

anomaly in a world where direct colonialism is all but abolished. The guarantee for such states is their connection with imperialism, but imperialism's world-wide dominance is also on the decline. The Palestinian uprising, on the other hand, as the flashpoint of the overall Palestinian revolution, is part of the world-wide national liberation movement which points the way to the future. As such, the uprising has brought Palestinian statehood into the realm of practical possibility, as the antithesis of Zionist occupation.

In a more immediate perspective, statements like Shamir's are but a cover-up for Zionism's failure to resolve the contradictions inherent in its own projects. The 'iron wall' has indeed been erected against the Palestinians and never more obviously than today when the occupied territories are simply sealed off if there is reason to expect widespread protests. But the Palestinians neither disappear behind the wall nor stop struggling. Instead, such measures have elicited more friction in the Zionist camp. A case in point was the situation around Land Day when the occupied territories were sealed off for three days. Trade and Industry Minister Ariel Sharon and settler groups openly opposed this policy because it collides with their 'reality' that the territories are part of 'Israel'. They advocated mass deportations as an alternative. However, both sealing the territories and mass deportations, like the Palestinians' general strikes, raise the question of where 'Israel' would recruit a labor force to do the low-status, manual work which Israeli Jews today avoid.

Referring to the Likud, Abba Eban, former Israeli foreign minister and now chairman of the Knesset committee on foreign affairs and defense, wrote in the *New York Times*: «Do they not realize that the collapse of the Schultz approach could make 1988 a tragic year for Israel, dividing the country, escalating violence in the occupied territories, dragging down the economy, eroding Israel's international relations and, at the end, threatening war with a united Arab coalition?» (*International Herald Tribune*, April 4th).

Actually this influential Israeli was unwittingly paying tribute to the impact of the uprising. It is not solely Shamir's obstinacy which blocks the Schultz plan, but more broadly that this im-

perialist proposal does not begin to address the essence of the conflict, i.e., the Palestinian question which, with the uprising, is on the ascent. The Schultz plan being merely a new version of the Labor Party settlement model, the uprising has also exposed before the world that Labor offers no alternative to the program of the Zionist right, much less to the Palestinian issue. Labor's proposals for resolving the issue of the 1967 occupied territories via cooperation with Jordan are actually another model of the 'iron wall', designed to protect the demographic 'purity' of the Zionist state. However, the Zionist ultraright always exploits crises and signs of Labor 'softness' to strengthen its own hand, while from the Palestinian vantage point, as stated by Edward Said, «Peace must be made with us, and not with a 'demographic



problem' - and the occupation must end» (*International Herald Tribune*, April 28th).

The real position of the Labor establishment can be read in statements like that of Peres upon deportation of eight Palestinians and ordering 12 more expelled on April 11th: «We are not deporting residents, just inciters and agitators and extremists» (*International Herald Tribune*, April 12th). Like the Zionist official who spoke about «extremists driving the Arab community», Peres cannot admit that 'Israel' is facing a whole people, united in their simple determination to be free. Such an admission would undercut the fundaments of the Zionist colonial project which was marketed both to Jews and internationally, under the false label of «A land without a people for a people without a land.» The 'benign occupation' which Zionism has boasted has

always been a myth, and this myth has now been irrevocably shattered by the stones of the Palestinian uprising. Thus, a 'statesman' like Peres is reduced to absurdities such as that those Palestinians deported from Palestine are anyway not residents.

## BEITA, APRIL 6TH

Events in the West Bank village of Beita, near Nablus, presented a microcosm of the dilemma which the uprising presents for the Zionists - and the extreme absurdities to which they resort. On April 6th, a group of settler youth from Elon Moreh settlement just 'happened' to take a nature tour near Beita. Later ABC television asked one of the hikers why they went where they did at such a time of tension. She replied, «We have to show them that we are the owners of the country» (*International Herald Tribune*, April 18th). Even without this admission, it was obvious that the nature tour was a settler provocation, showing readiness to endanger even Israeli lives for the sake of expansionist goals.

When some Palestinians threw stones at the settler group encroaching on their village, one of the two armed guards accompanying the settler youth opened fire, killing two Palestinians and an Israeli girl, and injuring a number of others. Immediately the Israeli army announced she had been killed by a stone, starting what grew into a credibility crisis.

With settlers crying for revenge, hundreds of Israeli soldiers besieged Beita and nearby villages. Curfew and collective punishment of Palestinians for Zionist crimes was the watchword of the operation led by Israeli Chief of Staff Shamron: Hundreds of Palestinians were rounded up, scores of houses were demolished and large areas of almond and olive orchards were bulldozed, while settlers went on the rampage throughout the area, damaging Palestinian property and shooting wildly. Six Beita residents were later deported.

When an Israeli military autopsy showed that the Israeli girl had been shot in the head, an absurd debate ensued as to whether she had died from a stone or the bullet, or whether a Palestinian had shot her, even though it was established that a Palestinian had only taken the settler's gun after he had fired all the bullets. When the army issued its final report, it admitted that