

Occupied Palestine

Continuing Mass Uprising

Despite the wave of arrests that continued after December's mass uprising, Palestinians persisted in expressing their rejection of the Zionist occupation, and their solidarity with their brothers in the besieged camps in Lebanon. By February, a full-scale mass uprising had again spread throughout the occupied territories.

On January 16th, the national institutions in Duheisheh camp in the occupied West Bank issued a statement denouncing the occupation forces' harassment of their camp which they said had become a «military base and a closed ghetto.» The statement noted that the occupation authorities had arrested thirty people in the three preceding weeks. Many were arrested, held for the customary 18 days, then released, only to be rearrested. The statement described how the occupation army had brutalized the camp residents by rounding up men between the ages of 12 and 60 in the camp's center and forcing them to stand naked with their hands in the air. This situation continued; four Duheisheh youth were snatched from their homes and arrested, with no reason given, on January 23rd.

The same harassment was going on in other places, as scores of youth were arrested, usually without any explanation, during the month of January. Students were especially hard hit. Around 20 Bir Zeit University students were taken from their homes in the night and placed under arrest without reason in the weeks preceding the student council elections. In late 1986, the Zionist authorities had announced the opening of a new detention center for youth, in the occupied Gaza Strip, dubbed Ansar II. In January, reports of torture began to leak out, promising that this center was to be the counterpart of Al Faraah in the West Bank, notorious as a torture factory for churning out confessions, having been established to quell the revolutionary spirit of Palestinian youth under occupation.

PROTESTING DEPORTATION

Regardless of the tightened iron fist, there were intermittent demonstrations

in January. Mass anger reached a height in the Gaza Strip on January 24th, after the expulsion by the Israeli authorities of Mohammad Dahlan, 26 year old resident of Rafah refugee camp near Khan Younis, and history student at the Islamic University in Gaza. There was a general strike in Khan Younis, closing all shops and secondary schools. Demonstrators stormed the municipal building and post office. The occupation forces reinforced their ranks and opened fire on the demonstrators, while spraying tear gas to disperse them. Shopowners who did not reopen were threatened with imprisonment.

At a press conference called in occupied Jerusalem by the Committee Confronting the Iron Fist, to protest the deportation, Attorney Khalid Al Kidri explained that the Zionist authorities had not had substantial evidence against Dahlan to merit conviction in the Gaza military court, for which reason they had earlier released him. The attorney voiced his suspicions that Dahlan had dropped his appeal of the deportation order under pressure from the security forces. The same misgivings had been expressed by the progressive Israeli lawyer, Lea Tsemel, before the deportation, while Dahlan was detained in the solitary confinement cells of Ashkelon prison, usually used by the Shin Bet for interrogation.

Schools and national institutions in the Gaza Strip continued to strike in protest of the deportation, and the masses repeatedly took to the streets in the succeeding days. On January 25th, a military vehicle was destroyed by demonstrators. Israeli troops again opened fire on the people. On January 29th, Israeli soldiers fired on a demonstration in Khan Younis, injuring three Palestinians. The Israeli army claimed that only one of them was shot by its own forces and that the other two injuries came from an «unknown

source». One of the three, a 17 year old, later died from his wounds. Again on February 1st, these «unknowns»-be they the occupation army, armed Zionist settlers or Shin Bet agents, were on the move. Twelve Palestinian girls were injured when masked men sprayed acid inside a Gaza high school.

On February 2nd, the occupation authorities closed Deir Al Balah secondary school for three days after demonstrations protesting Israeli oppression. In Khan Younis, shops closed as demonstrators raised the Palestinian flag on a post in front of the mosque. The occupation army was highly visible in the streets throughout the Gaza Strip.

AL NAJAH CLOSED AGAIN

On February 9th, residents of Balata refugee camp near Nablus, in the occupied West Bank, staged a large demonstration against the Israeli iron fist policy. Palestinians waved their flag of red, green and black - forbidden colors under occupation - while others burned tires and threw stones at the occupation troops. The camp was besieged and a curfew imposed after the Zionist forces had fired into the crowds indiscriminantly, injuring four camp residents. One of them was a 13 year old girl, who was shot in the back, another a 14 year old boy.

The same day in Nablus, hundreds of students at Al Najah University demonstrated in protest of the Amal gangs' siege of the Palestinian camps in Lebanon. The students erected roadblocks to keep the occupation troops out of their campus, and threw stones at the encroaching military patrols. Six students were wounded when the Zionists opened fire. Al Najah was ordered closed for one month by the military government, having only been reopened in mid-January after closures due to the mass uprising in