an Israeli delegation? Those from East Jerusalem? Those who have been expelled? What is the agenda? (Shamir says his plan only), etc. But the real catch is the Israeli government's unwillingness to come to terms with talking to the PLO in any form, since it represents the Palestinian people whose existence as a coherent national-political body is viewed as the negation of the Zionist project. This view is shared, to varying degrees, by almost all top Israeli officials. As of now, it has remained basically unaffected by the PLO's concessions and flexibility.

Bolstering the Israeli hardcore

On the background of this Israeli perception, one can analyze the series of minor crises in the Israeli government. The first such issue in recent

months was Ezer Weizman's alleged PLO contacts which led Shamir to try to fire him. Interestingly enough, the messages Weizman sent to the PLO reportedly urged the latter to align with Egyptian policy and accept the Baker plan. In the face of opposition to Weizman's dismissal, a compromise was reached between Likud and Labor in early January, whereby Weizman retains his portfolio as Science Minister, but will be excluded from the inner cabinet. Obviously, Shamir wanted to «protect the integrity» of the Likud-Labor hardline merger that really rules Israel today, despite the divergence of opinion that prevails in the government and Knesset as a whole. At the same time, he succeeded in using the Weizman case to send a message to the US that Israel is not about to talk to the PLO.

The second crisis came from the other side - relatively speaking. The Likud Central Committee finally met on February 12th, and Sharon resigned as minister of trade, transportation and industry, after failing to rally his party fellows around his attack on Shamir for alleged concessions in relation to the peace process. (In the preceding days, Sharon had accused Shamir of accepting to meet with a Palestinian



delegation that would include persons expelled from the occupied territories, i.e., PLOers.) Again, Shamir bolstered his own leadership, as well as the prevailing government line of de facto blocking peace, while making a pretense of cooperation with US diplomatic efforts.

The day after the Likud session, the Israeli government survived 10 no-confidence motions in the Knesset, six of them protesting Shamir's own statement about the need for «Greater Israel» to absorb new Soviet Jewish immigrants. Also the flurry around Sharon's resignation gave Shamir a chance to send signals to the US: Look! I'm besieged on all sides. Be patient so I can ready the Israeli political scene for peace.

Moreover, in early January, the Israeli interior ministry slapped a travel ban on a number of prominent Palestinians who were thought to be planning to travel to Cairo to discuss a Palestinian delegation to peace talks. Later in the month, one of them, Faisal Husseini, thought to be a candidate for the delegation, was arrested (later released).

All this serves to confirm that the real aims of the Shamir plan were as follows: (1) foiling the Palestinian peace offensive, by throwing the ball back in the PLO's court and making it appear as the party rejecting peace, especially in view of the broad international support and attention accorded to the PLO after the 19th PNC; (2) buying time for new attempts to terminate the uprising; and (3) creating an alternative Palestinian leadership that would comply with Zionist plans.

Baker agrees to talk about talks

The Bush Administration endorsed Shamir's plan as the centerpiece for Middle East diplomacy, based on the historical US policy of unconditional support to Israel, and a decision not to forward an initiative of its own. At the same time, the US administration was aware that the plan needed embellishment in order to lure Palestinians into the game of quelling the intifada politically and thus resolving Israel's dilemma; the US also recognized the advantages of having the PLO's con-

sent to this process. To this end, Baker proposed 5 points in October 1989, with the idea of convening a US-Egyptian-Israeli meeting to discuss ways of convening a Palestinian-Israeli meeting. Baker's points were accepted by the Egyptian government which set about trying to obtain the PLO's consent as well.

However, in the face of outright Israeli rejection, the US accepted amendments to its points in December. Most important of the assumptions on which Israel predicated its acceptance were: (1) restricting participation in elections to Arabs from the occupied territories, i.e., Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, but not Jerusalem; (2) limiting the agenda of talks to the election plan; and (3) allowing Israel to participate in the selection of a Palestinian delegation. Thus, the US accepted Israeli veto power over the Palestinian delegation, while American officials promised not to force the Israelis to talk to the PLO.

To date, Israel has not definitely accepted the amended US formula for talking to Palestinians. Still, US officials have exerted no pressure on Israel, not even to comply with ideas which they deem advantageous to Israel in the long run.

US compliance with Israel has been exhibited in a number of other fields as well. In its first year in office, the Bush Administration used its veto in the UN Security Council three times to save Israel from international censure. In December, Vice-President Quayle announced the administration's aim of revoking the 1975 UN resolution which equates Zionism with racism. Moreover, despite Bush's many declarations about limiting nuclear proliferation, the administration has taken no action concerning the reports of Israeli-South African cooperation that enabled the apartheid regime to develop nuclear missiles. This inaction is not because the reports are undocumented - they are based on US Defense Department and CIA information, among other sources.

Most importantly, by denying entrance to Soviet Jewish emigrants, the US has given Israel an enormous demographic boost which can only

serve to harden Israeli ideas that the Zionist state can remain large and strong despite being besieged by the intifada.

The intifada and peace

The US's kid glove treatment of Israel and callous indifference to peace prospects stands in sharp contrast to the current reality in occupied Palestine. The Palestinians of the occupied territories are continuing their daily struggle, asserting the necessity of fulfilling Palestinian rights, as the basis of a just peace. The demand for peace was dramatically emphasized by a series of internationally sponsored events in the last days of 1989, with the title- 1990: Time for Peace, arranged by the NGOs, Israeli peace forces and a Palestinian committee. Among the activities was a human chain around the Old City of Jerusalem, in which 20,000 participated. Even more would have come if not for the occupation army refusing entry to Jerusalem for Palestinians coming from the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The hostile stance of the Israeli government was also exhibited when the police attacked the demonstrators. At least 60 were injured, including members of international delegations. One of them, a progressive Italian woman, lost her eye when the police's water cannons shattered glass in a nearby building. At least 50 people were arrested, 16 of them Palestinians.

Israeli brutality against the masses of the intifada continues unabated. In mid-January, the occupation army opened yet another detention center in the Gaza Strip. In early February, the occupation authorities began sealing Palestinian homes on the pretext that a family member had thrown a stone, in a new spiral of collective punishment. Previously sealing and demolition were reserved for houses where someone was accused of throwing firebombs or a more serious act. Now it can hit literally each and every family. Such innovations in the war on the intifada are another confirmation that the last thought on the mind of the Shamir government policymakers is finding ways to deal with the Palestinians in the interests of peace. ►

PLO policy

Initially, the PLO dealt with Mubarak's 10 points as questions directed to Israel. The Baker plan, for its part, was presented to the PLO only via the Egyptian government. In this situation, the PLO Executive Committee and the Palestinian Central Council advanced five points summing up the Palestinian position on the peace efforts:

1. Palestinian-Israeli talks should be a preliminary step towards the convening of an international peace conference under the auspices of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, with the participation of all concerned parties, including the PLO.

2. The PLO has the sole right to form any Palestinian delegation to such talks, without preconditions.

3. The projected elections would be only a first stage of a comprehensive settlement aimed at establishing peace.

4. The agenda for talks should be open.

5. The Palestinian position is based on the Palestinian peace initiative which is grounded in international legitimacy.

After a series of meetings of the PLO Executive Committee in Cairo and Tunis, four questions were addressed to the US administration in relation to the Baker plan; they were:

- a. Does the PLO have the authority to appoint the Palestinian delegation and to include Palestinians from inside and outside the occupied territories?

- b. Is the US ready to accept the Palestinian peace initiative as a basis for a Palestinian-Israeli meeting, along with other proposals that have been forwarded?

- c. Is the US ready to accept an open dialogue without preconditions?

- d. Does the US agree to the talks as being a preliminary step towards the convening of an international conference with the participation of all parties, including the PLO?

Subsequently the PLO decided to respond by saying that it agrees on the Baker plan only in the context of the Palestinian Central Council's resolutions. The PLO was subject to intense pressure from the Egyptian regime to accept Baker's points unconditionally.

In the process, the Egyptian regime exhibited its bad faith by misrepresenting the US position to the PLO, to make it appear more attractive, and also misrepresenting the PLO's stance to the Bush Administration, to make it appear more conciliatory. The Egyptian regime has exerted all efforts for a settlement, but not for one that fulfills even minimal Palestinian rights. The fallacy of its efforts has been proven by reality, for the PLO has dealt flexibly with the political efforts to find a solution, but the Israeli and US stands have remained virtually unchanged.

All along, there have been forces within the PLO pointing out that the concessions given by the PLO go beyond the principles of the Palestinian peace initiative decided by the PNC, and that this could endanger Palestinian rights without eliciting reciprocal concessions from either the US or Israel. With the deadlock in the efforts to arrange a Palestinian-Israeli meeting, the Palestinian leadership as a whole grasped this fact. It realized that responding to the US-Egyptian pressure was not leading to any change in the situation, much less towards real peace. It perceived that dealing with the various plans floated by the US, Israel and Egypt could only lead to undermining the historical gains made by the Palestinian struggle over the years, and the status of the PLO itself, as the leader of the Palestinian people and their sole representative.

It has become obvious that there will only be more pressure put on the PLO, and the Israeli repression aimed against the intifada increases rather than decreasing parallel to this point-less diplomacy. Meanwhile, Israel is creating new facts on the ground with the influx of Soviet Jewish immigrants, as well as efforts to bring more Jews from Ethiopia to occupied Palestine. Not only are these developments a blow to the peace process; they push in the direction of «transfer» - i.e., expelling large numbers of Palestinians from the occupied territories to Jordan, based on Likud's idea that this is the site for a Palestinian state. Of course, carrying out this plan could only occur in the context of a major new Israeli aggression which could spark an explosion in the whole area.

The question now is: Was it necessary for the PLO to undergo this experience, wasting so much time, in order to realize these facts whose broad outlines were apparent long ago? In the light of the need to protect and develop the intifada, does the PLO have the possibility or the right to lose time running after the illusion of a change in the US policy of unconditional support to Israel? Or to make repeated trips to Cairo, that result only in being subjected to pressure against the interests of the Palestinian people and cause? Most recently, the PLO was the target of a campaign in the Egyptian media, reprimanding it for not having unconditionally condemned the attack on the Israeli tour bus. The real motive of this press campaign is not so much connected to the PLO's position on this military operation, as it is an expression of the Egyptian regime's irritation that the PLO did not accept the Baker plan as it was.

For a new PNC

With the purpose of reviewing all these developments and PLO policy in this regard, the PLO Executive Committee, along with the leaders of the Palestinian resistance organizations (PLO-members), held a series of meetings in Tunis in late January and early February. One of the important decisions adopted at these meetings was to convene the Palestinian Central Council in mid-March. A special committee was established to determine the membership of the upcoming PNC, that should be convened within six months. A number of other resolutions were adopted related to supporting and escalating the intifada, and launching a campaign to face the dangers of the mass immigration of Soviet Jews to Israel.

The significance of these resolutions is not only that they could pave the way for a more correct PLO policy; they could also contribute to crystallizing more effective Arab support to the confrontation of the Israeli plans and aggressive policies, as well as providing a firmer base for increasing international solidarity with the Palestinians' struggle for their national rights.

Shabura Camp, February 1990

Phyllis Bennis is a progressive US journalist who has traveled extensively in occupied Palestine since the outbreak of the intifada.

Umm Tala'at sat quietly, surrounded by her extended family and friends. The visitors had come to the Zakout family's bare, two-room house in Shabura Camp in Rafah, to mourn with Umm Tala'at for her 18-year-old son, Ayman, killed two days earlier by an Israeli soldier's bullet.

Eighteen months earlier, friends and family had gathered once before with Umm Tala'at, when her eldest son, Tala'at, also eighteen at the time, was shot and killed by soldiers of the occupation. Mrs. Zakout had raised Tala'at and Ayman, as well as their younger brother and two sisters, on her own; her husband had died fifteen years earlier. Umm Tala'at had herself spent 15 months in prison, beginning shortly before the intifada started. Among her cousins and extended family, nearly 25 people are currently in prison.

Rafah's Shabura Camp, at the southern tip of the Gaza Strip, has been the scene of four weeks of savage repression. Following the attack on an Israeli tourist bus in Egypt, Israeli occupation troops launched a massive retaliation against the people of Rafah. Some Israeli officials claimed the perpetrators of the bus incident came from Rafah. Palestinian residents dispute this, but the allegation was enough to justify a savage weeks-long siege using bullets, helicopters, and a fearsome gas, apparently a nerve gas, which collectively devastated the population.

It started with a curfew clamped on the camp. Then, as one Shabura resident described it, «After the first couple of days, they didn't seem to bother much with curfews. Except at night (during Gaza's 'normal' intifada curfew of 8:00 p.m. till 3:00 a.m.), the soldiers almost seemed to *want* us to go into the streets, so they could mow us down».

After the first few days, bullet-inflicted casualties strained the hospitals to overflowing. It was so bad, with scores of gunshot injuries every day, that UNRWA sent an almost-unprecedented letter of protest to the Israeli occupation authorities, stating concern about the high level of casualties and the resulting problems for the UNRWA medical facilities and personnel.

Some of the weapons created new challenges for the medical teams. Shabura residents described the horrific effects of a different type of gas than the usual extra-strong CS tear gas provided to the Israeli military by the U.S. «We haven't seen this kind of gas since the first weeks of the intifada,» one victim of the new gas said. «It seems to affect the neurological system, not just the eyes. It made people feel sleepy, and for some, it caused a kind of paralysis. For me, my hands were affected; I couldn't move my hands or close my fists for about half an hour.» A Gaza journalist, filming the helicopter-borne gas attack, described how the gas cannisters, still in cartons, were dropped in quantity on crowded residential sections of the refugee camp. «I saw one house where 22 cannisters of the gas had landed inside,» he said. «This was already seven hours after the gas was dropped, and I still couldn't stay in the house for even a minute. Imagine what it must have been like for the people inside.» The cameraman described the cannisters as printed with green Hebrew letters, not written in English as the ordinary (US-supplied) tear gas cannisters usually are.

The local Palestinian cameraman was one of the only journalists working in Gaza during the most intense periods of the assault. The Israeli

occupation authorities had declared the entire Gaza Strip a «closed military area» during much of the Rafah assault, so that journalists and non-residents were routinely turned away at the checkpoints. But those restrictions would not, by themselves, have prevented the usually creative and often innovative press corps from finding a way in to the besieged camp, restrictions or no restrictions. The more serious problem lay in the virtual absence of the foreign press from all of Palestine during this period. Dozens of reporters, camera crews, radio correspondents, etc., once stationed in Jerusalem to cover the «intifada beat» have been transferred to new hot spots, with the eastern European capitals edging out the Palestinian uprising in the cut-throat competition for media attention.

Many Shabura residents described their anguish and their fear at the realization that the Israeli shootings, gassings, arrest raids and beatings, were taking place completely outside the spotlight of global media attention. Despite the difficult conditions facing Gaza residents because of economic deprivation and severe repression, especially in Shabura and the other camps, people are avid followers of the twists and turns of political developments in the Soviet Union, the European socialist countries, and other focal points of global conflict. But that political consciousness co-exists with a parallel awareness that every news team transferred from Jerusalem to Prague or Berlin means the loss of an important weapon in Palestine's battle for international public opinion.

There is bitter knowledge, too, that Tel Aviv is just as aware of that press vacuum in occupied Palestine, and that the Israeli assaults in Shabura, in Rafah, in Khan Yunis and elsewhere, against Tala'at and Ayman Zakout and the hundreds of other Gaza victims, are carefully designed to take advantage of that vacuum.

Theoretical Questions Raised by the Intifada

The intifada has revitalized the contemporary Palestinian revolution, raising many new theoretical issues, while reasserting old ones. Turbulent revolutionary periods demand that we find new styles of thinking and practice, suitable to these developments, in order to create the means of struggle needed for the new situation.

