

sing. They express the determination and will of the people and the present forms of struggle.

The stone of our land is holy.

The stone of our land is legendary.

We build on our will and we are proud.

*Towards national liberation, comrade,
national disobedience will shorten the way.*

There is no alternative but expelling the occupiers!

The road is long and will need endurance.

The struggle of our people is the spirit of joy.

Our whole people is filled with determination...

We eat spinach and thyme

and sweeter than honey is the bread from our ovens.

The intifada is reflected in every sphere of social life. We were able to experience the immediate connection between the intifada and the arts a few days later at a folklore gathering at *Al Hakawati* theater in Jerusalem. The intifada in a theater hall - not a seat was empty. People of all ages have come together from various villages and towns. The lights dim, conversations are broken off, laughter and greetings die down. A deep silence fills the room as all turn their thoughts to the martyrs of the intifada. An oath, that their sacrifices will not be in vain, marks the beginning of every performance.

Suddenly the stage is bathed in light. A tableau of the intifada presents itself: a young boy throwing a stone, kofias, women in confrontation, in traditional dress and in jeans, a prisoner, a martyr, the victory sign.

For a moment silence prevails. Then cheers, slogans and trills burst the stillness. Each and every one here has found their likeness in the tableau. Everyone is on their feet, clapping, stamping and cheering with pride. The lights are cut and the stage is engulfed in darkness.

The group of 15 to 20 youth are performing for the first time, but appear to be known to all. People constantly shout greetings to the lead dancer who was recently released from prison. Tonight's performance is a mixture of theater, song and dubka. Each element harbours an aspect of the intifada, revealing it in a unique way. The ensemble culminates in a precise expression of the character of the uprising. There are neither actors nor spectators - everyone is involved. The first sketch is only five minutes long; few lines are spoken, yet much is said about the character of the people's confrontation.

A Palestinian youth runs onto the stage, followed by a heavily armed Zionist soldier who captures him and ties his hands behind his back. The soldier gags and blindfolds him with his own kofia, all the while calling for reinforcements. Increasingly insecure, the soldier calls for his commander, for other soldiers, but no one comes, and the soldier's voice is shaky, fearful, not more than a squeak. Meanwhile, the prisoner sits calmly, while the soldier becomes more and more distraught. Finally, when no one comes, he unties his prisoner and slinks away.

The military, equipped with the most modern weapons, is attempting to suppress an uprising of people armed with stones, *Democratic Palestine, March 1989*



and it's failing. Who is inferior and who is superior in this sketch is clear to all, for the people experience this daily and they are proud. On the stage, the scene has changed and the next sketch begins:

It is early morning and one of the shebab is standing guard outside a liberated village. A villager wanting to pass is asked for his ID card. He pulls out the orange card of the occupation, whereupon he receives a contemptuous look. The guard rips the card from his hand and throws it on the ground. Immediately the villager understands; he takes a stone out of his pocket and is allowed to pass.

The last sketch is particularly popular:

An old man walks with a child, and the child asks, «But where are we going?» The old man pauses. Leaning on his cane, he answers: «To Palestine, my son.» «How do you know the way?» the small boy asks. Setting forth, the old man says: «I see a boy over there throwing a stone.»

Each sketch, a fleeting glimpse of the intifada, gives rise to euphoric cheering. The intifada is everyday life for these people, and we, the only real 'spectators' here tonight, have discovered many of its aspects. Tonight is a celebration, a marvelous celebration of the intifada and of everyday life.

The last notes of the flute waver and fade away as the lights go on again. Some of the artists have already changed. With their traditional dress tucked under their arms, they disappear into the crowd. There are no encores. Everyone hurries along. There is still a lot to do today. A demonstration begins shortly in Ramallah. Others probably have committee meetings, have to feed the chickens, stand guard, teach or study in popular education classes, care for the wounded... Everyday life in the intifada is varied and folklore is just one aspect. Finally, we too set off. The impressions of the intifada continue to dance before our eyes, slogans ring in our ears: Intifada until victory - No way back! ●

Parts of this same story were previously published in *Al Karamah* magazine, Postfach 20 20 3550 Marburg/Lahn, West Germany. Our German-speaking readers may want to contact *Al Karamah* for information on how to obtain the book *No Way Back!*