

for itself, one for the Student Unity Bloc and one for the Progressive Student Bloc. The Progressive Student Action Front's weight among Bir Zeit students is actually sufficient to ask for more representation in accordance with proportional representation. However, the Progressive Student Action Front presented this formula in a desire to protect unity in the field and renew the experience of Bethlehem University where all the nationalist student blocs were guaranteed representation in the student council.

This was clear to all. Still, the Student Unity Bloc, which had a prior bilateral agreement with the Student Youth Bloc, proposed the following: five seats for the Student Youth Bloc, two for itself, one each for the Progressive Student Action Front and the Progressive Student Bloc. This formula contradicted the two agreed-upon principles and moreover neglected the true weight of the Progressive Student Action Front. However, there was insistence on this formula, forcing the Progressive Student Action Front to participate in the elections on an independent list. This would serve to prove the real weight of the various student forces, and expose to the student movement the selfish methods and considerations that dominate the conduct of some student blocs, contrary to the demands of unity in the field and proportional representation.

The voting results were as follows: (1) the Martyrs of Maghdousheh list got 797 votes; (2) the Martyr Ghassan Kanafani list got 471 votes; and the Islamic list got 651 votes. With 42% of the votes, the Maghdousheh list won all the seats on the student council. However, the results served to reveal the real weight of the various student blocs at Bir Zeit University. The Progressive Student Action Front gained 24% of the total vote, showing the injustice of the formula proposed by the Student Unity Bloc, and how clearly it contradicted the principle of proportional representation.

LESSONS TO BE DRAWN

All Palestinian nationalist forces are called on to draw the lessons of the Bir Zeit elections in the interests of supporting the nationalist student movement in the occupied homeland, consolidating its unity and enhancing its effectiveness in the unionist and national struggle against the policies of

the Zionist occupation and the Jordanian regime. The main lessons are:

One: The necessity of practicing unity in the field which is called for in theory by most democratic and nationalist forces. In a situation that demands utmost unified action to defeat the enemy's plans, it is not acceptable that an essential nationalist force be deprived of active participation and representation.

Two: Failure to achieve unified action has negative effects on the capacity of the nationalist forces in confronting the enemy plans. It creates gaps in the Palestinian nationalist position, which in turn leaves space for strengthening the influence of reactionary, religious and suspicious elements. Last year at Bir Zeit University, the Islamic list obtained 25% of the votes. This year it received 34%. In the context of the Israeli-Jordanian policy for promoting such elements, the failure of the nationalist forces to achieve full unity in the field allowed for this increase in the Islamic list's votes.

Three: Cooperation among the democratic forces is the cornerstone for Palestinian national unity in the field. Consolidating the cooperation among the democratic forces requires that all organizations put aside selfish considerations and bias. This is needed in the democratic forces' battle against the right-wing deviationist trend in the Palestinian arena, which tries to monopolize the Palestinian union movement. The Bir Zeit elections reveal that cooperation among the democratic student forces is weak, since some

forces put their own gains above the interests of the democratic and progressive students as a whole.

Four: The Bir Zeit elections reaffirmed the need to struggle consistently for practicing the principle of proportional representation in the Palestinian union movement, so that all parties can be represented justly in a correct, democratic manner.

Five: Insisting on false estimations of the weight of other forces only weakens the credibility of those using this method. It makes it impossible for the nationalist forces to agree in the union work. In contrast, adhering to the facts and giving each force its due weight would consolidate the practice of proportional representation and national unity in the field.

Six: The election results confirmed that the Progressive Student Action Front is a force to be reckoned with. Running alone, it gained 24% of the total votes. This is more than half the number of votes gained by the three nationalist student blocs together in the Maghdousheh list. Its actual weight as shown in the elections was more than the representation it had proposed for itself in the interests of achieving its main goal of unity in the field, putting aside selfish considerations.

In conclusion, it is worth noting that the Progressive Student Action Front declared its wishes of success for the newly elected student council, and its readiness to put its weight in the service of the nationalist student movement, regardless of not being represented in the council. ●

Palestinian Writers' and Journalists' Union Reunited

From February 8th to 11th, the unifying conference of the General Union of Palestinian Writers and Journalists was held in Algiers, ending the situation of division and dispersal that the Palestinian cultural movement has been suffering the last three years. In itself, the convening of the unifying conference was a positive nationalist move. Failure to consider that point would only consecrate Palestinian division.

The conference arrived at results constituting a common nationalist basis between the Palestinian nationalist and progressive organizations in attendance. The political communique

issued at the conference's end called for official cancellation of the Amman accord with the Jordan regime. It condemned the war on the Palestinian camps in Lebanon.

The convening of this conference, considering the critical conditions that the Palestinian people are living through, gave it a significance far beyond its importance as a union conference. All Palestinian nationalist and progressive journalists and writers are called upon to support and consolidate the union's unity, in order to consolidate its role in defending the Palestinian people and revolution.