The dialectic of the interior and the exterior

Among the issues raised with new urgency is the relation between the struggle inside and outside of Palestine - the interior and the exterior. This has always been a particularity of the Palestinian revolution since more than half of the Palestinian people live in exile. Over the years, the center of gravity - the leadership, as well as the military, informational and financial headquarters - has been stationed outside Palestine. This gives the relation between the interior and the exterior a different character than that prevailing in other liberation movements. In the Palestinian situation, this has become a major issue relevant to the revolution's overall political and military activities; it is an essential issue in the Palestinian strategy.

The revolution's center of gravity was supposed to be inside Palestine all along - from the time of the resistance's presence in Jordan, later in Lebanon and so on. Yet the center was always outside, and while it devoted attention to the interior, this was inadequate. The 1982 invasion and the PLO's departure from Beirut was a big loss for the Palestinian revolution's exterior center. Due to these losses, the arena of action in the occupied territories took on top priority. In the period from 1982 until the outbreak of the uprising, there were significant developments which made the uprising inevitable.

Being primarily in exile, the revolution was subject to the influence and pressure of the Arab regimes. This pressure had a great influence on the Palestinian strategy and tactics. The various components of the Palestinian leadership have derived political and military weight from their respective Arab counterparts among the ruling Arab bourgeoisie. This further complicated the internal struggle within the Palestinian revolution, and influenced the policies, activities and confrontation plans of the Palestinian leadership as a whole. Of course, the Arab regime's influence has not been the deciding factor in the Palestinian bourgeoisie's policies, because in the final analysis, the decisive factor is chiefly internal. However, the factor of the Arab regime's influence gains more significance, the more the Palestinian bourgeoisie's policies approach the official Arab policies.

The fact that the center of gravity lies outside Palestine, has had a series of negative effects on the Palestinian revolution. Most prominent among these are the military blows and repression to which it has been subjected; moreover, the revolution has been partially deprived of its opportunity to work among the masses. Nonetheless, the concentrated presence of the revolu-

tion's center in the exterior has enabled a number of achievements over the last decades.

It was not due to the wish of any organization that the center of the revolution has been in the exterior. Rather, this situation was dictated by a number of historical circumstances, both objective and subjective. Due to the particularity of the Palestinian cause, the interior-exterior dialectic is bound to continue. Therefore, any discussion of this matter revolves around a proportional shift in this relationship, i.e., relative shifts in action and influence.

After the 1982 invasion of Lebanon, the principal Palestinian organizations concentrated on the work in the occupied territories. This push, together with the accumulation of militant experience by the masses in the occupied territories, paved the way for the uprising which, in turn, strongly revived the issue of the proportional weight between the interior and the exterior. Being a qualitative turning point in the Palestinian national struggle, the uprising necessitated a new form of relation between the interior and exterior - and a shift in favor of the interior. This will make the interior more qualified to chart the Palestinian policies in the future.

There are different opinions concerning this issue in the Palestinian arena: The Palestinian Communist Party calls for marginalizing the exterior in favor of the interior which would become the decision-maker. Meanwhile, the right wing in the PLO views itself as the only decision-maker, while the interior, with all its militant structures, is merely an instrument and an extension.

In our view, both these opinions are extreme. The first viewpoint does not take into consideration the historical circumstances which led to the center of the revolution being positioned in the exterior. Such a viewpoint, despite intentions, leaves room for questioning the soleness of the PLO's legitimate representation of the Palestinian people. The second viewpoint marginalizes the main arena of the Palestinian struggle, belittles the role of the masses, and reduces their daily sacrifices to tools for achieving certain goals.

The solution to this dilemma is: Firstly, maintaining one leadership center, in this case the PLO, for many obvious reasons; secondly, embarking on a process whereby the interior gradually becomes a full partner in decision-making, based on the organic unity between the interior and the exterior. Now is the time to make this proportional change. Over two years, the uprising has created its own structures, enabling it to take the leadership in the field. Overlooking the significant role of these structures could directly harm the uprising's ability to achieve its goals. The experience of the past two years has proven that consolidating these militant and mass structures can make the interior an equal partner in the decision-making process. Such a change will have a positive impact on the uprising and the Palestinian revolution as a whole, for the following reasons:

First: The influential Palestinian leadership has a broad network of relations with the Arab regimes. As a result, its policies have gotten closer to the overall Arab line. Although its policies distinguish themselves from those of the regimes, by the demand for an independent Palestinian state, the Palestinian right wing often adopts the harmful tactics of the Arab regimes. The inside, however, is relatively free of this tie.

Second: Over the past 20 years, a particular social strata has crystallized in the ranks of the Palestinian revolution, mainly in Fatah, as a result of the political relations and organizational style of the right wing. This strata became bureaucratic; to a big degree, it lost its militant character and became corrupt; its interests are contrary to the revolution's. This reality was clearly seen in the thinking and practice of this strata that holds

sion-making process has been less than their actual contribution to these battles. Adjusting this ratio will have a positive effect on front work in the Palestinian revolution, as well as on the mass work of all forces, and the democratic struggle within the PLO. The more the leftist forces, and consequently the masses, participate in decision-making, the more effective will be the democratic struggle for maintaining a clear and firm nationalist line; capitulationist tendencies will be isolated.

Fourth: Transforming the interior into an active participant in the decision-making process will broaden the mass base of the uprising. A greater mass dimension will consolidate the social base of the Palestinian revolution, paving the way for it to seize the initiative in confronting the occupation. It is nothing new to say that the mass dimension is one of the principal factors in the continuation of the uprising.

Greater participation by the exterior in decision-making will not only contribute to the continuation and escalation of the intifada. It will also shield both the interior and the exterior from the pressure of the Arab regimes. Due to the uprising, the Arab regimes are no longer able to impose their political conditions in isolation from the will of the people who are resisting the occupation; they cannot but be supportive, at least verbally. This makes the PLO's political moves relatively free of the conditions of the prevailing Arab order. Furthermore, it gives the PLO the possibility of pressuring Arab officialdom. The PLO leadership, however, has not been utilizing these chances, especially not at this time when it is called upon to do so more than ever before.

The uprising and the armed struggle

One of the important issues raised by the uprising is it itself being one of the different forms of the Palestinian struggle. Some have tried to create a contradiction between the intifada, as a militant mass struggle, and the armed struggle. This contradiction is false and doesn't exist. The proper form of struggle is not determined by the wish of any one party, but is based on the objective and subjective conditions, as well as the nature of the struggle and of the enemy we are confronting. Economic battles for better wages or social conditions are not usually waged through armed struggle. However, homelands cannot be liberated via strikes alone.

Although there is no contradiction between the uprising, as a new phenomenon and form of mass struggle, and the armed struggle, there is a need to study the relation between the two. Throughout their history of national struggle, the Palestinian masses have experimented with all forms of struggle - peaceful and violent, armed and unarmed. From its inception, the Palestinian revolution adopted armed struggle as the main form of struggle against the Zionist army. Moreover, the achievements of the contemporary Palestinian revolution would never have been realized if not for armed struggle, due to the nature of the enemy we are confronting. The uprising itself came about as a result of the accumulated experience of the struggle, of which armed struggle was an important aspect. What is needed is a radical review of the armed struggle, aimed at gearing it to complement the uprising and contribute to its continuation and escalation. To this end, we point out the following:



- Sinijana Awad, from *Rama, the occupied West Bank, Palestine*

important and sensitive posts in the upper echelons of the PLO. This strata adopts policies that protect its own interests, relinquishing all revolutionary policies and means that are not in line with its own interests. This strata constitutes the social base of the right wing in the PLO. In contrast to the exterior, such a strata hasn't crystallized in the interior where the objective conditions are different since there is direct occupation and daily oppression.

Third: The active participation of the interior in the decision-making process will improve the internal balance of power within the Palestinian revolution, politically and in class terms. If this happens, it will be mainly to the interests of the leftist forces. In all the battles waged by the Palestinian revolution, including the intifada, the leftist forces' involvement in the deci-

First: It will be difficult to transform military operations launched from across the border into a people's war in the classical sense. This is due to the lacking demographic dimension which is an important factor in the people's war. A people's war means drowning the enemy's army in the sea of the popular masses, and stripping the enemy of its ability to maneuver freely and employ its advanced weaponry. The enemy will then be forced to submit to the logic of the revolution in the battle. This same process means simultaneously raising the efficiency of simple, popular means of struggle. In view of the lack of the demographic factor, military action will continue to be bound by many objective conditions that are beyond the control of the Palestinian revolution. Guerrilla warfare is based on fast attacks and retreats. It requires adequate qualifications in order to inflict the highest possible losses in the enemy's ranks, meanwhile minimizing the casualties in the ranks of the revolution.

Second: Launching military operations in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, i.e., reviving the experience of the Gaza Strip in the late sixties and early seventies, is conditional on several reservations. One is the fear of harming the popular nature of the uprising. Another is that the enemy will use military operations in the areas of the intifada activity as justification for bloody massacres.

Third: The geographic nature of the West Bank and Gaza Strip mitigates against transforming the uprising into a classical people's war as was waged in Viet Nam, China and Cuba.

These reservations should be taken into consideration, lest the armed struggle be at the expense of the intifada.

The uprising is a qualitative new mode of struggle. It is a violent political struggle that includes a form of armed struggle, in addition to all the other forms - violent, non-violent, struggles for specific demands and political struggles. All of these forms are dialectically connected, which gives the uprising many of the characteristics of people's war:

1. It involves broad sectors of the popular masses in daily resistance. This has partially stripped the enemy of its control over the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In practice, the enemy is now trying to reoccupy these territories captured over twenty years ago.

2. It utilizes simple means which a broad range of the people can master, while the enemy can't employ its advanced war technology.

3. It forces the enemy to fight according to the logic of the uprising. The enemy leaders were obliged to invent new training methods, unlike the methods traditionally used by regular armies.

4. It highlights the concept of liberated areas, applying this through relative liberation from the rule of the occupation forces, military government and civil administration. A Palestinian national authority has been built up alongside the occupation authority. This is clear in the masses' adherence to the directives of the United National Leadership.

The forms of popular struggle utilized by the uprising up till now are, however, incapable of forcing the enemy to retreat, although many achievements have been realized. The intifada has made the occupation costly for the enemy, but not to the point of turning it into a losing enterprise. Much greater human

and economic losses will have to be inflicted on the enemy, in order to bridge the gap between the former and the latter. Inflicting human losses in the enemy's ranks will push the Zionist leaders to reevaluate their political calculations. From the beginning, the uprising has aimed at inflicting as many economic losses as possible. On the other hand, the enemy is waging a war of attrition against the Palestinians primarily in human terms and secondarily in economic terms.

In order to continue this war for freedom and independence, we must enter the battle with reversed priorities - human losses first and economic ones second. This can only be done via reactivating and escalating the armed struggle. Therefore, we must broaden the confrontation front to include areas other than the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The experience of the past two years has proven that in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the uprising is the most proper form of struggle. The territories occupied in 1948 should be another front, complementing the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The popular resistance committees and strike forces of the uprising have become firm and extensive structures, but their activities have been limited to the cities, villages and camps of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. They mainly function to protect the inhabitants from the army and settlers' attacks, and to punish collaborators, though there have been some operations against the Israeli army in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. We feel that there is a possibility to expand the work of the popular committees and strike forces to include areas besides the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Some sections of these structures could be transformed into popular guerrilla warfare groups, basing their activities on armed action and sabotage in the Zionist state. We have all witnessed the enemy's confusion and distress when fires were set on farms and forests. The enemy will be even more alarmed, and their losses will be heavier, if such fires are also set in factories and other enterprises and there are operations against military posts.

In order for the uprising and the military action to complement each other, there should be well-planned, successful attacks from outside, and escalated military and sabotage actions in the 1948 occupied territories, along with the continuation of the popular uprising. This alone will transform the occupation into a losing enterprise in human and economic terms. It necessitates an overall review of the experience of armed struggle that responds to the new conditions. The mistakes of the past should be corrected, and right and left extremism should be eliminated. Organization has an important role in developing and escalating the uprising and armed struggle, as does a realistic revolutionary political line.

Internal Israeli contradictions

This section will examine the effects of the uprising on the Zionist entity. We will not include a discussion of the essential characteristics of the Zionist entity: aggression, expansionism, colonialism and organic ties with imperialism. We feel that no matter how developed and effective the uprising becomes, it will not change all of these characteristics. Such a change necessitates qualitatively different objective and subjective conditions. Rather, we will focus on the Zionist entity as a body that can be

infiltrated, unlike the myth that presents it as a totally cohesive unit devoid of any contradictions that could be capitalized on in the interest of our cause.

There are two levels of contradictions that pertain to the Zionist society. The first is class contradictions that exist in all capitalist societies. The second is contradictions between the Israeli society as a whole and the Palestinian people and revolution, i.e., the Arab-Zionist contradiction. Here we will discuss the second level.

The contradiction between the Zionist entity, and the Palestinian people and revolution, has generated secondary contradictions in the Israeli society. These are still in their infancy, but they interlink with the first level of contradictions. The secondary contradictions are those generated between the Israeli peace camp and the rest of the Zionist society. The peace camp is a social force that calls for Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and ending the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. This camp is not united, and the positions in it range from supporting autonomy for the Palestinians to advocating an independent Palestinian state. The differences within this camp should be capitalized on to the interest of our struggle.

Despite the fact that the Zionist society is shifting towards the extreme right, we must not overlook the growth of a trend opposing the main tendency. There is a process of polarization going on in the Zionist entity as is clear in the slogans adopted by the various trends in the peace camp. The results of this polarization are neither consistent nor final. How this vacillation develops depends to a great degree on the future development of events. What is important now is knowing how to deepen these contradictions and use them in a way that furthers our cause and a national solution.

Some view that the present activities of the peace camp are not equal to its activities during the 1982 invasion of Lebanon. At that time, there were demonstrations of tens and hundreds of thousands, and many new committees were formed. However, comparing in quantitative terms alone is inaccurate. We must also see if there has been a qualitative change in the nature of the slogans raised then and now. The slogans of 1982 demanded an end to the war and Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. The slogans of today demand withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and accepting the idea of two states. This in itself is a qualitative difference, because it contradicts the essence of Zionist ideology which denies the very existence of the Palestinian people as an independent entity which has the right to a free independent life.

The current that is now developing in the Zionist entity is an extension of the movement that grew up in 1982. The political demands of this current have developed in that they are in contradiction with the basis of the Zionist ideology. This current will expand if Israeli casualties increase, motivated by the desire to protect threatened lives, if not by political convictions. Such expansion is also tied to the clarity of the Palestinian policy. The Palestinian peace initiative, that was approved at the PNC's 19th session, was a suitable condition for the growth of this current.

As stated earlier, due to a set of objective and subjective conditions, the uprising is incapable of changing all the essential

characteristics of the Zionist entity. This does not, however, rule out the possibility of influencing some of them. The uprising has made the Palestinian state a realistic project which can be achieved if there is a proper militant program. Achieving the state would deal a blow to one of the basic characteristics of the Zionist entity - namely, expansionism, because it entails withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This would also provide conditions for impacting on the other characteristics. But this whole process is contingent on the developments of the coming stage.



The uprising has overturned many concepts which the enemy has tried to entrench over the years. For over 40 years, the Zionist enemy has tried to pose as the victim, living in a hostile environment. To a great degree, it succeeded in spreading this illusion in the western world. The uprising, and the savage repression inflicted on the Palestinian people, have shaken such convictions. World public opinion now views the Zionist enemy as the oppressor, not the victim. The enemy has also tried to emphasize that retaining the land and the occupation guarantees Israeli security and stability in this hostile environment. But the uprising has proved that neither occupying the land, nor annexing Jerusalem, have guaranteed security and stability. Many of the Zionist enemy's allies now think that the best guarantee for Israeli security is withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and a comprehensive solution to the conflict. Even the US secretary of state said: «Lay aside, once and for all, the unrealistic vision of Greater Israel.»

