

the weakness of the second base of the revolution, and reacting to the new state of exile and dispersion. This strengthened the subjective conditions of the Palestinian national movement. From 1982 to 1987, there was a revival of the mass movements - workers, students, women, voluntary work committees, etc., despite all the problems they faced, such as splits, secondary conflicts and the emergence of the (Islamic) fundamentalist trend.

Meanwhile, a set of objective conditions were building up, chiefly the unbearable conditions imposed by the occupation on our masses. This, combined with the crystallization of the Palestinian subjective conditions, created the uprising. With the uprising's having continued for a year and all the gains it has made, it is clear that the center of gravity of the Palestinian national movement has begun to shift to the occupied territories. By the center of gravity, we do not mean the Palestinian leadership and the institutions of the PLO. According to their nature and role, these will remain in the exterior. Rather, we mean that the frontline with the enemy has shifted into Palestine. We also mean the transformation of the Palestinian cities, villages and camps into battlefields against the occupation on a daily basis. In the battles with the occupation forces, the United National Leadership of the Uprising has succeeded in leading the people more successfully than has ever happened before. On the other hand, the occupation still controls the land. The day will come when the uprising will gain control of the people and the land; at that time, the dawn of freedom and independence will be at hand.

THE INTERNAL BALANCE OF FORCES

At the beginning of this article, we criticized the point-of-view which is trying to realize quick gains from the uprising, and posing only tactical questions. In fact, this is just another version of the point-of-view which for many years regarded the occupied territories as the «backyard» of the Palestinian decision-making center in the exterior, remembering the occupied territories only when the center was besieged or beset by conspiracies. At the same time, this trend regarded developments in the occupied territories with a degree of anxiety, for they might reverse the balance of forces in the PLO -the «equation of the exterior» (which does not allot representation to all organizations on the basis of their actual degree of activity and influence on the mass level).

Despite all the channels connecting the occupied territories with the exterior, the interior remained relatively free of the direct influence of the «exterior equation» just as it was relatively removed from the harmful influence of the Arab regimes. Moreover, a set of social and economic transformations have occurred in the occupied territories. These constitute new objective conditions conducive to the rise of the democratic forces in the course of the daily battles against the occupation. This has consolidated the role of the democratic forces to the point that the unjust «exterior equation» no longer applies to the interior. The mass struggle has shown that there is a new balance of forces on the ground, which should impose itself on the decision-making center and have an influence in defining the overall course of the Palestinian national movement.

The problem of the «equation of the exterior» is one of the reasons for the failure of the pre-1982 efforts to establish the Palestinian National Front in Palestine, and for mistakes in directing the union, student and women's movements. This «equation of the exterior» may explain the attempts to spread the ways of individualism, domination (of the single organization) and corruption. Some insist on imposing the «exterior equation» on the interior whenever there are serious discussions about unifying the mass movements in the occupied territories.

There are still some who resent dealing with the fact that the center of gravity has shifted to the interior. They are ready to use the same methods that have been used in the exterior, in order to control the movement and political decision-making. The critical issue is that some are dealing with the uprising as an «emergency issue.» Of course, it is an urgent issue, but we should primarily deal with it as a qualitatively new stage for consolidating the revolution. We can understand that the Palestinian bourgeoisie is dealing with the uprising as if it were an «emergency». However, we cannot understand that some of the democratic forces are falling into the same trap, confining themselves to tactical and interim questions, while neglecting the future of the Palestinian national movement. Loyalty to the uprising imposes strategic, tactical and interim tasks on us. Finding answers to these questions will lead us to serious discussion of how to overcome the crises of the Palestinian and Arab national movements.

2. ACCENTUATION OF THE PALESTINIAN—ZIONIST CONFLICT

The second feature of the uprising is that the Arab-Zionist conflict has assumed the character of a Palestinian-Zionist conflict, occurring in the framework of the overall struggle between the Arab nation and the Zionist enemy. Obviously, the pre-1948 struggle against the Zionist invasion of Palestine was in its essence a Palestinian-Zionist conflict. The Palestinian people were facing the Zionist settlers who depended on the support of the British Mandate. This did not minimize the importance of Arab participation in confronting this invasion, as was apparent in the continuous waves of Arab volunteers to the war for Palestine. However, we cannot overlook the negative influence of Arab reactionary interference in Palestinian internal affairs. The reactionary regimes played a major role in aborting the great Palestinian revolt in 1936-39, and then in squandering Palestine with the scenario orchestrated by Prince Abdullah who led the Arab armies that entered Palestine in 1948.

From 1948 until 1967, the nature of the conflict was an Arab-Zionist struggle, with the total absence of an independent Palestinian national role. All the attempts to create a Palestinian national center failed to make any serious change in the nature of the struggle, because the Arab national dimension predominated over the Palestinian national dimension which was exposed to obliteration, dissipation and confiscation. In spite of the rise of the Palestinian revolution after the 1967 war, the struggle against Israel remained confined to the Arab-Zionist framework, especially after the 1973 war, and until 1982, when the Palestinian revolution, alongside the Lebanese