

enemy until the uprising moved the Arab-Zionist conflict to a qualitatively new stage.

The uprising began, and for the first time in forty years, it was the war of our masses, not the classical war of the Arab armies and regimes. It was also not the war of vanguards and revolutionary groups alone. For the first time, the struggle against the Zionist enemy acquired a comprehensive and distinguished popular nature. It is a fact that the Palestinian masses have suffered most from the defeat and weakness of Arab officialdom. Our masses, especially under occupation, had truly despaired of the Arab demagogy. From their own experience, they discovered that all these lies and claims led to nothing but Camp David that is now spreading in the area.

After the results of the 1982 invasion of Lebanon, the weakness of the revolution's second base, and official Arab negligence towards the PLO, the masses sensed the direct threat to their national cause and the future of their legitimate struggle. Consequently, they rose in revolt with their collective will and consciousness, rejecting surrender and presenting an example for the Arab masses of how to confront Camp David and its consequences in the area.

It is no exaggeration to say that the popular nature of the uprising has elicited the fears of the Arab regimes. This makes them assume the role of spectators, if not conspirators against the uprising. The lesson drawn by the generation of the uprising can spread in the area. At that time, the stones of the uprising will ring the alarm bells in more than one Arab capital.

As we have said, the Palestinian uprising is a qualitatively new stage in the history of the Palestinian national struggle. It will have a great impact on the strategy, major forces and social structure of the Palestinian national movement. It will also have irreversible interim and strategic effects. As such, the uprising provides an objective opportunity for the Arab national liberation movement to enter a qualitatively new stage. The preceding stage, from Sadat's visit to Jerusalem, was the stage of Camp David. It has become clear that Camp David is not simply a legal framework for organizing bilateral relations between the Zionist entity and the Egyptian regime. Camp David is actually a social, political, economic and historical process aimed to end the Arab-Zionist conflict at the expense of our people's interests and those of the Arab nation. It aims to reinforce the subordination of the Arab regimes to imperialism, so that they ally with Israel in confronting the Arab mass movement, having surrendered to the humiliating conditions of Washington and Tel Aviv.

In confronting this capitulatory process, we notice that the Arab regime's response was insufficient to counter the enemy's strategy. The form and instruments of confrontation were only tactical - the Steadfastness and Confrontation Front, the Arab People's Conference, the National Charter and the Baghdad Summit aimed at isolating Camp David. Today, a decade afterwards, what did this achieve? Are the Arab regimes still serious about rejecting the Camp David regime in Egypt, and the Camp David accords?

Our response to this question is based on a scientific assessment of the results of this painful experience, i.e., the failure of these forms and frameworks in most cases. The decision taken at the Amman Summit, to end the boycott of the Camp David

regime, is the prime example. It is not unthinkable that the Egyptian president will be welcomed at the next Arab summit. This signifies the decline of the Arab regimes and their inability to protect themselves from the Zionist enemy's aggression, or to seriously resist its plans. Moreover, the Arab regimes have taken part in efforts to contain the Palestinian cause, to abort the uprising and liquidate our people's rights. Without the uprising, these regimes would have appeared to be the spearhead of the confrontation, marginalizing the Palestinian role as they moved to do in the Amman Summit...

The Palestinian uprising against the fascist enemy has presented the objective opportunity for the Arab national liberation movement and the Arab masses to overcome this dilemma and open a new stage of serious and comprehensive confrontation of the Camp David stage. The objective conditions for overcoming this crisis have existed for a long time, but the uprising highlighted the depth of this crisis. However, objective conditions are not sufficient, but must be combined with mature subjective conditions in order to overcome this crisis and begin a qualitatively new stage.

The Arab bourgeoisie which led the liberation movement for more than half a century has become impotent and bankrupt. What is needed is a revolutionary alternative to meet the requirements of the new stage, and work for establishing a new Arab revolutionary movement. The weapons of criticism, review and evaluation of our experience are the point of departure for this historical process. We should adopt a new vision in view of the new international and regional developments, as a prerequisite for launching this new revolutionary movement.

What is needed in the Arab arena is needed in the Palestinian arena as well. The Palestinian left, including its main forces and trends, should rise to meet the challenge of this qualitatively new stage, and not be satisfied with engaging only in the tactical questions of the uprising. The left must pose the real questions of the uprising in order to guarantee scientific responses. It is the left, and not the Palestinian bourgeoisie, that is expected to move the uprising into a qualitatively new stage. We are deeply convinced that the PLO should, objectively speaking, be moving in this direction. There is a sharp contradiction between the minimal concessions the Palestinian bourgeoisie is willing to give, and the maximal concessions which the Arab regimes want the PLO to make, in order to incorporate it in their plans. Still, we cannot but hold the Palestinian left responsible for moving the uprising to a qualitatively new stage.

In conclusion, it is time to stop repeating the terms of crisis and difficulties which the Palestinian and Arab liberation movements have faced. It is time to start charting the course for overcoming this crisis. I am not being unfair to anyone when I say that those who have acknowledged this crisis are responsible, more than all others, for starting this work; of course, this includes ourselves. This is the most essential issue raised by the uprising, from among the many important and strategic questions it has highlighted. We must crystallize the theoretical and ideological framework for our political practice, and for the uprising itself. This is the challenge to all parties, organizations and intellectuals, to search for scientific answers to these questions. ●