

«Everyone should learn from it, especially the Jordanian nationalist and progressive forces, in order that they may shoulder their responsibility as the vanguard and improve their ways of working in order to fulfill the demands and goals of the masses. The events have proven that social and economic factors and the struggle for democracy are priorities for the masses. These events and similar events in other Arab countries show that, in most cases, the masses take the initiative before the organized political forces. This in itself necessitates learning a lesson.»

These lessons must be learned quickly in order to face up to the king's current maneuvers as he tries to capitalize on the fact that the revolt was explicitly aimed against the Rifai government and not the monarchy per se. A classical stick-and-carrot scenario is underway, trying to keep the social situation in tow, while restructuring the economy according to IMF conditions and the needs of the ruling class. On the one hand, the king appeared on television to lecture his subjects on «being good» and holding out the carrot of quick elections and the loosening of restrictions on free expression. On the other hand, the stick is ever present.

Military governors have been appointed in Maan, Tefila and Kerak, and the security forces seemed poised for more repression if needed. Although as previously stated, it was not organized political forces which initiated the revolt, the progressive and national parties naturally supported this mass struggle. They made their position known by calling for the abrogation of the IMF agreement, economic reorientation, redistribution of wealth, an end to corruption, democratic freedoms, etc. On this pretext, the security forces arrested a number of political activists and professionals, including the vice-president of the Jordanian Writers' League (previously banned by the regime), the head of the Geological Union and members of the Jordanian Communist Party, the PFLP and the DFLP, as well as members of parliament, such as the deputy from Kerak. So, rather than providing more democracy as promised, the regime has actually reversed the moves it made earlier this year when it declared an

amnesty and actually released a number of political prisoners.

The bigh stick is most graphically illustrated by the appointment of Zeid Bin Shaker as prime minister for the new government whose designated role is to prepare for the new parliament elections. Until being appointed as court adviser on security affairs this year, he served as army commander for 12 years and is described in the official army history as «the principal architect of the operational plan for neutralization of the fedayeen» (1970-71). He is a member of the Hashemite family and personally accompanied King Hussein to quell an army mutiny in Zarqa, in 1957, during a period when the nationalist forces stood much stronger in Jordan than is the case today. (In 1956, there were relatively free elections under Suleiman Nabulsi's government, which enabled nationalist forces to take the majority of parliament seats.) Shaker is reputedly popular in the army which is disproportionately recruited from among southerners. It remains to be seen if his charisma works in the post-revolt phase.

Fulfilling the masses' demands requires a number of immediate steps to reduce unemployment, increase wages in line with the reduction of the dinar's value, and lower the prices on basic goods. However, the popular revolt has accentuated the fact that Jordan's economic crisis cannot be solved short of a comprehensive economic reform which could only be enacted if there is a radical political change as well, based on instating civil liberties and reviving parliamentary life through free and democratic elections. Such programs can only be enacted by a national democratic government that enjoys the trust of the masses. This is not something that can come about overnight, but should provide the guidelines for the nationalist and progressive forces' struggle in Jordan. The Jordanian mass revolt has already provided the Palestinian uprising with an objective support in forcing the regime to think twice about its policies. With the active input of the conscious political forces, the mass movement in Jordan could play a pivotal role in spreading the intifada to open a new stage of the Arab national liberation struggle. ●



Anni Kanafani

Originally, the Foundation was established to collect and republish Ghassan's literary works and arrange translations, as well as to carry out other cultural activities. The kindergartens began as part of these cultural activities and have become the main focus of the Foundation's work. We have chosen to specialize in kindergartens instead of doing a lot of different activities, because we felt it was better to concentrate on one theme. Maybe the fact that I am a kindergarten teacher influenced our choice, but the main thing was that in 1974, when we began, there was a great need for kindergartens in the camps; there was only one in all the Palestinian camps in Lebanon, established by the *In'ash* group in 1970. So we began by establishing a kindergarten in Burj Al Barajneh camp, Beirut, in 1974.

We now have six kindergartens. All run on a double shift, which means that one group of children come from 8 a.m. until noon, and another group from noon until 4 p.m. There are also two groups of teachers. The Burj Al Barajneh kindergarten is still small, accomodating about 60 children. Since 1981, we have been hoping to build a bigger and better kindergarten just outside of the camp, to accomodate needy Lebanese children as well as Palestinians. The Foundation was established by Lebanese as well as Palestinian friends of Ghassan, and is a recognized Lebanese foundation, open to all children according to need. We have had to postpone our plans for the new building due to the recurring wars, beginning with the 1982 Israeli invasion, but we haven't given up this plan.

In Ain Al Hilweh camp, near Sidon, there is a larger kindergarten for 300 children. In Rashidieh camp, near