The Concept of Return in Zionist Ideology

This essay was written by Dr. Faisal Daraj, in connection with the new mass immigration of Soviet Jews to occupied Palestine.

Since the revelation of the danger of the immigration of Soviet Jews to Palestine, the reaction in the Arab world has been one of fear in the face of an unexpected surprise. But the fact of the matter is that this new onslaught is far from being a surprise, because the concept of immigration to Palestine is a basic theoretical and practical component of Zionist ideology, if not the most decisive one. This situation illustrates the distinction between the alertness and consistency of the Zionist position on the one hand, and the naivete and brittleness of the Arab position on the other - a distinction that is worthy of contemplation.

The concept of immigration in the Zionist ideology takes on different forms. It appears as a reflection of religious consciousness, loyalty to Jewish history, and the way to the liberation and salvation of the Jewish people. It begins with the myth of the «Promised Land» - the only place where the Jews will ever be liberated from their worldly troubles. The «Promised Land» is God's gift to the Jews, and if God gives such a gift, it must be cherished, or his wrath will be evoked. Thus, yearning for the «Promised Land» serves two purposes: belonging to a special homeland and fulfilling God's will. Inversely, separation from the «Promised Land» is God's punishment in as much as it means depriving «the chosen people» of the «Promised Land». Hence, the myth of the Jew who has lost his soul because of detachment from the homeland. Accordingly, the restoration of his soul requires repatriation to the lost land. In this view, the return of the Jews to the «Promised Land» is a basic condition for their material and religious existence.

In the Zionist frame of reference, the history of the Jews is the history of their misery because of detachment from the homeland and longing for it. Thus, they are not worthy of affiliation to their history unless they experience misery and longing simultaneously, making «Next year in Jerusalem» a perpetual cause and justification for their existence. Thus, being Jewish means constantly returning to this spiritual and ideological experience and its relationship to the original root - the «Promised Land.» In Zionist ideology, the existential experience of the Jews is determined by two components: alienation and diaspora. Alienation is viewed as diminution, and diaspora as deprivation and the continuous quest for the lost paradise. This leads to the conclusion that Jews can only realize the conditions for their Jewishness through their belief in the necessity of return, and working towards its achievement. This doctrinaire theological consciousness necessitates specific educational and cultural principles to produce a Jewish consciousness which is in harmony with

its source as well as its destiny. Deviation from this innate spiritual experience is viewed as an act of heresy which erodes the Jews' uniqueness. This theological consciousness glorifies isolation and warns against assimilation.

Zionist ideology takes its point of departure in religious roots which quickly dissipate and become shrouded in different cloaks; religious consciousness is transformed into religious ideology which, in turn, is subordinated to a dominant ideology, Zionism, which conceals politics behind religion, and militarism behind piety. Zionism, as a contrived ideology, is constantly alternating between the secular and the religious. The slogan of «Greater Israel» is a political slogan which fulfills the ambitions of the Zionist movement. However, justifying and substantiating this slogan requires the evocation of Jewish religion and culture, whereby realizing one's Jewishness is to be attained through land annexation. Annexation satisfies both the fundamentalists and those who reject religion and resort instead to a fraudulent interpretation of history and culture. Hence, both the Zionist «left» and right advocate immigration and settlement, ignoring the rights of the Palestinian people.

By interlocking the Jews' liberation with their repatriation to their lost holy land, Zionism made immigration into a perpetual enterprise. It also led Israel to refuse to define its geographical borders. Israel does not abide by a geographic gauge, but by the spiritual energy of the Jews in the diaspora, since coming to the «Promised Land» is considered the divine right of every Jew everywhere. Concurrently, there is the idea that the «Promised Land» will not assume its true dimension until it embraces all the Jews of the world. Ben Gurion made this point emphatically when he described Israel as part of the Middle East only in a geographical sense. This accentuates the Zionist strategy which is constantly being adapted in proportion to the number of Jews that can be incorporated in the «land of their ancestors.» The geographic factor has no value, because it changes as political and demographic realities change. Ben Gurion's statement is in line with the classical Zionist doctrine which gave birth to the slogan of «reclaiming the homeland» which is awaiting its «lost people.» This slogan spawned two basic laws in Israel: The first is the Law of Return which aims at bringing to Israel all the Jews of the diaspora; the second is the Law of Government Education for making «the Jewish culture flourish in the motherland.» The relationship between these two laws is clear: Jews must be inculcated with an education which satisfies the needs of the Zionist movement. Israel does not address only those Jews in Israel, but

rather Jews the world over, for the «real Jew» recognizes only one country - Israel, and Israel is not a reality unless it considers all Jews in the world as its citizens.

This fabricated view which mixes politics with religion, and the Torah with the gun, was referred to by Ben Gurion as a message of «national salvation;» it emphasizes the relationship between Israel and Jews all over the world. Israel is considered the salvation, and its historical role is to fulfill the Law of Return and to create an ongoing positive relationship between itself and Jews around the world, for the purpose of ultimately bringing them to Palestine. That this is Israel's intended role needs no further proof for one simple reason: Israel cannot continue to exist without the presence of Jews in it; nor can it maintain its prestige without fulfilling its role as the moral, political and religious trustee of the Jews of the world. Since the state of Israel is a reflection of the «Promised Land» according to the Zionist conception, then submitting to Israel is in essence submitting to the will of God.

Israel's status is determined by the nature of the relationship existing between it and Jews around the world. As Israel manages to convince more Jews to immigrate, its policy changes in relationship to the human resources it gains. This is why Israel rejects geographical restraints, and considers the demographic element a determining factor in charting its policy. The Law of Return cannot be fulfilled in principle or in practice without a complementary law - «the law of transfer» which determines the relationship of Palestinians to the Arab world. As more Jews immigrate to the «Promised Land,» more Palestinians will have to be expelled to Arab countries. Israeli politicians are especially interested in Palestinians emigrating in relation to the «Arab demographic time bomb» because the demographic reality of the Palestinians is a nightmare for Israel. Moreover, the very existence of non-Jews, in this case Palestinian Arabs, in the «Promised Land» is an impediment to the creation of an exclusive Jewish state.

Having a «transfer law» for Palestinian Arabs is in total harmony with the Zionists' logic, for the presence of Palestinian Arabs threatens the stability of the Jewish society, and stands in the way of «Greater Israel» and a «pure Jewish state.» Therefore, expelling Palestinians is viewed as a necessity, and called for by politicians, political scientists and rabbis in Israel. It was natural for the Jabotinsky camp (Likud's predecessor) to propose «population exchange» after 1948, after Ben Gurion had hinted at this option in November 1942. Such a project is based on the premise that the Jews have their country and so do the Arabs. Accordingly, the future of the Palestinians is an internal Arab matter and the responsibility of the Arab states. Concurrently, Jewish immigration is an internal Israeli matter. Israel considers as legitimate all means designed to force Palestinian Arabs out of Palestine - to their «Arab homeland.» In this way, Israeli terrorism and repression are also considered an internal Israeli issue. Zionism is inconceivable without an expulsion policy, for its absence would undermine the basis of this ideology.

The dialectical relationship between Zionist ideology and immigration makes this law a constant in the Zionist project, as has been expressed in the writings of Hertzl, Jabotinsky, Ben

Gurion and Begin, and more recently by Sharon, Peres and Shamir. The emphasis on this law fluctuates in relation to the particular situation, i.e., the ebb or flow of immigration.

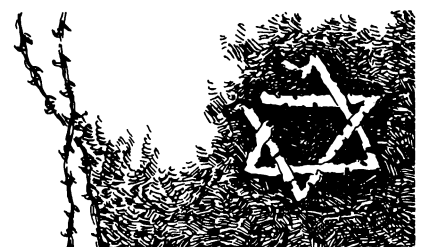
The issue of immigration gained prominence after 1948 and after the 1967 Arab defeat, and again after the fundamental changes taking place in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Whenever the conditions are ripe, a new Zionist immigration proposal is put forth. Meanwhile, Sharon and other Likud politicians see Jordan as the home of the Palestinians. During the early forties, there were several proposals to transfer the Palestinians to another place in the Middle East. After 1967, Levi Eshkol claimed that since Israel had embraced over 600,000 Jews from Arab countries, the latter should absorb the Palestinians. He considered the Arab states' rejection of this logic as an obstacle to peace, for pursuing peace requires recognizing the «right to return» of the «Jews in exile» to the «Promised Land,» in addition to the recognition of Israel as a state.

According to its own ideology, Israel is a state and a nation - a state which can realize itself only after the ingathering of all Jews of the world. Israel cannot exist as a state without its claimed existence as a nation, due to its peculiarity which necessitates the Law of Return, and asserts that Israel is the only place in the world with no relatives in terms of language, origin and religion. Israel claims to be unique in that it is the only Jewish state in the world.

In the Zionist rationale, this quality of being an orphan compels Israel to embrace the Jews of the world materially and morally. This in turn creates an organic relationship between expulsion (of Palestinians) and Judaization, because it is assumed that Jews will not immigrate to Israel unless they find their culture and national identity there. According to this definition, a «true Jew» should distinguish between a place and a homeland. Places are many, but there is only one homeland. A place is for making a living, but a homeland is for belonging.

In reality, there is no confusion in Zionist ideology, because it negates and rejects peace. Israel cannot accept peace without repudiating itself - disclaiming the notion of a state and nation, and the related Law of Return. The decisive question is: How can Israel be recognized without recognizing the practical and theoretical principles on which it was founded, including the Law of Return? How can real peace be achieved while Zionist ideology defends this law and the «Greater Israel» project?

Perhaps some will want to recognize Israel and not the Law of Return. In so doing, they are not so much rejecting Israel, as they are expressing their own dilemma and internal contradictions. Rejecting the Law of Return and criticizing Jewish immigration is futile in the absence of a comprehensive rejection of Zionism theoretically and practically. ●



The Uprising's Impact on Israeli Security

This is the third and concluding part of the study on Israeli security and the intifada which we began in preceding issues of *Democratic Palestine*. We call attention to the fact that this study was made on the basis of information available to us as of last autumn. However, we stand by our conclusions with one exception: In this study we tended to downplay the possibility of massive Soviet Jewish immigration to Israel, whereas this has since become a major danger facing the Palestinian cause.

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

Settlements - A provocation

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

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

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

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

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

Correction

In the first installment of this study, there was a mistake in the last half of the middle paragraph on page 20, second column. Here we print the sentence as it should read:

A report from Tel Aviv University Strategic Studies Center referred to a poll which showed that Israeli public opinion was becoming more hard-line on short-term issues (increased support to repression vs. the intifada), even while becoming more realistic concerning a long-term solution (those who accept a Palestinian state rose to 25%, compared to 20% at the onset of the intifada).

said, «We don't see Arabs and don't have social contact with them.»

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

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

The settlers' reaction has clearly shown that they perceive the army as their protection rather than that settlements as such are defense assets. In the wake of the army's failure to stop the uprising, i.e., to protect the settlers according to their expectations, there were unprecedented confrontations between political and military leaders on the one hand, and settlers on the other. Shamir was called a traitor when he went to the West Bank to eulogize a settler killed by a Palestinian with his own knife in June. In May, an Israeli settler had been banned from entering Palestinian population centers after he assaulted an Israeli soldier in Hebron - something that had never occurred before. West Bank Commander Mitzna told a Knesset committee that «Jewish settlers are the primary problem as far as IDF operations (in the territories) are concerned» (*Jerusalem Post*, May 29, 1989). Mitzna was not worried about the settlers' violence against Palestinians, but about their challenging the army's competence at a time when its stature was on the wane due to failure to halt the uprising.

The confrontations with the settlers raised a new danger: civil war. In late June, after a stormy Knesset debate concerning whether settler vigilantism could lead to civil war (among Jews), Shamir said on Israeli radio: «We must do everything to make sure such a war never happens. This is the most dangerous thing.» A poll published in *Yediot Ahronot*, June 8th, showed that a three to two majority of Israelis expect such a civil war. In September, Israeli newspapers reported the arrest of some settlers suspected of having attacked other settlers' cars earlier in the year with stones and firebombs, to incite them to «retaliate» against Palestinians. That settlers' own actions pose the biggest threat to their security was dramatically highlighted by an incident in the West Bank in August. Driving to his settle-

ment with his children, a settler fired on Israeli soldiers on the roadside, whom he took to be Palestinians. His own baby son was killed when the soldiers returned the fire.

The specter of civil war was much discussed in the heyday of settler terror in the early eighties, due to the state's concern for maintaining its monopoly on power, and dovish Israelis' wishes not to have the Zionist colonial project appear so barbaric. Today, the discussion is much more serious because it is not only a question of long-standing tactical differences within Zionism being aggravated. Today internal Israeli contradictions are aggravated *because* the whole Zionist occupation is besieged. While Israelis may disagree on the means for resolving this dilemma, almost all have interests in an end to the intifada and restoration of the prestige of their most central institution, the military. Thus, how internal contradictions are resolved is a much more volatile issue in this round. That explains that even Shamir spoke out against civil war, whereas the extreme right tried to dampen talk of this danger in the early eighties. The question is raised: Can the Israeli system tolerate challenges when it is besieged by the masses of the intifada?

Security from abroad?

Comprehensive views of Israeli security place high priority on Israel's international allies, as we saw in the first section of this study. And never has Israel faced such international condemnation as during the uprising. The moral justification for support to the Zionist state dissolved as the world saw Israeli soldiers treating Palestinian children in ways associated with Nazi war crimes. At the very least, Israel's friends are being forced to view their support in more practical terms: Is the occupation viable? Can Israel survive if this situation continues?

Israeli leaders, for their part, have dealt with international criticism mainly in line with their own partisan interests and the views they hold on how to end the uprising, territorial compromise, etc. The only new common element in the Zionist leadership's reactions to international relations is that the «Soviet threat» is no longer mentioned, even by those who previously used this as justification for the dangers of a Palestinian state. Perhaps this argument became too ridiculous in a war being conducted, from the Palestinian side, by unarmed youngsters. Surely, in the light of their increasing international isolation, Israeli leaders want to try and take advantage of the new foreign policy thinking in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries.

Most western European countries now appear convinced that Israel's interests lie in dealing directly with the Palestinians, including the PLO, and addressing at least their right to self-determination. The US is also aware that Israel may be forced to deal with these issues, even though its official position on the PLO and Palestinian rights is more circumspect. Secretary of State James Baker's May 1989 statement reinforced what his predecessor had discovered a year earlier, that the occupation is a deadend. Baker told the pro-Israel lobby, AIPAC, that: «For Israel, now is the time to lay aside, once and for all, the unrealistic vision of a greater Israel. Israeli interests in the West Bank and Gaza - security and otherwise - can be accommodated. ►

Forswear annexation. Stop settlement activity. Allow the schools to reopen.»

However, the Zionist leadership will not begin to translate criticism into rethinking of how to guarantee Israeli security in new ways, unless its allies pressure it into doing so. With the reception given the Shamir plan - outright US support and a relative slowdown of European diplomacy - It seems that Israel's allies are not yet prepared to pressure it to do what they think would be logical in the given situation.

A good gage of the US position is found in «Building for Peace: An American Strategy in the Middle East,» prepared by the Washington Institute's Presidential Study Group on US policy, chaired by Lawrence Eagleburger and Walter Mondale. This report was completed before the PLO launched its peace initiative in November 1988, but there is little indication that the Bush Administration has departed from its basic premises, despite changing events. A quote from this study explains the US failure to pressure Israel on any basic issue so far: «The intercommunal conflict between Palestinians and Israelis manifest in the uprising, has now become a chronic problem, rendering peacemaking more urgent and more difficult. Israel feels now it can take fewer risks for peace; the Palestinians seem to believe they can achieve more than is possible or, from the US viewpoint, desirable; and Jordan appears to have retreated to the sidelines. The interstate conflict between the Arab states and Israel now threatens to become increasingly dangerous and volatile...Another ambitious American plan for solving the Palestinian problem is not only likely to fail but will also be counterproductive...The first task of diplomacy is to lay the foundation upon which negotiations can be built.»

