

Poets of the Resistance

In the last issue of *Democratic Palestine*, we printed a selection by Emil Tuma on the Palestinian Arab cultural movement in the Zionist state. Tuma noted that: «Several good poets have emerged with poems that harmonize revolutionary contents with an original form.» Outstanding among them are those who came to be known as the Poets of the Resistance, especially Tawfiq Zayyad, Samih Al Qasem

and Mahmoud Darwish. Here we print some poems that are representative of this trend.

Samih Al Qasem's «The Land After I Had Gone» reflects the focus on the land, whereby it rises from being mere soil to stand as a symbol of the Palestinian cause itself.

Tawfiq Zayyad's «The Coming Day» expresses the persistent optimism of the Palestinian people and their conviction

in the inevitability of liberation, despite decades of oppression.

In «The Path Has Risen,» Mahmoud Darwish pays tribute to the distinguished Palestinian poet, Muin Bseiso, who died in January 1984. At the same time, Darwish's poem brings out the universal aspect of the Palestinian cause. (For reasons of space, we print only the first verse.)

The Land After I Had Gone

by Samih Al Qasem

A day after my green youth
was engraved on marble tomb
my heart said - excuse me,
marble tomb
will a stronger knight be
victorious.
after I have gone?
If he becomes the 'lover'
I am a memory
then completely forgotten.

My land which, with my
ancestors' bones,
I ploughed
It intermingled with my sons
my land, to which I showed my
love
and cared for its fruit all my life
my land which...
Is he the lover,
I am a memory
and then completely forgotten

Oh, our everlasting home
oh, our temple-home
upon its doorsteps I kneel
and smell the perfume of the
shoes of its builder
oh, the door to my home
opened to houses all over the
world
of my attic
the cradle of the first word I
sang
you are witness to my
affection
you, when his hands grab its
fruit
you, my sole shelter
Is he the beloved
am I a memory
then completely forgotten

who put boulders on plains,
who watched the stars?
who taught the breeze to blow
softly on gardens?
who... but only the good
generous heart of my grandfather

who made the fields bountiful?
who but my old uncle and father
who watched for nests in our
ancient olive trees?
who engraved the names of relatives,
one after another,
on each branch of all our vines,
only this blessed lover?

Is he the lover
Am I a memory
and completely forgotten?
Oh the most beautiful beats of
my heart
oh with which I enjoyed love
Am I made wretched through hatred?
Answer your son,
your misfortunate son
oh land?

The Path Has Risen

by Mahmoud Darwish

How many deaths must you die?
In how many languages must you make mistakes
Before you arrive?
The path has risen against the path
And our steps have taken many directions.
The hero's dead,
Long live the mountain!
How many times, for your sake and mine,
Must you raise two tents on the shores?
How often must you come into the kingdom of violets,
Only to find no violets there?

Do not use my eyes to cry, but lift me
So I may carry the weapons of the dream
Stained with a blood that calls our name
And leads us - I don't know where.
No. We have not found a river to take
Save this one. Let's go with it then.
Cities appear, and disappear in us,
While from our hand to our blood-
A horizon that cannot be fenced in
Except with the boxthorn of childhood.
How much have we seen? How often
In the four winds have we seen
Cities approach, in which we disappear,
Only to emerge like hostages when hope betrays us?
The hero's dead,
Long live the mountain!