

loathed double oppression; national and class oppression. The Palestinian worker is exposed to daily humiliation, before he even gets to his place of work, during the morning search on the borders to 'Israel'. The Palestinian worker gets only one-third of a Jewish worker's wages. He enjoys no rights whatsoever, no medical or social insurance, although at least one-third of his wages are automatically deducted by the Histadrut and the Ministry of Labor. Moreover, he is forced to work long hours and liable to be fired at any time. The surplus value of the Palestinian workers' production does not benefit the Palestinian national economy. On the contrary, it accumulates to the direct benefit of the Israeli economy. Even the surplus value produced by workers in small workshops in the occupied territories indirectly accumulates as Israeli capital, because most of these workshops function as subcontractors to Israeli industry.

All of these conditions contribute to making the Palestinian working class the class most exploited by the occupation and its repressive policies. It is thus most compeled to assume its historical role in the struggle for freedom and liberation.

WORKERS IN THE FOREFRONT OF THE UPRISING

Despite all the fetters noted above, Palestinian workers in the occupied territories showed their will and ability to resist the occupation collectively by going on strike. Due to Israeli dependence on their labor power, especially in the construction and service sectors, and other manual labor, these workers played a major role in the uprising by boycotting work in 'Israel'.

A study by the Israeli Industrialists' Federation showed that the uprising has had damaging effects on almost 50% of Israeli factories. Some economic reports said that 'Israel' is losing almost \$70 million a month as a result of the Palestinian workers' strikes.

The workers' participation in the uprising was not limited to strikes. They were active in the reopening of many local Palestinian factories, while the United National Leadership has called on factory owners not to fire workers, reduce their wages or deduct for absence. Workers also formed blacksmith committees to repair the iron shutters of shops forced open by the Israeli soldiers' attempts to break the commercial strike. These committees are part of the strike force confronting the occupation troops. Workers are also involved in the food supply committees, medical relief committees and other popular committees. Hundreds of workers and dozens of trade unionists have been arrested, in addition to those martyred and injured. The United National Leadership's calls address the workers, urging them to consolidate their role as vanguards in the struggle.

THE ROLE OF THE PEASANTRY

It is true that the uprising was sparked in the refugee camps, most particularly in Jabalia, in the Gaza Strip. The first bloody confrontations occurred mainly in the camps and towns, due to the population concentration in these places. Moreover, the camps and towns have always been the centers of the Palestinian national movement. Since the 1967 occupation, many new mass organizations, trade unions, popular committees, clubs and societies have been formed. These contributed to a higher degree of organization.

However, it is equally true that the countryside joined in the uprising on a large scale from the first days. This greatly con-

tributed to its continuation and expansion, and confused the Zionist forces. Daily demonstrations in hundreds of villages confused the Zionist authorities, and forced them to deploy their forces over wide areas, instead of concentrating on the camps that have always been considered the centers of unrest. The large-scale participation of villagers in the uprising disturbed the Zionists' carefully calculated plans.

ATTEMPTED ISOLATION OF THE COUNTRYSIDE

Before the original Zionist occupation, the British Mandate worked to keep the Palestinian countryside backward and isolated. A sharp gap was created between the rural and urban areas, economically, socially and culturally. The British exploited this gap into a political contradiction. They allowed the urban bourgeoisie and the feudalists to assume leadership, such as the Husseini, Nashashibi and Abdul Hadi families, and used them to repress the revolts of the peasants. After 1948, the Jordanian regime continued this policy. After 1967, the Israelis also planned to keep the countryside isolated and unaccessible to the Palestinian nationalist organizations. Later on, the occupation authorities established the Village Leagues, staffed with collaborators who were given weapons and administrative authority, in order to force the villagers to deal with them. These leagues were able to function in certain of the most backward areas of the West Bank, such as around Hebron.

At that time, the activities of the Palestinian national movement were concentrated in the towns and camps. The Palestinian resistance did not devote enough attention to mobilizing the peasants. Its action was limited to armed cells. The resistance did not realize the great potentials of the peasants and did not direct its work towards the rural areas until the mid-seventies.

SEMIPROLETARIZATION

Since the 1967 occupation, the Israeli authorities have employed old laws and enacted new ones for the purpose of usurping Palestinian land and water resources. As a result of extensive land confiscation and heavy restrictions on the cultivation and marketing of agricultural products, the Palestinian peasantry has been partially destroyed. As of December 1987, 53% of the West Bank and 38% of the Gaza Strip had been confiscated. While in 1966, 36% of West Bank land was cultivated, only 27% was farmed in 1985. In the Gaza Strip, the area of cultivated land decreased from 55% in 1966, to 28% in 1985. The number of farmers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip decreased from 70,000 in 1967 to 38,000 in 1987.

Many peasants were either totally deprived of their land or forced to neglect it. They were subsequently forced to emigrate or to seek work in the towns or in 'Israel'. Of those who commute for work, most retain residence in their villages and