One concrete proposal of the report has been implemented: «strengthening Israel's deterrent by advancing strategic cooperation.» In April 1988, the US and Israel signed yet another memorandum of agreement for political, security and economic cooperation, including development of the Arrow missile, and the Marines training on the ground in Israel (Israel radio, July 21, 1988). Strategic cooperation is being further advanced with the current US proposal to preposition \$100 million worth of military equipment in Israel, suitable for both armies, which Israel could draw on according to a pay-as-you-use agreement. (In return, Israel is requested not to oppose US tank sales to Saudi Arabia.)

Unprecedented US criticism of Israeli practices in the occupied territories, and the fact that influential legislators put questions to US aid to Israel in the future, initially led to optimism in some circles that the US might pressure Israel on meaningful issues. However, ensuing developments show that while the uprising has raised questions as never before, it will have to be even more prolonged and radical before the projected separation could be created between Israel and its main financier, to the extent of enforcing Palestinian rights. In a paper entitled «Political Implications of the Uprising,» Rashid Khalidi noted: «In spite of the opening of contacts with the PLO, the isolation of the United States has increased as a result of the uprising. I would strongly argue, however, that there is still no



crisis for American policy makers. Until there is one - whether it's a crisis on the ground or some crisis in the domestic situation here or in Israel - I think the United States and Israel can hold out in splendid isolation indefinitely («*American-Arab Affairs*, Winter 1988-89). This is, of course to a great extent the case due to the absence of a satisfactory response to the uprising in the Arab world, whether from the regimes or the national liberation movement.

If this situation continues, US policy can shelter Israel, giving it time to resolve its internal contradictions about the questions of withdrawal and a political settlement. Abba Eban expressed this in a commentary which appeared in the *Washington Post*, July 24, 1989): «The only thread that now separates the Israeli-Palestinian area from early explosion is the fact that the United States is in a simultaneous discourse with all the parties. Ending the American-Palestinian dialogue now would lead to despair of peace, escalation of violence and the growth of extremism on both sides of the conflict. It would be injurious to Israeli interests for the United States to withdraw its restraining presence from this area.»

One can conclude that the guarantees of security which Israel receives from its main allies have not as yet been decisively affected, though this might happen in the future as the intifada continues. In evaluating how Israel may react to potential US pressure in the future, it is useful to refer to a book published in New York, 1987, in cooperation with the Hebrew University: *Israel, the Superpowers, and the War in the Middle East*. The author, Yaacov Bar Siman Tov, lists eight counterstrategies used by Israel in the past to offset US pressure: self-restraint; swift military offensive before a ceasefire is imposed; escalation to provoke confrontation with the Soviet Union and force a US response; bargaining; penetration of the domestic system of its US patron; blackmail by weakness; threatening regional instability; and military confrontation with the Soviet Union. Reviewing this book in the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Winter 1989, Michael Collins Dunn remarked that these counterstrategies «would appear to be singularly ineffective in dealing with the US on the issue of the intifada.»

The enemy within/demography/transfer

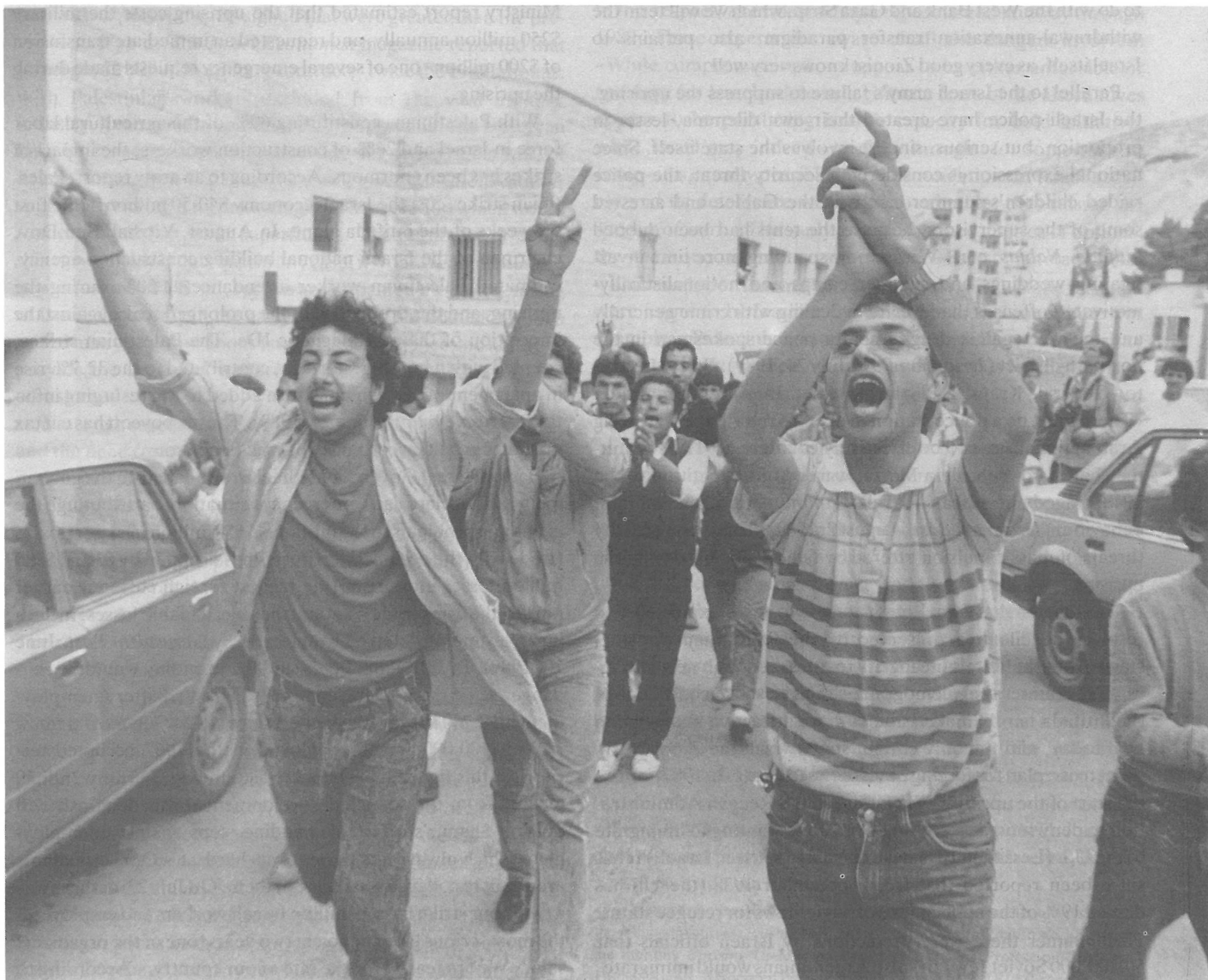
If Israel does not appear to be threatened in terms of its reliance on international aid for security and well-being, the

situation is different vis-a-vis its internal security. Participation in the intifada by Palestinians living in the Zionist state has mainly been in the form of support to the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Despite this, or maybe because of it, the activities of Palestinians living in Israel have been regarded with the utmost suspicion by the Israel authorities.

According to the Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem (1985), only 10 to 20 Palestinians in Israel have acted against the state or its security each year since 1948. Yet, after the December 21, 1987 general strike, the first all-Palestine action since the 1936-39 revolt, Likud MK Kaufman proposed reimposing military rule on them. There was a similar general strike on March 30, 1988, but more disturbing was the fact that in the 1988 elections, Zionist parties received the lowest ever percentage of the Palestinian Arab vote. *Al Hamishmar*, June 2, 1989, quoted an MK's figures that «Israeli Arabs» were involved in over 1,000 nationalistically motivated «attacks» since December 1987 (a figure that may include throwing stones and raising the Palestinian flag). Most damaging were the acts of arson which, in view

of the arrests made, seem to be regarded by the Israeli authorities as cooperation linking Palestinians from the 1967 occupied territories with those of the 1948 occupied land. In 1988, 38,000 acres of Israeli-confiscated land were burned (as opposed to 3,000 acres in 1986). This method of struggle has continued with 20,000 acres burned in the nine months of 1989.

In 1988, the Israeli police formed a special unit to «handle riots in the Arab sector» (*Al Fajr*, July 24, 1989). On May 3, 1989, the cabinet held a special debate on «the condition of Arabs in Israel and the impact of the intifada on them» (*Al Fajr*, May 8, 1989), as scores were being arrested in the Galilee and Triangle for having expressed support to the intifada via leaflets, fundraising or demonstrations. At the meeting, Yitzhak Modai, minister without portfolio, said he didn't see a «separation between the Arabs in Israel and the Arabs in the territories,» remarking that the police cannot enter some Arab villages (in Israel). Also in May 1989, the Knesset gave preliminary approval to a new «anti-terrorist» law making it an offense to receive material donations from «terror organizations» and ►



allowing the police to search for and confiscate said materials or funds on suspicion alone. Justice Minister Meridor said on Israeli radio, May 24th, that the government introduced the bill because the PLO is channeling money to Palestinians in Israel, as well as to the 1967 occupied territories, in «an attempt to create an economic framework...to destroy the foundations of the building we call the State of Israel.»

Mansour Kardoush, director of the Nazareth-based Human Rights Society, believes that the law aims to shut down the nearly 80 Palestinian societies providing social and cultural services (*Al Fajr*, May 8, 1989). These are dependent on support from abroad in the light of the gross underfunding of Palestinian communities by the Zionist state. The obvious conclusion is that the Israeli authorities don't distinguish between «fighting terrorism» and keeping the Palestinians weak. This is related to what the Zionists consider the «demographic danger,» and fear of this has been increased by the intifada, for its challenge of the 1967 occupation principle reopens the files of the 1948 occupation on which the state is based. Thus, the debate about what to do with the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which we will term the withdrawal-annexation-transfer paradigm, also pertains to Israel itself, as every good Zionist knows very well.

Parallel to the Israeli army's failure to suppress the uprising, the Israeli police have created their own dilemma, lesser in proportion, but serious, since it involves the state itself. Since national expression is considered a security threat, the police raided children's summer camps in the Galilee and arrested some of the supervisors, because the tents had been dubbed *intifada*, *Nablus*, etc. «We are now spending more time investigating weddings and summer camps and nationalistically-motivated offenses than we are in dealing with crime generally and the war against drugs,» said a police spokesman in the northern district (*Jerusalem Post*, July 24, 1989). Police Inspector-General Kraus told the Knesset Interior Committee: «There must be a police station in every Arab village if growing Arab nationalism is to be effectively countered.» The committee chairman, Yehoshua Matza, warned of a repetition of the 1948 tragedy if «Israeli Arabs» didn't stop their militant behaviour (*Jerusalem Post*, August 2, 1989). This is one of many threats of mass expulsion uttered by Israeli officials during the uprising.

The danger that Israel might resort to mass expulsions, to resolve the dilemma presented by the Palestinian uprising, stems from the state's incapacity to attract enough new immigrants to counter the «demographic danger.» The conditions of the intifada hardly make Israel a more attractive immigration goal today, and the only «bright spot» which the Zionists can point to is a plan for forcing Soviet Jews to Israel. In 1987, before the start of the uprising, Shamir asked the Reagan Administration to deny refugee status to Soviet Jews wanting to immigrate to the US. (Less than 10% have chosen to settle in Israel.) It has since been reported that from September 1988, the US has denied 19% of the applications of Soviet Jews for refugee status. This summer there were predictions by Israeli officials that 50-100,000 Soviet Jews and also Argentinians would immigrate

to Israel over the next three years, and that part of them would be settled in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. When Peres visited the US in late September, he asked for \$400 million in loans to finance housing for the new immigrants. The whole absorption process is estimated at \$3 billion. Irregardless of whether the emigrants can be forcibly channeled to Israel, which appears doubtful in itself, this project seems precarious in view of its costs and the objections already voiced by some US Zionist leaders. The Absorption Ministry itself has expressed skepticism in view of past difficulties with integrating new immigrants. This leaves Israel in the withdrawal-annexation-transfer paradigm concerning the «demographic danger.»

Economic bind

We earlier indicated that those who view Israeli security in comprehensive terms had begun to question, even before the intifada, whether Israel could perpetually bear the costs of occupation and war. The uprising made this question acute as is most apparent in rising defense expenditures. In mid-June, a Defense Ministry report estimated that the uprising costs the military \$250 million annually, and requested an immediate transfusion of \$200 million - one of several emergency requests made during the uprising.

With Palestinians constituting 60% of the agricultural labor force in Israel and 26% of construction workers, the impact of strikes has been enormous. According to an army report, Palestinian strikes cost the Israeli economy \$40-50 million in the first six weeks of the intifada alone. In August, Yitzhak Ben Dov, chairman of the Israeli national building construction agency, estimated Palestinian worker attendance at 50% during the uprising, and this dropped with the prolonged strike against the imposition of the new magnetic IDs. The Palestinian strikes, coupled with a housing shortage, contributed to the 32.7% rise in apartment prices, which in turn added to the resurging inflation (*Jerusalem Post*, June 24, 1989). The tax boycott has cut tax revenues in half, according to official Israeli sources.

Bank of Israel Governor Michael Bruno called on the government to declare an emergency situation, attributing the economic problems to the intifada - \$650 million in export losses (trade with the occupied territories has dropped by 63%); \$280 million losses in tourism (the biggest foreign currency earner next to the arms trade); and further incalculable losses, including investments deterred by uncertainty (*Jerusalem Post*, June 10, 1989). In July 1988, Peres said the economy would be «endangered» if the uprising continues. This was after unemployment hit 9.7% in May, the highest since 1967.

With 100,000 Israelis deployed in the 1967 occupied territories, this figure seems doubly astounding. On July 2nd, 30 mayors from the so-called development towns demonstrated outside Shamir's office, demanding steps against unemployment which always hits these towns hardest. «Our settlements are about to collapse,» said one of them. On July 23rd, there was a two-hour strike by one million Israeli workers and employees, the most serious labor action in two years; one of the organizers said, «We are fearful for the fate of our country.» According to

AP, August 17th, «Israeli employers have been under pressure from the government to replace their Arab workers with Israelis for security reasons and to lower the nation's rising unemployment rate.» This effort seems dubious, since Palestinians from the territories do the jobs Israelis avoid. The initial response to the Palestinian strikes was to import workers. (*Davar*, August 4th, reported that there are 10-15,000 workers in Israel from Portugal, Poland, Thailand, England, Turkey and the Philippines.)»

Unemployment intersects with the issue of demoralization in the army as well. Aside from immigrants from North Africa, the Israelis hardest hit are those who have just completed military service. Ran Cohen of the Citizens Rights Movement said: «This is what the State of Israel asks of its soldiers, to go and serve their country and then go and stand in line for unemployment payments» (AP, September 5, 1989).

Our review of the Israeli economy during the uprising reveals only one success story: On June 11th, the Defense Ministry released figures for 1988 weapons sales that exceeded \$1.47 billion, with export contracts signed that were greater than the previous peak year. The *Israel Economist* magazine reported that Israel got \$2 billion in military contracts - twice the 1987 amount. With Palestinian workers excluded from the vital military industry, it can remain unaffected by the uprising, and Israel can base its economy more and more on this sector. This will, of course, strengthen Israel's nature as a garrison state. Another suggestion has been to make a high-tech revolution which would render Palestinian labor superfluous. The feasibility of doing this very quickly is dubious; in any case, it would require massive new infusions of US aid, such as accompanied the restructuring of Israel's economy in the early eighties - a phenomenon which raised many question about Israel's independence and ability to provide the degree of welfare to which its Jewish citizens are accustomed.

