

tant and decisive role that immigration could play in perpetuating the Zionist occupation and giving it some form of legitimization. Based on this awareness, they proceed to issue statements that immigrants are free to settle anywhere, even in the occupied territories, thereby ignoring the tension and dangers this issue represents to the whole region.

A corollary to this is the policy of «creeping transfer» that is now being enacted. This entails the immigration of many Palestinians to the West or other Arab countries; being unable to bear the harsh living conditions under occupation, they «choose» to emigrate to seek a better life for themselves and their children. Another aspect of this policy targets women and children and involves deporting them to Jordan on the pretext that they were in Palestine «illegally,» although many have been born there. In this way hundreds of families have been separated in the past year alone.

In view of these developments, it is no mistake to regard immigration as a war on the Palestinians and their basic rights. More Israeli settlements and fortifications are being constructed at a very rapid rate. More land is being confiscated from its rightful owners to make room for Jewish immigrants. In addition to perpetuating the Israeli military occupation, this immigration war is intended as an assertion of Israeli sovereignty over the occupied lands and is, therefore, an attack on Palestinian sovereignty and their right to a homeland. Jewish immigration is a threat to the legal and civil rights of the Palestinians, in as much as the real possibility exists that the territories will be annexed and their inhabitants expelled.

There can be no peace without the recognition that the land the Palestinians inhabit belongs to them; but Israel refuses to accept such a peace. Its refusal is derived from Zionist ideology which is based on racism and expansionism. Israel has not only refused to withdraw from the occupied territories, but has even rejected American efforts aimed at starting a dialogue between Palestinians and Israeli officials. Although these proposals are far from recognizing Palestinian national rights, Tel Aviv's rejection of even this minimalist effort only underscores its intransigence regarding the peace process. For their part, the «peace» plans drawn up by Israeli leaders don't take into consideration the elements necessary for true peace, namely the end of Israel's occupation of Arab lands and the restoration of Palestinian rights to self-determination and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on the soil of Palestine. It is evident that any settlement of the Middle East problem promoted by Israel is, in fact, a mere maneuver aimed at diverting the world's attention from the new Israeli expansionist plan.

It is clear that Israel is not a peace-loving state, and does not work for or want peace. The aggressive wars of expansion it started in 1948, 1956, 1967 and 1982, the official declarations made by those in power about annexing the occupied territories and its refusal to carry out UN resolutions 242 and 338 prove that Israel does not want peace but is bent on aggression and expansion. Its objective is to use the immigration issue as a means of foiling any political solution that does not concede full Israeli sovereignty over the occupied territories. Israel is saying through its immigration policy, in effect, that it will accept nothing less than Palestinian surrender, even though it insists on calling this surrender «peace.»

The US role

The US decision to close its doors to Jews arriving from the USSR may seem unusual; but a careful study of rela-

tions between Israel and the US since the establishment of the Zionist state shows that the US government has consistently helped Israel, in spite of the fact that Israel has followed a policy of expansion and aggression. The US response to Shamir's remarks about «Greater Israel» that they were «not helpful» had no effect on the generous American economic and military aid Israel receives which finances such expansionist plans. Instead of showing good intentions to the Palestinians and exerting some form of pressure on Israel to take a more moderate attitude, America has repeatedly engaged in a double-faced policy of preaching one thing and practicing another. «Our position is clear,» State Department Spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler stated on January 17th, «we do not think that building settlements or putting more settlers in the (occupied) territories promotes the cause of peace» (*Al Fajr*, Jan. 22nd). Months before this statement, the US government had called on the Israeli government to rid itself of the dream of «Greater Israel.» Yet, in spite of their fully realizing Israel's intention to settle the new immigrants in the occupied territories, the US severely restricted the quota for immigrants coming from the Soviet Union, forcing the Jewish immigrants to go to Israel instead. In addition, the US continues to apply pressure on the Soviet Union to allow direct flights between Moscow and Tel Aviv.

Delving into what has been said historically about the US-Israeli relationship confirms that the US is a full partner in the occupation of Arab lands as the main supporter of Israel, providing it with the means to tighten its grip on these territories. A description of this relationship was given by former US President Jimmy Carter in Jerusalem in 1979: «Seven presidents have believed and demonstrated that America's relationship with Israel is more than just a special relationship. It has been and it is a unique relationship. And it is a relationship that is indestructible, because it is rooted in the consciousness and the morals and the religion and the beliefs of the American people themselves...Israel and the United States were shaped by pioneers - my nation is also a nation of immigrants and refugees - by peoples gathered in both nations from many lands...We share the heritage of the Bible...» (quoted by The Arab League, op.cit., pp.357-58). Before he became president, Ronald Reagan pointed out that the US position «would be weaker without the political and military assets Israel provides,» adding that Israel's value, after the fall of the Shah of Iran, had increased «as perhaps the only remaining strategic asset in the region on which the United States can truly rely» (*International Herald Tribune*, Aug.17, 1979).

Calling for providing Israel with additional funds to help settle Soviet Jews, US Senator Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania said, «We are cutting off the opportunities to come to the United States, so if Israel is willing to take these immigrants, it is something which is very helpful to US policy» (Associated Press, Jan.18th).

In the final analysis, without US pressure to change its hardline stand, Israel will not make any moves towards a just and lasting peace. The result of this is more time for Israel to crush the intifada. In other words, America and Israel are opening another front against the Palestinians and the Arabs at large in response to the intifada. In Shamir's words, «They [the Palestinians] feel defeated, because they see that the uprising...is powerless to stop the great, authentic, natural flow of people of Israel to their land...That is what they are trying to prevent» (Associated Press, Jan. 16th).