

However, the new situation after the June 1967 defeat, coupled with our effective presence in Jordan, enabled us to struggle against the Zionist enemy on a wider scale with many small military operations. This had a tremendous effect in restoring the confidence of our people in the armed struggle and people's war, especially after the heroic battles of Al Karameh, Al Wahdat and the Jordan Valley. Our effective presence in Jordan had a dual impact on the issue of the relation between the struggle inside Palestine (the interior) and the struggle outside it (the exterior). On the one hand, the presence of the bulk of the revolution's forces outside Palestine provided an objective alternative for presence in Palestine. This in itself led to lack of concern about transferring the center of the revolution to the interior. On the other hand, preoccupation with defending the Palestinian armed resistance against the enemy plans for liquidating it, led to the dissipation of a major part of our potentials, weakening our efforts to transfer the movement to the interior. This applies especially to the battle between the Jordanian regime and the Palestinian resistance, which terminated the state of dual power (September 1970-July 1971).

This stage ended in July 1971 with the departure of the Palestinian fighters from Ajloun and Jerash, and the transfer of the revolution, its leaders, forces, organizations and institutions to Lebanon. The center of gravity of the Palestinian national movement shifted to Lebanon, where the leadership's preoccupation with defending the second base of the revolution, and with the Lebanese arena, led to insufficient concentration on occupied Palestine. This preoccupation was necessitated by the Palestinian-Lebanese alliance and joint struggle against the Zionist - rightist front. This situation continued until 1982, and in that period, the PLO was able to impose the Palestinian presence in the constellation of forces, because of its effective presence in Lebanon and continuous confrontation of the Zionist enemy and its agents. Consequently, the political successes of the PLO constituted a practical substitute for serious, organized efforts to move the center of gravity into Palestine.

At this time, the mass situation in the occupied territories rose and fell in accordance with the developments in the Palestinian arena outside; the mass movement did not possess clear-cut and mature subjective conditions. However, there was a move in this direction due to the democratic forces' effective role which was geared to the development and the socioeconomic structure of the Palestinian society under occupation. Other factors contributing to this were the minimal influence of the policies of individualism and hegemony (of a single group) which affected the Palestinian revolution outside, and the relative absence of the Arab regime's interference. Finally, and most importantly, was the masses' experience of direct confrontation with the occupation over the years.

Because of all these factors, it was natural for the base of the revolution to be consolidated in Palestine, and to increase mass activities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, especially in the decisive confrontation of the occupation's plans and the attempts of the Jordanian regime to create false alternatives to the PLO... The Palestinian revolution prepared for and created the objective base for these activities via political,

military and material support to the masses in the occupied territories. The confrontation of the attempts at political liquidation contributed to increasing the role of the masses in the interior, and to making the revolution give greater priority to the interior.

But the overriding characteristic of the pre-1982 period was the revolution's strong presence in Lebanon. Moreover, at that time, the deterioration of the official Arab situation had not yet reached its current low level. The center of gravity of the Palestinian national movement was in the exterior at the expense of the interior, even though the interior had begun to occupy a more important place both in the Palestinian strategy and in the enemy's strategy against our revolution.

The stage which followed the Israeli invasion of Lebanon was characterized by a set of facts which contributed to enhancing the importance of the occupied land in the Palestinian strategy for confronting the Zionist occupation.

The first of these facts was the weakness of the second base of the revolution due to the results of the Zionist invasion and the departure of the Palestinian fighters to new places of exile. In this light, it seemed that Palestinian military action had suffered another setback which would have tangible effects on the equation of the interior and the exterior. This impression was reinforced by ensuing developments as the Palestinian revolution faced a chain of camp wars aimed at finishing what the Israeli invasion had begun, i.e., to put an end to Palestinian armed presence in Lebanon once and for all.

The second of these facts was the weakness of Palestinian national unity and the split in the PLO which lasted from May 1983 until the unifying PNC in 1987. This problem emerged due to deviationist tendencies on the one hand, and adventurist nihilist tendencies on the other; it was coupled with unparalleled political tension between Syria and the PLO, which reinforced the split whose influence is still felt in the Palestinian arena.

The third of these facts was the decline of the official Arab policy, and the diminishing importance of the Palestinian cause on the Arab political scene which was preoccupied with a set of regional conflicts: the Gulf war, the Lebanese crisis, the Maghreb conflict, Egypt's continued adherence to the Camp David accords, etc. This culminated in the Amman Summit which reinforced the collective Arab evasion of the Baghdad Summit's decisions concerning Camp David and the boycott of the Egyptian regime. The aim of all this was to restore Egypt's position in Arab officialdom as it was apparent that the opponents of Camp David had become very few in number. There is no doubt that the extraordinary summit in Amman aimed to minimize the PLO's role in favor of King Hussein and his policies for subordinating the Palestinian cause.

In the light of all this, the masses in the occupied territories had two options: either to submit to the capitulationist trend, or to take the initiative and play their required role in keeping alive the flame of the revolution and the national cause. The rise in mass action in 1986-87 was a signal that the masses chose to escalate the struggle, leading to the uprising. We should also point out that after 1982, the Palestinian leadership concentrated more on the interior in order to compensate for