Water as a resource is obviously vital for any state's existence, and the need for water was one of the motives of the 1967 occupation in the first place. Reuvan Pedatzur wrote in *Haaretz*, April 23, 1989, «Any future settlement will rise or fall around one essential issue - the water problem...The government of Israel has ignored this problem...It constitutes the major problem in Israel's relations with its eastern neighbors, and once again reveals the shortcomings of Israel's strategic planning. The reason for this blunt statement is quite simple. Those who control West Bank water sources will - quite simply - have the ability to dry up the Israeli coast...Close to one-third of Israel's water is from the West Bank.» The opponents of withdrawal can bolster their position with a material argument even if the occupation becomes unprofitable. Until the uprising, the occupation paid for itself with the taxes, cheap labor and other resources stolen from the Palestinians. This is no longer the case, but the cost has not yet become high enough to force Israeli consensus on withdrawal, much less a just solution that might pave the way for neighborly, civilized solutions between Palestinians and Israelis on issues such as water. Here it is useful to recall that politically-related security considerations have generally taken

precedence over economic considerations in the occupation authorities' decision-making. We also recall that Israel has previously solved economic crises by going to war, 1967 being the most obvious example. But can Israel afford to do so today with the war raging in its «backyard»?

Is Israeli security compatible with peace?

We have seen that the Palestinian intifada has had a devastating, though certainly not fatal, impact on the Israeli military, the cornerstone of Israeli security doctrine. It has also impacted significantly on all fields considered to have importance for Israel's security in a comprehensive sense. The uprising has posed as a reality that the only possible alternative to the occupation is an independent Palestinian state, but while many Israelis realize the status quo is untenable, they are far from countenancing this state which is being built right under their noses.

Even the thinkers of the Tel Aviv University Strategic Studies Institute have not come farther than the Israeli man on the street in this respect, as evidenced by a report issued midway through 1989. These experts are aware of all the dangers involved: «While compromise options appear to be either unfeasible or too risky for Israel; while its legitimate fears of the alternatives appear to be paralyzing Israel's capacity for bold initiative; while Israel may indeed «muddle through» for some time to come - it is equally possible that the foundations of Israel's society and its deterrence will begin to crumble, thus raising the specter of war...» The study group examined a series of options: the status quo, autonomy, annexation, a Palestinian state, Gaza withdrawal, Jordanian-Palestinian federation. None of them were found to be feasible and desirable at the same time. For example: «Palestinian statehood is potentially extremely risky from a security standpoint, and is as dangerous for the fabric of Israeli society as is annexation» (*Israel, the West Bank and Gaza - Toward a Solution*).

Thus, Israel remains armed with the intransigence of its security concept which rules out real consideration of Palestinian rights; discussions on how to resolve the dilemma posed by the intifada remain trapped in the withdrawal-annexation-transfer paradigm. To break this vicious circle, the intifada must continue and become more radical, and the Palestinian resistance and Arab liberation movement must move more decisively to create a new dynamic in the regional situation. Theoretically, this could prod Israel to resolve its own internal contradictions and develop a consensus for security via a just peace. We say theoretically because Israel's colonial and militarist nature have always been steering it in the opposite direction. The intifada has shown the traditional Zionist security concept to be non-functional, when faced by united Palestinian determination to achieve independence. Whether the Zionist state will draw the obvious conclusions is however uncertain. In this sense, Israel's security is in its own hands.

- For quotes from Israeli sources, we are indebted to the translations provided in the following sources: *Journal of Palestine Studies*, *Al Fajr* English weekly edition, the monthly *Uprising Updates* published by Database Project on Palestinian Human Rights, Associated Press news bulletins and *EURABIA* (French).

From War to War

«My brother in the eastern area, I can guarantee that I am not going to declare war on you, but I cannot guarantee that the war is not going to explode again...We have learned from past experience that wars simply explode without anyone declaring them.»

Lebanon's Prime Minister Salim Hoss, (Associated Press, December 18th).

With the Hrawi government's failure to move against General Aoun's stronghold in East Beirut, fighting broke out in the eastern areas on January 31st. Aoun's separatism, and the de facto partition this caused, generated a new war, this time in the heart of the Christian community.

The current situation shows that partition is the crucial problem facing the people of Lebanon. Between war and partition, citizens are killed, homes destroyed, families separated, and the future is something to be feared.

Aoun's isolation

The fighting in East Beirut has its roots in Aoun's continued refusal to accept the Taif accord and President Hrawi's legitimacy. The other major power in East Beirut, Samir Geagea's Lebanese Forces, had accepted Hrawi's presidency, and proposed a federated state of sectarian cantons rather than either partition or the unified, reformed political system laid out in the Taif accord. In view of his increasing overall isolation, Aoun could tolerate no dissent in the so-called Christian camp. The whole country, even his supporters, had begun to realize that it is Aoun and his actions that are blocking the drive for peace and reconciliation.

In this situation, Aoun provoked the latest round of fighting by ordering the Lebanese Forces to disband, ridiculously charging Geagea of waging «war against the army with American blessing to enforce implementation of the humiliating (Taif) agreement» (*Al Safir*, February 9th).

Geagea defied Aoun's order, vowing that he would «respond to each shell with 10 shells,» not to «allow those blinded by the lust for power to slaughter the Lebanese Forces» (*The Economist*, February 3-9). In the ensuing fighting, over 600 people were killed and 2,000 wounded, in the first half of February. Artillery fire hit hospitals, schools and churches in addition to homes. Several hospitals warned that they would not be able to continue functioning for more than two or three days as water, blood and oxygen supplies were being exhausted. Thousands have left their homes and fled to safer areas in West Beirut and northern Lebanon, where the legitimate authorities have maintained stability. The new round of fighting in East Beirut is the worst since February of last year, when Aoun moved against the Lebanese Forces to exert his authority over the Christian areas.

In view of the new round of death and destruction he has unleashed, the mad general can no longer maintain the image of the «saviour of the Lebanese Christians» which he had worked to cultivate in the local and international media. Even in the rightist Christian camp, there are few Lebanese who continued to fall for his lies about the «war of liberation», because Aoun has become «nothing but a television show,» in the words of Prime Minister Hoss (AP, January 29th).

In the light of the unanimous popular support for the Taif accord and the government of national reconciliation, the dictatorial general and his sectarian campaign have been reduced to absurdity. Accordingly, he even declared war on the press, declaring «from now on, critical tongues shall be cut off... They (journalists) have committed many crimes in the name of freedom, which has become chaos» (*Al Safir*, January 18th). The media had defied his ban on referring to Elias Hrawi as

president of Lebanon or Salim Hoss as prime minister. Aoun then shut down *Al Diyar* and *Al Bayrak* newspapers, along with *Akhbar Al Yom* newsletter, all published in East Beirut, for a week.

More fragmentation

Adding to the picture of infighting was a new round of violence which broke out on December 23rd, between Nabih Berri's Amal movement and Hezbollah, in Iqlim Al Toffah, between Sidon and Jezzine in South Lebanon. As a result of this inter-Shiite fighting, at least 98 people have been killed and 290 wounded. The two sides are vying for control of Lebanon's Shiite Moslem community, and both ignored the ceasefire called by the Algerian mediator, Mohammed Taher, on January 29th, despite having expressed readiness to withdraw their fighters to the pre-conflict lines.

Other obstacles to stability

Since coming to power, President Hrawi has taken a series of measures to pave the way for restoring Lebanon's unity and stability, and further isolate Aoun. In this framework, he paid a visit to Damascus on January 21st, seeking a mechanism to guarantee implementation of the Taif accord. This was his first trip outside Lebanon since his election in November, and the first leg of a planned tour to the states of the Arab tripartite committee which brokered the Taif agreement (Algeria, Saudi Arabia and Morocco), aiming to revive their efforts to support his government. In Damascus, Hrawi agreed with President Assad on a security plan for the western part of Beirut, the airport road and the coast. In addition to a gradual withdrawal of Syrian troops from West Beirut to the southern outskirts of the city, the plan would ban militias from the city, aiming to create an atmosphere of security

and thus encourage the return of foreign diplomatic missions that left West Beirut from mid-1985 after a series of attacks and kidnappings.

Despite these measures and Lebanese, Arab and international support, the Hrawi government has not moved towards ending Aoun's control of the presidential palace and East Beirut, even though Hrawi has stated that «the day of judgement... will be very soon» (*Guardian*, December 1st). Thus, the Lebanese government still stands at an impasse. As the legitimate government slides from an offensive to a defensive position, it actually reveals its own weakness. Despite Hrawi's declaration of intending to «use everything to stop the partition», it seems that the Taif agreement will remain merely a plan (AP, January 24th).

Some of the problems faced by Hrawi's government are connected to the state's political, social and economic structure - the corrupt, unjust, sectarian system that has yet to

be reformed. Other problems are connected to the continuing positions of the right-wing forces, chiefly General Aoun's partition plan, but also Samir Geagea's federation scheme, and their insistence on maintaining sectarian privileges. Still other problems are connected to the regional situation, first and foremost, the continued Israeli occupation of the «security zone» in South Lebanon and the presence of Antoine Lahd's proxy South Lebanese Army there. Thus, Hrawi's anticipated quick operation to normalize the situation in Beirut has yet to materialize. The legitimate Lebanese government has been unable to use force to end Aoun's partitionist position, because it has waited for concrete international support for such a move, and this has not been forthcoming.

France and the Vatican bear part of the responsibility for the continuation of the crisis, for their line has been to deny the government the right of using

every means possible to restore Lebanon's unity. Despite proclaimed support, in practice they take a hostile position towards the Lebanese government and the Arab solution to the crisis. The statement of the papal nuncio to Lebanon, Pablo Puente, made clear the Vatican's role of protecting the rightists in East Beirut. He said that he will work for a «sincere and loyal dialogue among all parties, taking into account above all those in a weak position, who fear for their future and that of the country» (*Al Safir*, January 8th). The French government's attempts to have the Taif accord amended have the same objective. Both aim at imposing Aoun as a negotiator, which would lead to recognizing two governments in Lebanon and the maintenance of sectarian privileges. Added to this is the US position which, despite the State Department's call for Aoun to step down, has not changed essentially. This is best illustrated in the continued support to Israel and US failure to concretely back any settlement in which it is not a main broker.

Behind the current crisis, Israeli interference looms as the most formidable challenge to Lebanon's unity, with its ongoing occupation in South Lebanon and support to the pro-partition rightist forces. Continuing air strikes, such as the two raids on South Lebanon in January, leave no doubt as to the aggressive Israeli aims of keeping Lebanon in chaos and division. An end to Aoun's statelet would be a blow to the Israeli plans. As stated by Eliahu Ben Elissar, head of the Knesset Security and Foreign Affairs Committee, «Defeating Aoun doesn't serve the interests of Israel or the free world» (*Al Safir*, December 2nd).

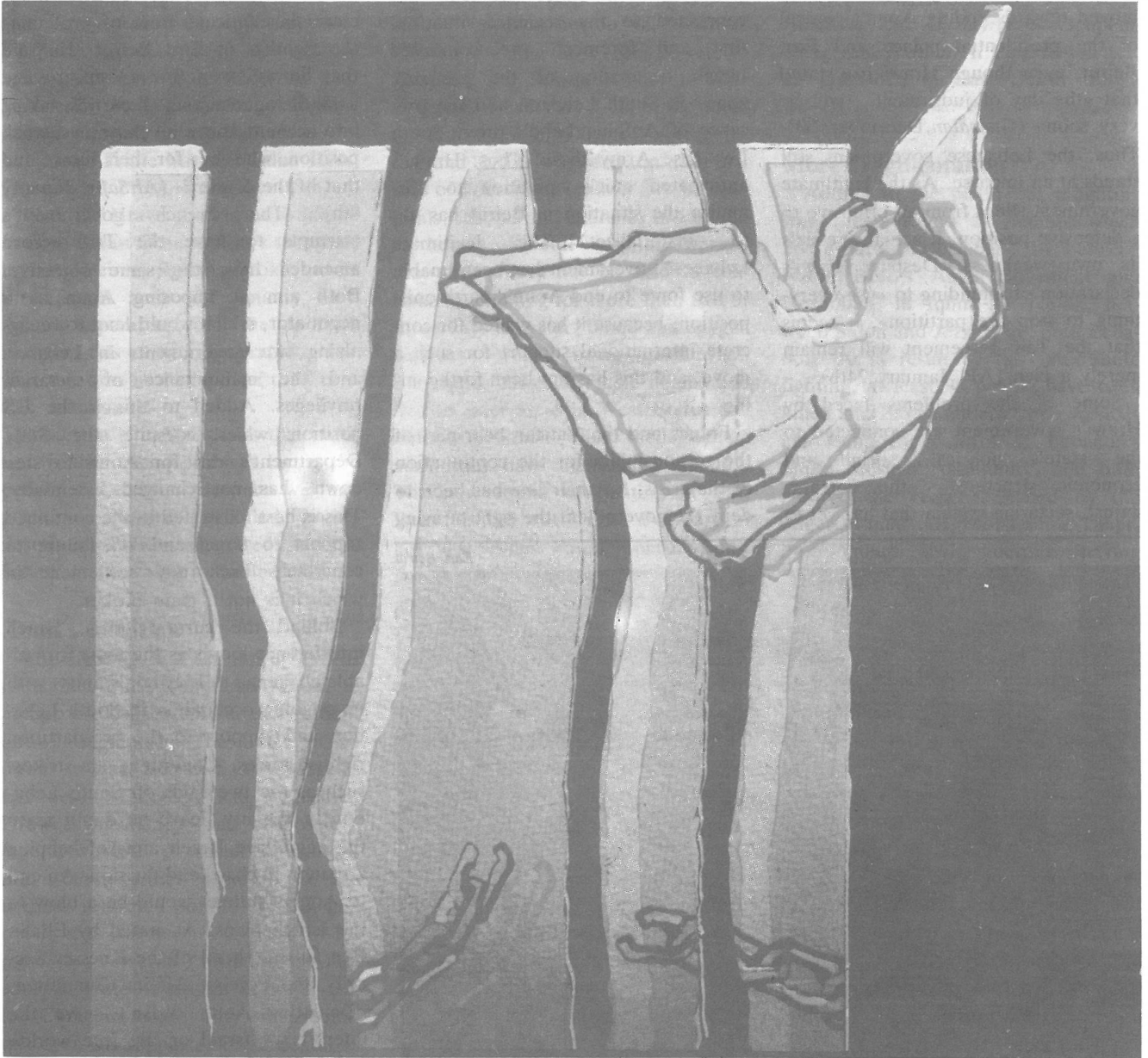
In view of these obstacles, the legitimate Lebanese authorities have been unable to restore Lebanon's unity and stability. Current events show that there will be no peace without a radical political solution to end factionalism. Otherwise, there can only be temporary truces that feed into new wars.

East Beirut



Jordan

New Democratic Era?



What is happening in Jordan? Is democracy really taking hold in the midst of the tyranny which has prevailed in the Arab world for decades? Or are the new democratic procedures only a tactical retreat by King Hussein, taken under the impact of the political and economic crisis which threatened to bring down the regime itself? In this case, the monarchy will revert to rep-

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ression as soon as there is a ray of hope that the crisis may be resolved.

Observers are divided on these issues. Some consider that the swift democratic changes are the natural outcome of objective changes that have occurred on the political, economic and social levels in Jordan over the past few years. In this view, these changes are a response to those

taking place in many other parts of the world, i.e., a Jordanian perestroika. Others see the current situation as no more than a repetition of the experience of the mid-fifties, at the time of Suleiman Nabulsi's government which was quickly aborted by the monarchy.

A precise analysis of the background and future of the current developments requires us to avoid exaggeration when

describing the genuineness of these changes; nor should we consider the long, bitter experience of the past as the only criterion for evaluating these developments. In this discussion, no one has a monopoly on the absolute truth. These developments are still new, and there must be an intensive and profound debate so that the various nationalist forces can crystallize a sound view for themselves and for the masses.

