

forces and the engineering companies which tried to apply this project.

Fourth, the Jerusalem Electric Company's license was going to expire by the end of 1986. The Zionist regional electricity company wanted to take over its concession and reduce the areas that were served by the Jerusalem Electric Company. This is also a political question about who has authority, the Zionists or the Palestinians, or even the previous authority of the Jordanian regime. The Palestinians refused to let the Jerusalem Electric Company's concession be confiscated or limited. This led to clashes between the workers of the company and the Zionist authorities, which expanded to include the Palestinian masses in more than one place.

These were a number of developments that set the stage for the uprising. Added to them are a number of other actions, such as land confiscation and tax collection. Fifty-four percent of West Bank and Gaza Strip land has been confiscated. The amount of taxes imposed on the people is unbelievable. The Palestinians had to pay more in taxes than the Zionists used during their 1982 invasion of Lebanon. The Palestinian began to feel that all of his work went towards paying for the occupation. He is not able to secure his land or even his life. For instance, the Palestinian started to plant the land he inherited from his father and grandfather, and the next day a gang of settlers would enter his land and take it from him. In this situation, where a person is deprived of basic necessities as well as values and heritage, it becomes essential to confront the occupation.

Here, some specific events that lead to the outbreak of the uprising in the Gaza Strip come to my mind. Prior to the uprising a number of Palestinian nationalists managed to escape from the Nafha and Gaza prisons. They clashed with the Zionist army and four of them were martyred. Two days after this, an Israeli truck intentionally hit two Palestinian cars at Arez barricade. Four of the Palestinian passengers were killed and six wounded. The residents of Jabalia camp protested this murder, and a number of Palestinians were killed by Zionist troops. There was a strong reaction in Balata camp near Nablus, and the uprising spread to the West Bank.

These were the events that ignited the uprising, but the uprising is a result of the accumulation of many events starting with the establishment of the Zionist entity in 1948, and the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967. During

these years, there were a number of Palestinian uprisings. The current uprising is qualitatively unique in terms of its organization, expanse, the participation of all of the masses, the readiness of our people to sacrifice and the methods used to confront the occupiers.

How has the uprising managed to continue despite unprecedented Zionist repression?

The uprising is an objective answer to the occupation and its acts. The masses had reached a point where they could take no more. The main Palestinian organizations, their affiliated mass organizations and their cohesion with the masses, created through experience the popular committees, strike forces, aid committees, family solidarity committees, etc. These committees constitute the backbone of the uprising. These are the factors for insuring the continuation of the uprising and the steadfastness of the masses, and for increasing the intensity of the uprising. The uprising will continue so long as the reasons for it are there. The masses, of all sectors and ages, started to participate in one way or another in confronting the Zionist violence. The masses are strongly unified under a conscious leadership in terms of organization, slogans and achievements.

In fact, the uprising wasn't a random event. On the contrary, the masses continue the uprising in accordance with the decisions taken by the United National Leadership which is strong and closely related to the overall leader of the Palestinian people, the PLO. By the slogans they raise, the masses everyday assert that their leadership is the PLO. The PLO is not only the political expression of the aspirations of the Palestinian people. It is the daily practical leadership of the masses in the occupied territories. It is the spiritual homeland of our people. There is a strong coordination between the creative leadership of the United National Leadership in the occupied territories and its leader, the PLO.

What led the Islamic forces to be so active in this uprising in the Gaza Strip?

For the first time in the history of the religious trend in the occupied territories, an Islamic organization, the Jihad, deviates from that trend and works within the nationalist framework, under the leadership of the United National Leadership and therefore the PLO. The Islamic Jihad is respected by all the other Palestinian nationalist organizations and by the Palestinian masses, for its role in the uprising. The Jihad participates on equal basis with the other organizations under the nationalist program and the banner of the PLO. The Islamic Jihad participates in the United National Leadership in Gaza; its followers participate actively in the nationalist activities in the West Bank as well.

Islamic Jihad is the most aware organization within the Islamic trend. They have reached the conclusion that the occupation threatens all the Palestinians. The occupation doesn't distinguish between Muslims, Marxists and nationalists. After reaching this conclusion, Islamic Jihad saw it essential to engage in the resistance, at least to defend themselves. The Zionist occupation forces have committed many acts of terror against the Islamic holy places and leaders in Palestine. About two months ago, the Mufti of Jerusalem, the highest Islamic ►

