

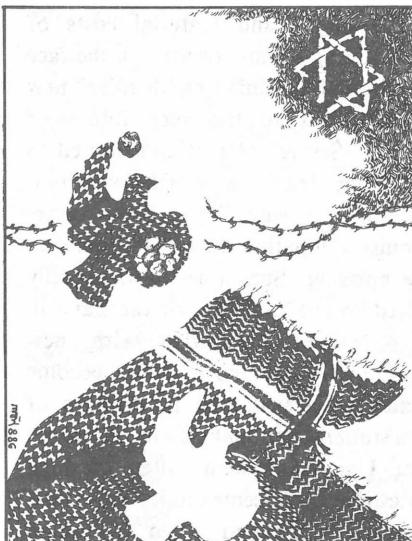
Impact of the Uprising on the Arab World

There is no doubt that the current uprising in occupied Palestine is a major turning point on the road to achieving the goals of our people. This article covers the major effects of the uprising on the Arab level and the most urgent tasks of the Arab liberation movement.

First, the uprising restored the prominence of the Palestinian cause and the Arab-Israeli conflict, after these issues had been purposely marginalized, as at the latest Arab summit in Amman. Second, the uprising served to stimulate Arab officialdom. The Arab foreign ministers met especially to discuss means of supporting the uprising. Third, the uprising forced the Amal movement to lift the 32-month old siege on the Palestinian camps in Beirut. Fourth, on the popular level, the uprising ushered in a new stage of revolutionary action. The effects of the uprising have spread to the whole Arab arena. This is particularly the case in Jordan and Egypt, where the regimes continue maneuvers to foil the uprising on the pretext of preparing the atmosphere to search for peace. These two regimes have suppressed mass demonstrations with methods similar to those used by the Israelis.

THE OFFICIAL ARAB POSITION

The extraordinary Amman Summit of Nov. 8-11, 1987, was a dangerous step backwards for the official Arab position. For the first time since the initial Arab summit in 1964, the Arab-Israeli conflict was a secondary issue. This contrasted sharply with the whole tradition of Arab summits, which arose from the need to discuss the Arab-Israeli conflict and the means of confronting the Zionist threat that encompasses the Arab countries in general, not only Palestine. This threat has materialized in Israeli participation in the British-French aggression on Egypt in 1956. In 1964, 'Israel' began a plan to divert the Jordan River waters. Then came the 1967 aggression that resulted in the occupation of the rest of



Postcard issued in solidarity with the uprising by the Union of Iraqi Democrats.

Palestine, and parts of Egypt and Syria as well. The biggest threat was the bilateral treaty signed between Egypt and 'Israel' in 1979, that was followed by the annexation of Jerusalem and the Golan Heights in 1981. 'Israel' invaded South Lebanon in 1978 and major parts of Lebanon in 1982, occupying Lebanese territory. 'Israel' has even raided distant Arab capitals: Baghdad in 1981 and Tunis in 1985.

Yet, the Amman Summit disregarded the Arab-Israeli conflict, moving it to third place after the Iran-Iraq war and settling inter-Arab disagreements in order to restore «Arab solidarity».

One of the most dangerous results of the Amman Summit was dropping the slogan of an independent Palestinian state, raised in the Rabat Summit in 1974 and officially adhered to since then.

Another extremely dangerous move was the decision that: «diplomatic relations between any Arab League member state and the Arab Republic of Egypt is a sovereign matter to be

decided by each state in accordance with its constitution and laws.»

At the Baghdad Summit in 1978, the Arab countries had agreed that «it is an essential, inviolable principle to prohibit any Arab party from signing a separate agreement regarding a solution to the Palestinian problem in particular, and the Arab-Israeli conflict in general. The accords signed by the Egyptian regime at Camp David were considered «a violation of the rights of the Palestinian people and the Arab nation» and as having been concluded «outside the framework of the Arab consensus and in conflict with the resolutions of the Arab summits and not leading to the just peace aspired to by the Arab nation.» Egypt was subsequently boycotted.

Until this very day, the Egyptian regime adheres to the Camp David accords. Moreover, the vice-president of the ruling National Party flew to occupied Jerusalem shortly after the Amman Summit, to celebrate with the Israelis the tenth anniversary of Sadat's visit to 'Israel'. Meanwhile, nine Arab states resumed diplomatic relations with Egypt in less than a week. The only Arab countries that have not resumed relations with Egypt are Syria, Lebanon, Libya and Algeria. (Democratic Yemen resumed relations with Egypt in February 1988).

NEW FOCUS ON PALESTINE

The results of the Arab foreign ministers' council, held on Jan. 23-24, 1988, in Tunis, attest to the repercussions of the uprising on the official Arab position. True, the meeting was convened late - six weeks after the uprising began. However, it was evident that the uprising had imposed the Palestinian cause on Arab officialdom, serving as a direct retort to the Amman Summit that completely neglected the Palestinian question. In the meeting, the Arab foreign ministers expressed their countries' strong support for the Palestinian people's uprising and continuous struggle against the Zionist occupation. The council took several