Limits of the democratic margin

An unprecedented margin of democracy has been achieved in Jordan. It has affected almost all aspects of life in a relatively deep way. It has threatened, in many cases, the absolute dominance of the executive authority in general and the intelligence service in particular. It is impossible to note all the particulars which have resulted from the revival of democratic life in Jordan. Here we will refer to the most important decisions and measures:

1. The various political and social forces and trends agree that the parliamentary elections were honest, despite the fallacy of the 1986 election law on which they were based. (Among other faults, this law is sectarian, stipulating representation by minority or religious groups; the number of deputies elected from each region is not proportional to the population of that region.)

2. Many representatives of the nationalist and democratic forces, as well as other opponents of the regime, won the people's confidence and were elected to parliament, despite the ban on political parties other than the Muslim Brotherhood.

3. The release of all political detainees, i.e., those who had not been brought to trial, the return of confiscated passports; and the government's recognition of the citizens' freedom of movement.

4. The extensive and bold discussion of the cabinet's statement when it was presented to the parliament by Prime Minister Mudar Badran. The government won the parliament's confidence

only after declaring the suspension of martial law, and promising to abolish it completely within four to six months, as well as to reconsider the 1935 defense law and the release of all political prisoners.

5. Overturning the decision of the martial courts to dissolve the elected administrative boards of three Jordanian newspapers (*Al Rai*, *Al Destour* and *Sawt Al Shaab*).

6. Abrogation of the martial court decision to dissolve the Jordanian Writers' League.

7. Stripping the martial courts of their authority to rule on the validity of many laws, such as the anti-communism law and the law on affiliation to banned parties; the cases related to such laws will be heard in civil courts. The anti-communism law was subsequently repealed.

8. Establishing an investigation committee to examine the reasons for the economic crisis and punish those responsible. (However, there has been no change in the economic policy.)

These are the main features of the new democratic life in Jordan, from the November 8th parliamentary elections till the discussion of the cabinet's statement in early January. These democratic measures indicate that Jordan is entering a period of democracy, especially as compared to the previous situation, or to the status quo in much of the third world and the Arab world in particular. A significant margin of democracy has been achieved. It will, however, remain narrow as long as the ban remains on political parties and freedom of the press; the martial and emergency laws are not totally repealed; all political prisoners are not released; and the required measures have not been taken to facilitate the return of thousands of exiled Jordanian citizens. One must also bear in mind that the democratization process thus far has relied on an election law that is both unfair and insufficient. The elections were held under the shadow of martial law and the total ban on political parties. This deprived the political forces, save for the Muslim Brotherhood, of their right to field their can-

didates openly. These deficiencies raise doubts not only about the motivation for the democratic measures, but also about their future, and the seriousness of the Jordanian authorities' expressed intention to continue this process.

Motives and background

A scrupulous examination of the political and economic conditions prevailing in or affecting Jordan in the last few years, reveals five main factors which led to the current situation:

First: The intifada in the occupied territories, which tangibly reasserted the Palestinian quest for independence, and, on the other hand, the growing Likud extremism. The King's decision to sever ties with the Palestinian West Bank signified a retreat for the so-called Jordanian option for resolving the Palestinian question. At the same time, this step revealed King Hussein's fears of the growing extremist tendency in the Likud, which claims that Jordan is the proper site for any future Palestinian state. The king tried to counteract this claim with a series of «Jordanization» measures after severing ties with the West Bank. The parliamentary elections were part of the monarch's efforts to block the Likud plan for resettling the Palestinians in Jordan.

Second: The Jordanian national movement also played a role. Though this movement was not able to really threaten the regime, its militants kept the issue of democracy alive and exposed the reactionary policy of the monarchy, internally and vis-a-vis the Arab-Zionist conflict.

Third: Jordan's economic crisis worsened, with foreign debts reaching about ten billion dollars. At the same time, there was a near cut-off of Arab financial aid to Jordan, due to the US-Arab reactionary opposition to the king's severing ties with the West Bank. Thus, Hussein was left alone to face the crisis. He therefore began to reorganize the internal front, hoping to draw the political opposition into the battle to resolve the crisis.

Fourth: The unprecedented mass

protest of April 1989 revealed the weakness of popular support for the regime, even in its strongholds in southern Jordan. The decrease in the regime's popularity was due to the aggravated economic and social problems which occurred in the absence of a legislature. The dominance of the executive authority over the country's resources led to the policy of theft of public funds, corruption, favoritism and other practices which were not only illegal, but also immoral. The subsequent resignation of Zaid Al Rifai's government and the relatively free elections were part of the effort to restore public confidence in the authorities, mend the fences broken with the April protest, enlarge the regime's social base, and absorb the new social strata which have emerged as a result of the economic developments which began in the mid-seventies.

Fifth: The Arab countries, including Jordan, are not immune to the influence of the new international situation with perestroika and its repercussions. King Hussein is one of the most experienced Arab politicians, and adept in both Arab and international affairs. He is well aware of the potential impact of these dramatic international developments on a country like Jordan which lacks a self-sufficient economic base, as well as democracy and security. Hence, he was the first Arab ruler to board the train of change, taking the initiative to respond to the changes within limits that do not endanger his regime.

Indeed, no single one of the above-mentioned factors alone could have pushed the country towards the period of relative democracy for which the cornerstone is now being laid. Without their interaction, the previously prevailing state of oppression and political blackmail would have continued.

The pressure of the discontent

Since the democratic margin emerged, the task of all nationalist forces has been to protect and develop it, so that it covers all the political, economic and social aspects of life.

They must shoulder this responsibility without any illusions about the genuineness of these changes, and disregarding the question mark that the previous era would put to the current developments. The main task now is to develop this experiment, and not leave it as an easy prey for those local and regional forces that are working to abort it. There are many such forces, beginning with some trends within the state itself, namely the executive authority whose interests are threatened by democracy; this includes the intelligence and high-ranking army officers. These two groups are the most discontent with the introduction of democracy into the political life. They have nothing in common with democracy because they were brought up in a fully tyrannical atmosphere. The more democracy there is, the more limited their authority.

Ironically, we have a former security officer, who is now a member of parliament, accusing Mudar Badran (himself a former head of the intelligence) of «diluting the role of the intelligence and compromising the dignity of its officers» (*Middle East International*, no. 366, January 5th). This clearly indicates the political opposition in some circles of the security apparatus to Badran's measures which reduced the influence of the intelligence on organized political activities. Moreover, we have the Muslim Brotherhood trying to break down the foundations of the very margin of democracy that brought them into the parliament, by raising reactionary slogans which are at odds with democracy and progress. For example, as a solution to unemployment, the Brotherhood proposed depriving women of the right to work.

Regionally, there are Arab regimes that fear that the «democratic fever» will infect their people. More important is the pressure applied on Jordan by Israel with a view towards stopping the democratization. Prime Minister Shamir and Trade Minister Sharon renewed their threats that Jordan is the site of any future Palestinian state. The Zionists have, moreover, tried to

exploit a number of shooting incidents at the Palestinian-Jordanian borders. In one case, they shot down a Jordanian air force helicopter, killing five high-ranking officers, after guerrillas opened fire on an Israeli patrol from Jordanian territory, despite the Jordanian authorities denial of responsibility for the incident. Obviously, the Israeli provocations stem from fear of a reactivation of the Jordanian national movement and the Palestinian nationalist forces in Jordan, and especially so in this era of the intifada.

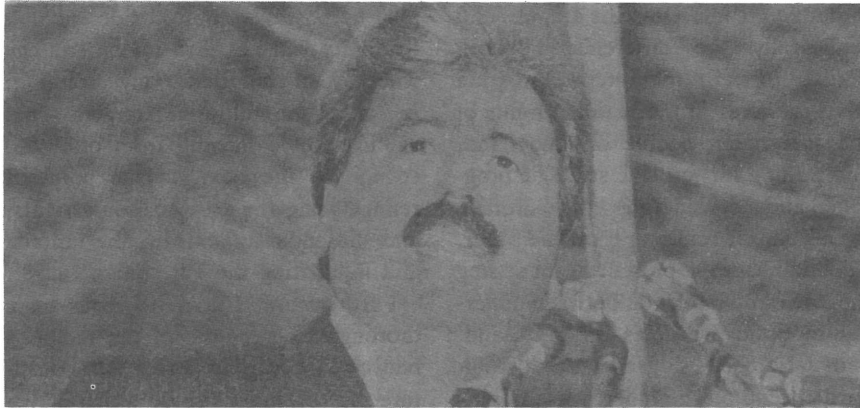
What about the future?

The objective factors which led to the democratization process are all deep-rooted developments that can be expected to continue to exert an influence for some time to come. Thus, it is logical to assume that the mainstream in the regime and King Hussein himself will remain obliged to continue the new course, as long as it does not endanger the regime's stability or its basic political and economic plans. At present, there is no indication that the new margin of democracy will be suddenly reversed, as happened with the coup which toppled Nabulsi's government in 1956.

However, continuation of the democratization process is also bound to the capacity of the pro-democracy forces to confront the pressure exerted by those who aim to abort this experience. This presents big tasks for the Jordanian national movement, especially in terms of politicizing and mobilizing the masses to protect and expand their democratic rights. The population at large still harbors suspicions as to how genuine the new democracy is. At the same time, they have yet to experience any benefits on the economic level, as the crisis continues unabated. The experienced political forces have the duty to provide the framework for involving the masses in shaping the democratization process. Today, there is a real opportunity for wide-ranging national democratic activity in Jordan, to enhance democracy and contribute to charting the future policy of the country. ●

The Arab Situation and the Intifada

This article was written by George Hawi, general secretary of the Lebanese Communist Party, on the occasion of the PFLP's 22nd anniversary.



The 22nd anniversary of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine occurs as the glorious intifada is entering its third year - more consolidated, broader and more determined. The convergence of the two events is not a coincidence, for the celebration of the PFLP's 20th anniversary highlighted one of the main factors that led to the outbreak of the uprising. It is not true that the intifada was born an orphan; that nobody is behind it; that it resulted from objective conditions alone, or is purely an expression of the masses' spontaneous will to confront the occupation and achieve independence. The subjective factor played an active role in paving the way for the intifada, specifically the action of the organized militant forces among the masses, and the various methods of struggle they adopted. The PFLP is one of the forces of the Palestinian revolution and the PLO, which partook in this process, along with all the forces, parties and mass organizations that reject occupation. All these forces contributed to the outbreak of the intifada.

It has been said that the uprising is the movement of the whole people and

that it is greater than the organizations combined. And why not? This does not belittle the role of the forces of the revolution. On the contrary, the role of the organization becomes most prominent when it operates not in isolation, but as an organizer of the masses' struggle - stimulating their potentials and igniting their capabilities. The accumulation of struggles is not a mere quantitative sum, but rather creates a new situation which qualitatively surpasses the quantitative accumulation. Consequently, all the struggles of the Palestinian people, in and outside of the occupied territories, laid the ground for the intifada.

I allow myself to credit the Lebanese arena with having played an essential role as well, both prior to the 1982 Israeli invasion, with the Palestinian-Lebanese national steadfastness, and after the invasion, with the rise of the Lebanese national resistance against the Israeli occupation, and the material and moral victories it achieved. It was an example of the tremendous popular potentials - Lebanese and Palestinian which can be mobilized to confront the occupation... Besides, we must not forget the suffering and steadfastness

of the Palestinian camps in Lebanon. It is in this context the celebrations of the PFLP's 20th anniversary played a basic role in the struggle directed simultaneously against the Israeli occupation and the reactionary Arab course which was doing its best to confiscate Palestinian national decision-making in preparation for surrender, as at the Amman Summit (1987). This struggle elevated the potentials of the Palestinian people.

We should dedicate the celebration of the PFLP's anniversary to discussing the task of protecting and developing the intifada, to enable it to succeed. Of course, there is insufficient room in an article for all the discussion needed. Hence, based on awareness of the centrality of this issue in the overall pan-Arab struggle, the Lebanese Communist Party is convening a Lebanese-Arab-international seminar on the occasion of the intifada entering its third year. We prepared this seminar in coordination with the PFLP, hoping that in addition to being a demonstration of solidarity, it would be an occasion for the leaders of Arab organizations and revolutionary and nationalist intellectuals to discuss their obligations in supporting the intifada. Here I will focus on the main points to be discussed...

1. On the Palestinian level

The Palestinian arena remains the party most capable of determining the line of the intifada, and fortifying it against the excessive Zionist repression on the one hand, and the attempts at aborting and containing it made by imperialism and Arab reactionary regimes on the other. Also, we must not forget the attempts of the Palestinian right wing to adopt policies that would ultimately lead to weakening the intifada and pushing it towards failure.

This poses certain tasks: bolstering the organizational structures which guide the intifada: consolidating the ►

intifada's continuation. We also stress the dialectical relationship between the unity of these forces and the PLO's unity. Consequently, we call for a real discussion of the different aspects of unity and struggle inside the PLO. Although this unity sometimes seems superficial and lacking a firm base, to neglect it means pushing for division with catastrophic effects on the intifada. Nevertheless, clinging to unity at all costs, even if some parties violate the collective resolutions of the PNC, becomes a hindrance for the true nationalists, preventing them from playing their role, alongside the masses, defending the slogans of freedom and independence.

These are issues to be seriously addressed. In this context, we give great importance to the PFLP's political position and militant practice. We consider this position one of the main factors in determining our own position.

2. On the Arab level

The intifada's entering its third year raises many serious questions on the Arab level, although they are not new to us. They are the result of a bad situation to which we Lebanese communists pointed frankly and clearly. The tragic shortcomings are not limited to the disgraceful state of the Arab world watching the intifada for two years, while the Palestinians were fighting alone - with the exception of the Lebanese National Resistance against the Israeli occupation, and Syria's role as the sole Arab state confronting Israel and Zionism. Even worse than just watching were malicious endeavors by some Arab regimes to pressure the PLO leadership to give more concessions, in order to contain and abort the intifada, and consequently destroy the PLO's credibility. These endeavors aimed to cancel the PLO's role and turn the Palestinian representation over to Jordan once again, or to Jordan and Egypt jointly, with a weak collaborationist interior leadership, mandated by the PLO in the initial stage, only to be put aside later. To make a long story short, we

can conclude four main lines regarding the tasks of supporting the intifada on the Arab level:

1. Confronting the Arab reactionary maneuvers, especially the Egyptian regime's 10-point plan which is but a mechanism for implementing Shamir's plan. Foiling this and other similar projects - which will increase whenever the intifada develops and the situation becomes more awkward for Zionism, imperialism and Arab reaction. This should be the major task of all the forces of the Arab national liberation movement, and not of the Palestinian people and uprising alone.

2. Pressuring the Arab regimes to adhere to the Arab summit resolutions concerning the PLO's representation of the Palestinian people - without this diminishing Arab obligations towards the Palestinian cause, and the political, moral and financial support that should be given to the intifada.

3. Working to create an Arab popular and official progressive center, grouping the regimes, forces and parties which adhere to the slogans of the intifada and have interests in its success. We call for reviving the Steadfastness and Confrontation Front on a new basis, including the Arab popular movements and main progressive parties in addition to the regimes. We also give utmost importance in this domain to the Palestinian - Syrian - Lebanese nationalist alliance, which requires first of all, improving relations between the PLO and Syria, the latter being the major base of the Palestinian struggle and the major force confronting Israel and Zionism. Thus we join our voice to the conscious voices in the PLO, who call for an end to viewing relations with Syria from a perspective of tactical maneuvering, because these relations are a vital strategic issue and could have a tremendous effect on the intifada. This is the only condition for restoring the militant Palestinian-Syrian-Lebanese nationalist alliance. It might constitute the impetus capable of surmounting the obstacle of the US-backed, Israeli rejection of the intifada's demands and the Palestinian people's rights. Moreover, the Palesti-

nian - Syrian - Lebanese nationalist relationship constitutes the cornerstone for the unity of all sincere Arab nationalist forces, and for more effective Arab support, wherein the stand of Libya, Algeria, Democratic Yemen and North Yemen play a pioneering role, in addition to the popular movements and parties.

