

The Uprising, United, Will Never Be Defeated

by Itimad Musa

Palestinians recently celebrated several important achievements of the intifada, as resistance to the occupation continued to escalate. The occupation authorities responded predictably, killing at least 40 Palestinians and wounding and arresting hundreds in the first three months of 1990. But most importantly, Palestinian unity held firm in the face of ongoing Zionist attempts to drive a wedge between the nationalist forces.

The force of the intifada made itself felt in the Knesset in an historic way when the so-called national unity government of Israel collapsed in mid-March (see article in this issue). Amid finger-pointing and mud-slinging, superficial explanations suggested that the cause of the government's demise was its inability to respond to the Baker proposals. This analysis ignores the root cause of the collapse: the two-year-old Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories. This is the first time in history that concerted Palestinian action has brought down an Israeli government.

Another breakthrough for the Palestinian struggle came from abroad when the European Parliament recommended in mid-January to freeze scientific cooperation with Israel until the authorities reopen Palestinian universities shut since the beginning of the intifada. In addition to the freeze on funds worth \$10 million, the European Commission (EC) indefinitely postponed two European-Israeli seminars on economic and scientific cooperation (Associated Press, February 19th). Even though the sanctions aren't binding until adopted by the EC's ministerial committee, the move was apparently enough to prompt the Israeli authorities to at least start reopening on an individual basis the 16 Palestinian community colleges and vocational schools in the occupied territories. Although all Palestinian universities and many high schools remain closed, this measure shows the effect that even mild international sanctions can have on the Israeli government's policies in the territories; one can only speculate

as to the effect sweeping sanctions would have.

The EC also issued a strongly worded statement in February condemning Israel's building of settlements in the occupied territories. Many European and world leaders have expressed opposition to new settlements in the territories, especially during the recent influx of thousands of Soviet Jewish immigrants to Israel. Even British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher has joined the chorus of international voices opposing Jewish settlements in Israeli-occupied Palestinian land. In an interview with a Kuwaiti newspaper in April, Thatcher called settling Soviet Jews in the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem, illegal (Associated Press, April 3rd). In the United Nations, many Arab and non-Arab countries have protested Jewish settlements in the territories, but a Security Council resolution has yet to be passed on the issue.

Amnesty International, in a report published January 3rd, strongly criticized Israel's open-fire policy, asserting that the authorities are «effectively condoning, perhaps even encouraging, extrajudicial executions...»

Settler activity was heightened during Easter week in the Christian

quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem when 150 Jewish settlers occupied a four-building complex of the Greek Orthodox Church. Israeli police fired tear gas at clergymen and other Palestinians protesting the building's occupation.

The settlers alleged they bought the complex. Apparently they would stop at nothing, including shady legal maneuvers, to establish their «right» to colonize the Old City. Their lawyers failed to inform the judge who granted their request for a stay of the eviction notice that a fellow judge had turned down a separate request just hours earlier. Consequently, a Jerusalem District Court panel overturned the stay of eviction notice, accusing the settlers' lawyers of «an improper use of procedures, to say the least.» It also took the unusual step of assessing the lawyers for the settlers' court costs of \$5,000, apparently for attempting to thwart the Israeli legal system (Associated Press, April 18th). As we go to press, it is still unclear, though, when the settlers will actually be evicted from their would-be settlement.

The settlers' move was particularly provocative coming as it did during a Christian holiday. It has brought inter-

