

with reactionary racist ideology from which it derives justification for inflicting the worst oppression on the Palestinian masses, in Palestine and in exile.

This position is the essence of the policies of the ruling coalition in Tel Aviv. Differences within this coalition are secondary ones pertaining to ways and means, not aims; neither of their policies deviate from the basis of Zionist policy. The Labor Party, that calls for «peace» has waged three out of the four major wars against the Arabs. During the Labor's era, the remainder of Palestine, the Golan Heights and the Sinai were occupied. The Likud, on the other hand, signed the infamous Camp David accords. Labor's Rabin, who is directing the war on the intifada, is not less fascist than his Likud colleagues. Therefore, it is superficial to argue about which of the two blocs is more moderate. In fact, their differences are a competition between the two as to which means are best for achieving their common goals.

Although these differences are secondary, it is our task - as a revolution - to capitalize on them and broaden the gap. In the current situation, transforming the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip into a losing enterprise is an essential factor in widening the gap in the two-party coalition.

When discussing the impact of the uprising on the Israeli political constellation, we must monitor the new phenomenon. It is true that Israeli political life is generally heading towards fascist extremism, but it is also true that the democratic forces calling for peace are growing more than at any other time, despite the prevailing right-wing mainstream in the government and parties. The process of polarization in the Israeli society will have a great impact on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, although it is not the decisive factor. We must not neglect this factor when charting our tactics in the battle with the Zionist government and parties.

Many questions have been raised by a broad circle of Jewish intellectuals and even in the Labor Party. Many Israelis have called for an end to the crimes and crude violations of human rights, that are taking place in the occupied territories. Some Israeli officials, such as Weizmann, the minister of science, have openly called for recognizing the PLO and accepting an independent Palestinian state. Such phenomena should be encouraged.

More important is the probability of a real split in the Israeli government on the issue of the Palestinian independent state, due to the uprising. The continuation and escalation of the uprising and its deep effects on the Zionist entity represents a real threat, in addition to generating Arab and international support for the independent Palestinian state, as a factor of pressure on the Zionist government. Shamir himself pointed to the possibility of civil war (among Israelis). The Israeli government has been able to overcome the crises of the past two years, such as the major conflict over Mubarak's plan, but this situation won't last forever. As the uprising escalates in the future, a split could occur. At this point, we would be much closer to actually establishing the independent Palestinian state, because exactly at this point, one of the toughest links in the Israeli position would be broken.

The US obstacle

Although it seems that the US administration is not in harmony with Shamir's demands, it does in fact respond to the basic Israeli wishes. The US has always facilitated Israel's regional ambitions in return for Israel serving US global strategy. The relationship is one of mutual interests. Israel is no longer merely a tool in the hands of the US, but the US is still the protector of Israel's interests and reputation which is deteriorating internationally. The US worked diligently for Shamir's election plan to be accepted, and pressured the PLO to accept it, trying to snatch more and more concessions from the Palestinians. The US has moreover exercised its veto in the UN Security Council every time there was a proposal to condemn Zionist repression against our people. The essence of the Israeli and US policies is one; both stand as an obstacle to any solution that guarantees legitimate Palestinian rights.

We should use all means to surmount this obstacle. The uprising, if properly used as a weapon, will play a decisive role in this regard. We must consolidate our support and protection for the uprising in order to make it an ongoing fire that would consume the US interests in the area. We must also urge the Arab governments to take a clear position on the US administration in light of its rejection of our people's right to self-determination. The Arab states should be pressured to close their markets to US goods. Creating these factors will guarantee a change in the US position and end its unconditional support to the repressive Israeli policies.

There have been many schemes aiming to abort the uprising: the Shamir plan, Mubarak's 10 points and the Baker proposals. The PLO's position on these was sometimes ambiguous. Some felt ambiguity was exactly what's needed, while others urged the PLO to take more clear-cut positions. How do you evaluate the Palestinian position vis-a-vis these schemes?

First, I would like to emphasize that all these schemes have one thing in common: denial of the Palestinian people's inalienable rights, of the PLO as their sole legitimate representative, and of the fully empowered international conference as the proper solution. They are new versions of the Camp David accords.

If we believe that the US, Israel and Egypt are pressuring the PLO, rather than pressure being exerted on the Israeli government, we will then conclude that the PLO leadership must take a clear position on these schemes. The last Central Council meeting, held in Baghdad, declared a clear position, but often we hear statements by the PLO officials that raise doubts, in addition to the violations of resolutions soon after they have been adopted. These practices lead to confusion in the ranks of the PLO and among the Palestinian people. They moreover encourage our enemies to exert more pressure to elicit further unjustified concessions.

It is important for the PLO to stay in the limelight and not isolate itself from political developments. However, it is more