4. The intifada has revealed the depths of the crisis of the Arab national liberation movement on two levels. First is the responsibility for the crisis of the movement's current class leadership. The second is the crisis of the supposed revolutionary alternative to the presiding leadership. We must review the position towards the intifada in terms of the size of support, and the influence it has internally in each country as an element for crystallizing the conditions for revolutionary change. Then we must plan how to develop this position on the intifada. The position towards the intifada not only reveals the state of mass apathy, but specifically the state of disarray in the leadership of the Arab national liberation movement and the popular movement. The situation on the mass level appears as bad as the official situation, and the situation of the revolutionary leadership is not better. To avoid a theoretical argument about whether or not such a leadership exists, we hasten to clarify that we simply mean the various national and pan-Arab leaderships of the forces committed to the tasks of national and pan-Arab liberation, and the general upshot of relations between these leaderships. Our deep awareness of the crisis does not encourage us to call for solidarity with the intifada organized by these forces, for although such solidarity is needed, it will not achieve the required minimum in the current conditions.

Our thinking is directed mainly towards the role of the intifada in solving the Arab national liberation movement's crisis. The intifada's role in deepening this crisis could be the first step towards solving it. Yet great efforts are needed on the two levels. First is the reality of the intifada itself ►

and the state of the struggle in each country. The second must be the outcome of serious political and ideological debate aiming to define the principles of a new Arab revolutionary movement: the revolutionary theory on which it should be based, methods of struggle, the forces making up the movement and the organizational frameworks for coordinating internal relations. These are not the immediate goals of the seminar on supporting the intifada, but the discussions will highlight them.

On the Lebanese level

The praise we hear about the role of the Lebanese national and progressive forces does not make us feel satisfied. On the contrary, it reinforces our critical outlook, aiming to discover and redress deficiencies. The Lebanese arena played a role in inspiring the intifada, and developing the Lebanese national resistance is the greatest contribution to supporting the intifada. The struggle for a national democratic solution in Lebanon entails the withdrawal of the Israeli occupation troops, confirming Lebanon's Arab identity, restoring national unity, foiling the divisive Zionist project, and having really democratic political reforms, based on total negation of political sectarianism, and establishing the state's executive, administrative, legislative and military institutions on democratic foundations.

The struggle for such a solution contributes to the Palestinian intifada. Nevertheless, all the above is not enough to make us stop thinking of how to restore the broader and unique role played by the Lebanese arena in the seventies. This role was restored after the Israeli occupation, with the rise of the Lebanese National Liberation Front and the battles to liberate the mountains and the southern districts of Beirut and the other militants acts that led to victories against Israel, the Marines, the multinational forces and the sectarian regime of Lebanon. It is now very urgent to revive this role whether the Arab solution agreed at Taef succeeds or not. Restoring the

state of revival entails, first of all, restructuring the relations among the Lebanese nationalist forces on the basis on commitment to the national democratic, non-sectarian program. The other requirement is establishing the Palestinian-Lebanese nationalist relationship on foundations of true solidarity. Stress should be placed on the role of the Lebanese nationalist forces and masses in supporting the intifada, protecting the camps and maintaining the Palestinian revolution's armed presence - to be used in fighting for liberation.

In turn, the Palestinians must support the Lebanese nationalist forces' national program and struggle against Israel and the internal reactionary forces. Yet the decisive factor in this revival lies, as we noted before, in restoring the Syrian - Palestinian - Lebanese alliance.

3. On the international level

When seeking stronger international support for the intifada, we must first of all make use of the general sentiment of sympathizing with the intifada and consequently with the Palestinians' legitimate national rights. There is now an unprecedented international consensus on supporting the intifada, which equals, or even surpasses the consensus on supporting the Vietnamese revolution in its final stages. But this sympathy is being exploited by some imperialist, Zionist and Arab reactionary circles, who portray it as a result of the PLO's concessions, and not the result of the steadfastness of the Palestinian people and revolution. This portrayal aims to elicit more concessions, and we must be alert to these dangers. International support is necessary to reinforce the intifada, not to replace it. If the revolution lays down its arms and the intifada is suppressed, world support would be reduced to pity, and pity does not retrieve rights or restore a usurped homeland.

The second important matter is how to turn this world sympathy and solidarity into pressure on the Israeli occupation and its US protector. It is

no secret that Israel is the only obstacle to solving the Middle East crisis, and the US is shielding its obstinate position. Developing the international support campaign would reinforce the position of the Palestinian side in talks with the US, and increase the latter's isolation, helping to show that the position of the US administration is not only contrary to the world consensus, but also to US interests, especially those of the American people. Moreover, great efforts should be exerted to influence American public opinion in favour of the Palestinians. The role of American public opinion was very important in the Vietnamese struggle, and the Palestinian cause is as much an American domestic concern in view of the strategic US-Israeli alliance and the interlinked interests between Zionism and US monopolies. Here we must not forget the importance of acquiring more support from Western Europe, because its position influences American public opinion and eventually the US position.

All this should not lead to any confusion. In such a long, fierce war, the revolution must have clear priorities. In our view, top priority should be assigned to consolidating the strategic alliance with the non-aligned countries, other liberation movements and revolutionary parties, and the socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union. Such strategic alliance is the main guarantee of long-term active support to the intifada. The leadership of the intifada and the PLO should give this matter the importance it deserves. Current developments in international relations and the tasks imposed on the great powers and their agenda of vital issues, in addition to the difficulties facing the socialist countries - all these factors reinforce the importance of consolidating alliance with the Soviet Union and socialist countries. This demands exceptional efforts, and a firm position, as well as knowing how to gain the suitable support, in order to withstand pressure and confront those who try to find easy solutions to the regional conflicts, no matter what the price. ●

Palestinian Theater

The following is a paper presented by George Ibrahim Habash, Secretary of the League of Palestinian Theater Activists in the Occupied Territories, to the conference held in Athens in December 1989, by the International Committee of Artists and Intellectuals for the Support of the Uprising and the Struggle of the Palestinian People in the Occupied Territories.

First of all, allow me to present a brief historical overview of the real beginnings of the Palestinian theater and its active role in the process of struggle. The very dialectics of occupation and resistance constitute the basic framework of the local Palestinian theater. No theater, unless it is involved in resisting the occupation, is worthy of the name.

The genuine experience of the theater began in the early seventies against a backdrop of no actual theatrical experience. The period of Jordanian rule of the West Bank witnessed no real experience in this field. In fact, this period was characterized by paralysis of the cultural movement in general. The emergence of the local theater in the seventies was not a unique or isolated event, but was part of a broad upsurge among the various sectors of the Palestinian people at that time. The June 1967 defeat had provided a rare opportunity. The masses, at that time, surpassed the limited potentials of the ruling Arab bourgeoisie. They discovered the real path of history through action which relied on their own potentials, instead of merely making use of the narrow margin of freedom to act and innovate which was grudgingly allowed by the regimes.

The Palestinian resistance, which paved the way for all strata of the Palestinian people to put their hidden potentials to use, was the main manifestation of the upsurge of the masses. Theater in the occupied territories started under the influence of a markedly rising revolutionary climate. From the very beginning, it was a patriotic theater. Without the new climate created by the revolution, it would

have been impossible for the society in the occupied territories to foster the initial experiments in theater. All the popular masses - the intellectuals, workers, peasants, petit bourgeoisie,



Scene from Al Hakawati production:
«The story of the eye and the tooth»


etc., both men and women, were caught up in the revolutionary tide of the resistance movement which had broken all chains. They became an attentive audience for the new theater,

despite the fact that there had never been any local theater before.

In this sense, the emergence of the theater was in itself an act of resistance to occupation. As a matter of course, the masses' readiness to sacrifice increases under occupation, as long as there is a revolutionary leadership, with leaders who remain among the masses, not on their shoulders.

From the beginning, the theater in the occupied territories benefited from the artistic experience of other peoples... Our local Palestinian theater has been identified with an extremely simple set, complete elimination of the fourth wall and audience participation. The theater groups were supported by the intellectuals, and theater critics emerged. Women began to act in the local theater. The scarcity of resources encouraged self-reliance. The local theater was able to present the works of Sophocles, Shakespeare, Moliere, Brecht, Lorca, Nazim Hikmet, Mahmoud Darwish, Samih Al Qasem, Ahmed Fuad Nejm, etc. It was able to apply different methods of performance and production. It benefited from the methods of Stanislavski, Mairhold, Grutovski, etc. The gains made by the local theater were due to the revolutionary atmosphere to which I referred earlier, as well as to the open social relations prevailing among the people in the occupied territories, and their desire to resist the occupation.

Yet the spontaneous emergence of the theater was not free of errors and weaknesses. Most of those who took part in the local theater movement lacked both practical and academic experience in this particular field. Their artistic and theatrical culture was



rather limited, except for the few who had lived abroad and had the chance of becoming informed about the development of theater in other countries...

On the other hand, the occupation undermined a whole series of artistic and cultural experiments, including the theater, during the eighties. Under occupation and the increasing process of capitalization in the occupied territories, more and more citizens were burdened with concerns about the difficulties of everyday life and making a living. This led to members of the theatrical troupes being preoccupied with their daily problems. Consequently, the surplus time and energy that could have been invested in cultural life contracted.

At the beginning, most of the participants in theater activities were students or new graduates who were severely affected by the economic and social conditions. As they got more involved in family life with all its requirements, many of them gave up the theater and some even left the country; the absence of professionalism also contributed to this. Waves of theater activists succeeded one another, as students and new graduates came and went. While the initial activists came at the time of the revolutionary tide, later ones came at a time when the phenomenon of bureaucratic deviation had set in, in the early eighties.

Then the theater faced the problem of the audience who began to avoid the theater and concentrate on their own lives. People were exhausted by the search for work and subsistence in the day, and were watching television in the evening. As a way out of this impasse, a number of theater artists decided to address youth and school children, attempting to form a mass base with the perspective that real Palestinian theater must be promoted by the rising generation. Theater groups concentrated their attention on children's theater and the schools. Over the last ten years, there have been 54 full theatrical performances shown to children.

These shows were essentially based on legends and often overloaded with social and political content. Now, with Palestinian children having acquired a greater life experience and deeper dimension of thought, we hesitate a lot when choosing the story for a children's play. The children have started demanding more; they are asking for something beyond the legend and the social themes; they insist on getting revolutionary plays which deal with the real situation of occupied Palestine, and correspond to the revolutionary tide that has penetrated their very beings.

Meanwhile, other plays continue to depict the repression practiced by the enemy against the cultural movement in the occupied territories. The theater has played a significant role in revolutionizing the Palestinian masses. The plays which took the lead are those which called for shaking off slumber and giving up waiting for the unknown savior who might never come. One such play, «Waiting for Faraj» (*faraj* means relief), was presented by the popular group *Sanabel*. It reviewed the situation of the Palestinian people at that time, calling on everyone to rise and take action.

The play, «Who is the Barren Woman?», identified surrender with death, since capitulation means sterility... Birth never comes unless there is revolution and liberation.

«Caligola», by the Artistic Theater Workshop, clearly speaks out against the fear of confrontation, since fear never protects against death; life is based on challenging injustice and overthrowing the oppressor.

«Two Aliens», by the troupe of Theatrical Arts, is a condemnation of emigration from the homeland.

«Kafar Shamma», presented by the Hakawati Theater, deals with the tragedy of the Palestinian people who are scattered all over the world because of the first disaster (1948).

«The Igniters», presented by the Artistic Theater Workshop, was an open letter to the ruling Arab bourgeoisie, warning them of the inevitable fire which will certainly con-

sume them if the status quo persists.

Some may imagine that things were going smoothly in a comfortable atmosphere of cultural and intellectual liberty, where Palestinian artists enjoyed freedom to create and perform. The reality was, however, completely different. The occupation authorities went on persecuting Palestinian artists. In addition to the notorious British Emergency Regulations of 1945, the Zionist authorities have issued a whole series of arbitrary decrees depriving Palestinians of the freedom of cultural creation and expression. Many creative workers are under house arrest; others are in prison. Cultural centers and institutions have been closed. Many performances have been stopped, and the performers arrested. All performances were prohibited in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. They can only be held in Jerusalem where there is relative cultural freedom due to the Israelis' imposition of civil rule there immediately after the occupation. Yet even the special status of Jerusalem did not prevent the occupation authorities from closing down the sole Palestinian cultural center in the city 34 times since it was established in 1983. There have been repeated raids during artistic performances. The center has even been attacked by soldiers using plastic bullets and tear gas, injuring several performers.

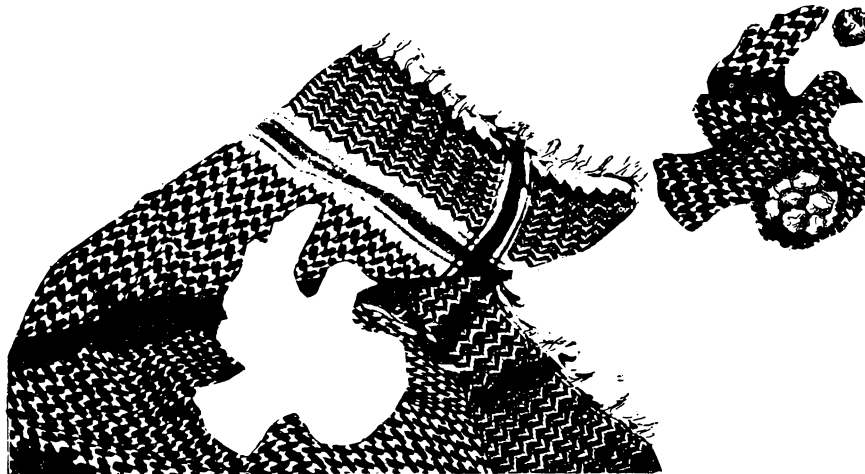
The shackles imposed by the enemy on Palestinian national cultural expression are too many to be listed here. Inversely, they constitute sufficient evidence of the depth of this cultural expression and its vigorous influence on the course of political life. Palestinian culture stresses the identity of the Palestinian people and their adherence to national unity and their leadership, the PLO. Our commitment has gone beyond the political framework to become an expression of our very identity, and an authentic synonym for Palestine...

We have no other weapons than stones. Also our theater possesses only the most basic artistic instruments, similar to stones. ●

Solidarity with the Palestinians

Less Talk, More Action

This article was written in December by Alexander Smirnoff, professor of history, and Middle East deputy manager of the Soviet news agency, Novosti.



It is not my hobby to write about outstanding occasions, but the second anniversary of the Palestinian intifada is not merely a time for festivals. Rather, it is an occasion for rallying the supporters of the just Palestinian cause in the Soviet Union. I cannot imagine celebrating the third anniversary of the intifada with the balance of forces not having shifted in favor of the Palestinian cause in the occupied territories, or with solidarity with the Palestinians having decreased on the Arab and international levels. Meanwhile, with every new day of the uprising, there is more death among unarmed Palestinian children and youth, more injured and maimed, more torture, terror and economic hardship.

Hence, it is the duty of noble people all over the world to double their efforts to support the Palestinian cause, so that the intifada will not be suppressed, nor the world become accustomed to the scenes of killing and destruction. With the support of the

Arab world and at least part of the international community, the intifada should be enabled to overcome the obstinacy of the Shamir government, and pave the way for achieving Palestinian rights.

Many experts are trying to give a real definition of the intifada but, in my opinion, they have not succeeded, for the intifada is an unprecedented phenomenon. It is not only civil disobedience, but a new social and class reality in the occupied territories. If we examine the social aspect of the uprising, we find that class contradictions have decreased under the influence of the common struggle of the Palestinian community against occupation. On the instructions of the United National Leadership, wealthy people voluntarily contribute to the fund for supporting the poor and those who have had their property confiscated by the occupation forces. Prices have been reduced, as have bridal dowries; many negative traditions have disappeared.

