

grounded in the theory of the strong chain, rather than on that of the central link. According to the first, the chain is never stronger than its weakest link. Hence, 'Israel' tries to consolidate all the links of the chain, instead of concentrating on a single strong link in a chain of weak links. According to this theory, the Israeli concept of strength has been the full expression of force in all spheres: economic, human, social, scientific, technological and military. The Israeli concept takes into account all probabilities in its relationship with the imperialist center, and tries to convert borrowed force into its own force on the assumption that the enemy -«the Arabs»- would make full use of their actual and potential resources. It is highly probable that the secret of the enemy's success in attaining the status of a great regional power lies in this point. This is the modern expression of the biblical «Greater Israel», not in its well-known geographical sense, though this has not been cancelled from the comprehensive Zionist strategies, but in the modern sense of power.

On the other hand, how has the situation of the Arab side been in the intense struggle that has been going on since the beginning of the 20th century?

I am not going to talk much about the helplessness and treason of the reactionary forces; the history of the region is full of dismal records. I'll point out only the most outstanding instances, from the reactionaries' conspiratorial attitude towards the 1936 six-month general strike in Palestine, and the same attitude towards the 1939 revolt, to their helplessness and conspiracy in the 1948 war.

ABSENCE OF AN ARAB STRATEGY

What I'd like to point out in this essay is precisely the attitude and strategic policy of the Arab nationalist side over the last four decades of confrontation. Was there any well-defined, comprehensive strategy adopted by and providing guidance to the Arab side? The answer is a definite *No*. A lot can be said about the reasons for the lack of such a strategy. However, the fact to be emphasized is that the Arab national bourgeoisie, which assumed the leadership of the Arab national liberation movement in the second half of the century, was not capable of formulating such a strategy because of its backward and impotent character. This leadership became locked in an impasse, but neither have the revolutionary alternative forces, the class alternative to this leadership, been capable of drawing up such a strategy. How then can we imagine the existence of a comprehensive common strategy of confrontation, uniting and organizing the efforts and energies of the different detachments of the Arab national liberation movement?

The plan of the late Egyptian president, Gamal Abdul Nasser, whatever can be said about it, did for the first time provide the Arab national liberation movement with the chance to take the initiative. Yet it was not based on a comprehensive strategy as was admitted by Nasser himself.

In such a situation, how could any Arab victory be possible? How seriously can one view the plan of confrontation propounded by many successive forces throughout the last forty years? I am raising these questions in the conviction that time means more bloodshed, and we don't have the right to play at trial and error. We call upon all forces as well as intellectuals, to give the deserved attention to this vital problem. We pose these questions without any illusions that our answers will contain the full solutions; rather we consider them a modest contribution to the process of materializing the comprehensive

strategy for confronting the Zionist, imperialist and reactionary assault.

As noted above, the proper starting point is clear identification of the enemies we face. What do they want? What are their assets and liabilities? Where have we erred and what did we manage to do well through experience? How can we mobilize and organize all our resources and forces in this fierce battle?

HOW TO UNDERSTAND THE ENEMY

The starting point of any comprehensive strategy is the identification of the enemy. We must acquire a scientific, developed and interrelated understanding of the enemy. I say scientific, because many of the conceptions we have about 'Israel' are characterized by mysticism and preconceived, superficial notions. Here I include the idea of dividing the world into two camps, absolutely good or absolutely evil, respectively, thus blurring the nuances in between; and the recurring ideas about the impasse of the enemy, its overwhelming crisis and being lost and troubled. Deliberately or otherwise, such ideas create the illusion that the collapse of the enemy is but a question of time.

I say developed, up-to-date understanding, because we are facing an enemy which is continuously changing. We must not be satisfied with preconceived attitudes, limiting our information within their confines. 'Israele' today is not the 'Israel' of 1948. We have to follow its development and prevent our intentions, desires and illusions from becoming theoretical theses which violate the facts.

I say an interrelated understanding because we are not facing an enemy of about three million people. The root of the problem lies in the fact that the Zionist project is closely linked with two centers which should be taken into consideration in any research: The first is the world Zionist movement which provides 'Israel' with the very essence of its life on the human, material and spiritual levels. The second is the imperialist center. Without considering this link, it is impossible to understand the laws that govern the development of this entity, or to probe into the basis of its strategic perspectives.

Needless to say, the importance of examining these two links does not negate the importance of studying the subject in conjunction with the development of Arab reaction which considers this entity a useful instrument for blocking any progressive change in the area - a guarantee for themselves to remain in power.

The first step in our attempt to outline a realistic picture of the Zionist entity must be based on recognition that the 'Israel' of 1988 is not at all the 'Israel' of 1948, by any socioeconomic, military or human standard. Over the last four decades, qualitative developments have taken place, placing this entity in the category of a great regional power. This not only has consequences locally-in 'Israel' itself, but affects its relations with the world Zionist movement and the imperialist center; it also affects the Israeli concept of the parameters of the regional and international role assigned to it. For the sake of clarification, we shall examine the most significant tendencies in the internal socioeconomic and political development of 'Israel', and the development of its position on the higher strategic-international level.

A. THE REAL ECONOMIC SITUATION IN THE ZIONIST ENTITY

Before analyzing the most significant economic indices in ►