Though the Palestinian people as a

whole are resisting occupation, not all Palestinians are firm militants; there are some collaborators among them, who are subject to hard punishment. The situation is quite different from the time of the Palestinian struggle under the British occupation, for the collaborators now are merely individuals, rather than whole classes or political parties.

What were the antecedents that led to the present uprising? One of them was the 1936-39 revolt, with the famous six-month general strike, which was aborted as a result of the intervention of the Arab rulers. They called for an end to the strike after the British promise to meet Palestinian demands... (a promise that remained unfulfilled). The 1936 revolt combined civil disobedience and armed resistance.

Recently, we celebrated the 35th anniversary of the Algerian armed resistance. As part of the liberation struggle, there was a confrontation in the Algiers *casba* between civilians and

the French authorities, which was very similar to the intifada, but still the intifada is a rare and unprecedented phenomenon. The Israeli and western theories attempting to explain the intifada have been disproved, one after the other. The intifada is not spontaneous; nor is it just religious fanaticism or a youth rebellion. Rather, the intifada is an explosion which generated a permanent flame with a tremendous capacity for renewal.

The Palestinians have made great human and material sacrifices: Hundreds killed, thousands injured and 150,000 imprisoned at one time or another. Each and every Palestinian, even if he remains at home, will face one of these possibilities: being imprisoned or beaten, or having property confiscated. Therefore, it is better for all Palestinians not to stay home, but to go out and participate in the intifada.

World public opinion

If we examine western public opinion, especially in Europe, and public opinion in many Asian countries, we see a remarkable increase in solidarity with the Palestinian people, resulting from protest against the Zionist authorities' repressive measures. French President Mitterand, addressing the last session of the European Parliament, said: There is no excuse for the continued acts of oppression, whereby human beings are being turned into beasts and victims; here, we see again the eternal contradiction between the oppressor and the oppressed, the murderer and the victim. What is happening in the West Bank and Gaza Strip has been going on for too long. I do agree with Mitterand's words, although his response is not always appropriate. For example, concerning Lebanon, his statements have not always been correct, but concerning the intifada, I dare say his words were quite adequate and timely.

I am very impressed by the western media's coverage of the intifada. Despite my appreciation of the Soviet press, I have not read in *Pravda* or *Izvestia* or even *Literanaya Gazeta*,

good and interesting articles and reports in support of the Palestinians, such as those which have appeared in *Le Monde*, *The Observer*, *The Guardian*, etc. or in the press of Greece, Cyprus, Spain, Italy, Portugal or even West Germany, and lately Japan. In addition to what the Palestinians themselves have published, the best materials about the intifada have been written by objective western journalists.

By the way, I disagree with some Soviet journalists who, in the name of a «balance of interests», are equating the victim and the victimizer. The difference is apparent in Mitterand's statement, but some of our journalists do not see this difference. You can look at one of our newspapers and see Arafat to the left counterposed to Shamir on the right, or George Habash counterposed to Shlomo Gazit, and so on. If this is what is meant by a balance of interests, then it is wrong. I'll give an example of the balance of interests: Let's consider Palestine as a big house inhabited by a people (the Palestinians); then along comes another people (the Jews), saying: This is the house of our forefathers, so give it back to us. Here the conflict begins. It is obvious that we have to divide the house in one way or another, so that both people can live in it; the question is how to divide it. Some suggest dividing it into two equal parts. Others propose building an additional small room in front of the house, of the kind usually built for dogs, where one people (the Palestinians) can live, while the other people (the Jews) live in the big house. In fact, this is the essence of both Shamir's and Baker's plans.

Soviet campaign needed

Now is the time for a broad unconventional campaign of solidarity with the Palestinian people in the Soviet Union, because the kinds of meetings we have been holding are no longer sufficient. We need big actions like those which are becoming a normal phenomenon in our country. We call them human chains as the chain which stretched from Vilnius to Tallin, or from

Zilnagrad to Gorky Street, or even to the KGB headquarters, and others. The Soviet community, along with the 25,000 Arab students in our country and their friends, should be able to get permission and undertake to form such a human chain. There was an idea to hold a concert in the Soviet Union, at which international stars and rock music groups would perform. Vanessa Redgrave proposed the idea, but it was not met with enthusiasm by our authorities when she visited Moscow to discuss it. Moreover, Soviet artists must not only visit Tel Aviv; they must also express solidarity with the Palestinians in the occupied territories.

There should also be parliamentary activities because the work of the Soviet Supreme Council is no longer restricted to applauding and raising hands in assent, etc. The present council operates very well. It has established a special committee for international affairs, headed by Alexander Tsamakhov who, only two years ago, was the chairman of the Soviet Solidarity Committee and previously was ambassador to an Arab state which was a main party in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Thus, he has detailed knowledge of the conflict. The Soviet Supreme Council should discuss the Palestinian cause, especially in view of the aggressive Israeli practices in the occupied territories. Soviet religious leaders should be more active in solidarity with the Palestinians. Moscow's patriarch issued many appeals concerning the situation in Lebanon, and these were appreciated by the Lebanese. Let us take the example of Beit Sahour, the town near Bethlehem, inhabited by Greek Orthodox Christians - the descendents of the shepherds who found the baby Jesus in the manger. Today, outrageous things are happening there, with the Israeli authorities confiscating the property and belongings of Beit Sahour residents because they refuse to pay taxes to finance the aggression of the occupation forces against them. In the center of Beit Sahour, opposite the church, a detention center has been set up, where detainees are held for many days

before being taken to prison. The roofs of buildings have been turned into Israeli observation posts where the soldiers urinate into barrels placed there to gather water, and the people are forced to drink this spoiled water because they are under 24-hour curfew. Furthermore, four patriarchs were prevented by the Israeli authorities from visiting the town...Why is Moscow's patriarch silent about such practices? If he lacks information, we must provide this...

In Jerusalem, a prison has been built on property which belonged to the Orthodox Church before 1967, and was then sold to the Israeli authorities at a very low price. Today, horrible things are going on in this prison. While people pray in the nearby church, they can hear the cries of prisoners being tortured. In the square opposite, mothers of detainees gather in hopes of catching a glimpse of their sons as they are moved to other prisons. Soviet religious leaders should have a clear-cut stand on these matters.

We must continue to demand the withdrawal of the Israeli troops, and the recognition of Palestinian rights. In addition, we must ask for urgent measures to stop the practices of the armed Zionist settler gangs who are far worse than Israeli soldiers. Unfortunately, we find some Jews of Soviet origin among these criminals. We call on the UN and other international organizations to demand the immediate withdrawal of the Israeli troops, at least from the Palestinian population centers. We must also demand an end to deportations. So far, sixty Palestinians have been expelled, including activists and educators such as Professor Taysir Arouri, a graduate of Moscow University, who was handcuffed and kicked onto an Air France plane in a manner that led the pilots to protest strongly. Why doesn't the dean of Moscow University invite Professor Arouri to Moscow?

As a journalist, I call for ending oppression against my Palestinian colleagues, like closing newspapers, expelling journalists, such as Akram

Haniyeh, and the closure of the press center directed by Faisal Husseini who has been frequently arrested. Moreover, some western journalists have been subjected to ill treatment by the Israelis. I propose that the Soviet television send a team to the occupied territories, but they should not conduct their work under the auspices of the Israeli military. On the contrary, they should ask the assistance of the legitimate, local Arab (Palestinian) organizations. Some Soviet reportage of the intifada has been unbalanced, though I cannot say it was completely aligned to Israel. Filming the intifada through the opening of Israeli armored vehicles should not be the preferred job of Soviet journalists.

In my opinion, when the Middle East question is discussed by the Soviet public, the Palestinian cause should not be mixed with the Soviet Union's internal and external affairs. It is no secret that the problem of the nationalities has intensified in the Soviet Union. There is debate in various publications and among the public, including (a revival of) the old «western Russianism» and other tendencies, and this is an unhealthy atmosphere. It is not correct, in this debate, to mix the Palestinian issue with the Jewish question and Jewish culture in the Soviet Union. Of course, the latter issues should be discussed but not necessarily parallel to the Palestinian cause.

I am very happy to hear that the idea of forming an Arab front to support the intifada is now being discussed in the Arab world. Such a front would refute the pretexts given by some Soviet citizens, like: «Why all this fuss about the Palestinians - don't we have enough problems of our own? Why should we support the Palestinians more than the Arabs themselves do?» When the Arab community forms a unified front to support the intifada, this would pressure the Arab governments and, in turn, the United States. In this case, there would be more reason for increasing the activities of those who defend the Palestinian cause in the Soviet Union.

Concerning relations with Israel

Most Soviets I have spoken with share my view about resuming full diplomatic relations with Israel at this time. They consider this premature and unjustified while the heroic Palestinian intifada is escalating, and the Israeli authorities are increasing their crimes against unarmed civilians, as well as their raids and other terrorist acts against Lebanon. Resuming relations in this situation cannot be justified in the Arab world or by millions of Soviet citizens. At the very least, it must be preceded by a halt to the criminal Israeli practices in the occupied territories and specific measures towards the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, or repositioning them. In this regard, it would be positive if negotiations were to begin between the Israelis and the Palestinians who have relations with the PLO, and who defend the Palestinian people's interests and national rights.

Some Soviets argue that the absence of relations with Israel is unnatural, but we should not forget that it was not Moscow's fault that these relations were severed. It was the Israeli policies that led to a situation whereby normalizing Soviet-Israeli relations became impossible in the absence of a settlement for the Middle East problem. Moreover, Shamir's government continues to sabotage the peace efforts...

I want to stress the importance of the Arabs and the Palestinians developing «popular diplomacy» which would proceed alongside the efforts of the Arabs' faithful friends in the Soviet Union, in order to make a positive impact on public opinion and obliterate previous mistaken views about the reality of the Middle East. In this respect, I cannot but agree with the words of the Soviet Supreme Council in welcoming PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat: «Today we are very confident that the intifada has become a highly influential element in the region and internationally. It has led to increasing the wave of sympathy and support for the Palestinian people the world over.»

Mandela is Free!

Seldom has the release of a political prisoner held such great significance as Nelson Mandela's reunion with his people on February 11th, after 27 years in apartheid's dungeons. It would be difficult to describe or quantify the emotions this brought forth not only among his family, friends and comrades, but also among millions the world over who have grown to love and revere Mandela as a symbol of human courage and endurance in the battle against injustice. Mandela's release is concrete evidence of what both neutral and partisan observers, as well as the ANC itself, have been saying for some years now: The tide has turned and apartheid's demise is inevitable; it is coming soon.

Mandela's release is proof that the apartheid regime itself has now acknowledged this fact. Reaching this point has taken decades of popular and vanguard struggle, untold sacrifices and sustained international pressure. True, the Pretoria government unbanned the ANC and other anti-apartheid organizations in connection with Mandela's release. But this was more of a confirmation of the prevailing balance of forces: The masses had already lifted the ban in practice, especially with the rising struggle of the mid-eighties, where ANC slogans and symbols were frequently raised, and an increasing number of mass organizations in South Africa declared their alignment with the ANC.

What the De Klerk government is actually saying is that it is ready to negotiate with the ANC as the undisputed leadership of the broad anti-apartheid struggle. At the same time, the minority regime, including the pro-reform forces within it, will work to steer these negotiations in a direction which will leave decisive power and certain privileges in the hands of the white establishment.

Nelson Mandela and the ANC are well-aware that the war has not been won, but rather they are entering the final battle. This was clear in Mandela's speech to the crowd of 120,000 who gathered to welcome him back to Soweto: «There must be an end to white monopoly of political power and a fundamental restructuring of our political and economic systems to ensure that the inequalities of apartheid are addressed... The factors which necessitated the armed struggle still exist today. We have no option but to continue.» At the same time, he urged the government to meet the conditions for negotiations by lifting the state of emergency and freeing all political prisoners. Mandela advocated negotiations for «peace, democracy and freedom for all,» calling on whites to «join us in the making of a new South Africa» (*International Herald Tribune*, February 12th).

With Namibia's achievement of independence under SWAPO's leadership, the native people of Palestine and South Africa stand together as the sole remaining victims of settler-colonialism in the world today. The dual, but overlapping structure of the Palestinian revolution, with the intifada in the occupied territories and the PLO's political and military struggle from exile, is to a great extent similar to that of the Black majority's struggle, with the organized mass movement in South Africa and the ANC in exile. With the new stage signalled by Mandela's release, the ANC has officially reentered its homeland, reintegrating its various arenas of struggle. Achieving such a situation is also an aspiration of the Palestinian revolution. Perhaps more than any other people, the Palestinians are closely following the unfolding events in South Africa - and there is much to be learned.

One important lesson is the necessity

of a long-range view, revolutionary patience and persistent struggle that defy periods of set-back and hopelessness. The ANC's struggle dates back to 1912, when it was founded and embarked on non-violent resistance to apartheid. The adoption of the Freedom Charter in 1955 marked a turning point in that it laid down the principles of the democratic society for which the movement was struggling. Another turning point came with the 1960 Sharpeville massacre which prompted new thinking about whether the people's aspirations could be achieved solely via non-violent struggle in the face of the massive brutality practiced by the apartheid regime. As a result, the military wing of the ANC, Umkhonto Sizwe, was formed in 1961, and began armed struggle against the forces of apartheid. The arrest of Nelson Mandela, and his being sentenced to life imprisonment, along with other militants, came at this time with the racist regime's attempt to nip the vanguard struggle in the bud. But the ANC persisted in multifaceted struggle throughout these long decades until the eighties when the anti-apartheid movement was able to enforce the new balance of power which is the background for today's events.

The very question of Mandela's own release has been under negotiation for an extended period during which he resisted any impulse to attain his own freedom on conditions that would compromise the ongoing struggle for equality and justice. Yet there are those who advise the PLO to compromise basic Palestinian rights and its own leading role in hopes of gaining an undefined «something,» before it is too late. The experience of the struggle in South Africa speaks against such desperate approaches. It shows that freedom, whether of a people or one of their leaders, is not something to be

begged for, but something to be enforced through struggle to change the balance of forces.

The ANC has long worked on the basis of a realistic assessment of the balance of power and its own potentials at any given time. It has skillfully combined various methods of struggle; it has coordinated its work with a broad spectrum of other organizations, representing all sectors of the oppressed in South Africa, and maintained close relations with the South African Communist Party over the years. ANC has contributed greatly to the breadth of the anti-apartheid struggle by applying a truly non-racist policy that mobilized not only the Black majority, but other ethnic groups as well, including democratic whites. It has understood how to explore and widen the contradictions among the different sectors of the white minority, meanwhile eliciting support from a broad spectrum of forces on the international

level. It has tied together all its fields of work with a political line that exhibited firmness in strategy and flexibility in tactics.

These are the factors that created the conditions for Mandela's unconditional release, and that ensure that this marks the beginning of a new stage that can only end in apartheid's abolition.

The PLO can benefit from the experience of Mandela and the ANC, for it is the same conditions that must be created in the Palestinian arena to ensure that the intifada can be translated into political gains for the Palestinian cause.

Despite the great advance that Mandela's release means, we do not underestimate the great obstacles that remain before the majority of South Africans enjoy freedom, democracy and social justice. In the coming stage, which will most likely witness both militant struggle and peace negotia-

tions, the majority demand for «one man, one vote, based on a common voting roll» will be one of the pivotal issues. To this obvious principle of justice, President De Klerk has counterposed universal suffrage but with political power shared on the basis of racial groups, or «structural guarantees» for whites. Those who benefit from apartheid - both reformers and hard-liners - can be expected to fight back to retain their privileges. A poignant sign of this was the fact that a number of Black youth were shot and killed by the racist police while celebrating Mandela's release, while Mandela himself is under a death threat from the ultra-rightist Afrikaner organization. There should be no slacking off of international solidarity with the African masses' struggle, and no lessening of sanctions, as begun by Margaret Thatcher, until apartheid has been made a relic of the past in material as well as morale terms. ●

Nelson and Winnie Mandela upon his release




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