



Shati camp, Gaza Strip, under curfew

- Tordai

the Jerusalem district and up the Israeli population of the West Bank (now estimated at 100 – 105,000) by 50% in the near future. (The number of Israeli settlers in the Gaza Strip – now 4,500 – has already doubled since the start of the intifada.) The emphasis of the Zionist settlement plan is on enlarging existing settlements, particularly around Jerusalem, turning them into full-fledged cities. A prime example is the plan to expand Maale Adumim (current population 15,000) into a city of 50,000, as was reported by the Israeli daily *Haaretz* in late May. This entails confiscating land from Palestinian villages and camps on the eastern side of Jerusalem and hemming in the Palestinians residing in the Old City. The overall plan of the Housing Ministry, as described by *Yediot Achronot*, June 28th, is to build 106,000 new housing units at 110 sites in the West Bank, covering 90,000 dunums of land, in the next few years.

Another tactic is building settlements which straddle the «green line,» erasing the distinction between 1948 – occupied Palestine and the Palestinian land occupied in 1967. If, in the future, Israel were to accept the principle of land for peace for tactical reasons – to get the Arabs to surrender – the new physical and demographic realities created would reduce the options to be negotiated. Resolving the Palestinian issue would be limited to the imposition of «autonomy» on the remaining pockets of Palestinians' presence in their own homeland. In call no. 72, the UNL

described «the occupation's expansionist policy exemplified by the gradual annexation of parts of our state.»

The danger of the renewed settlement-building is not only to the 1967 occupied territories, but challenges the overall Palestinian claim to Palestine. The immigration wave will reinforce Israel economically and eventually militarily, especially in view of the high professional and technical skills of Soviet immigrants. This will bolster the Zionist state's position against future international pressure for withdrawal or addressing Palestinian rights.

The new immigration and settlement-building mean confiscation of West Bank and Gaza Strip land, fitting into the occupation authorities' current plan to starve out the intifada, making the economic situation so difficult that people will simply give up. This also means further marginalization of Palestinians residing in the Zionist state, with new land confiscations in areas such as the Galilee, where they still constitute a majority. Citing a report written in Israel, *CAABU Bulletin* of July 1st highlighted «Interior Ministry decisions which, in order to create space for new housing, expanded the Jewish settlement of Nazareth Ilit by 7,330 dunums at the expense of neighboring Arab villages and reduced the area of the large Arab village of Umm al Fahm by 500 dunums.»

### Can the intifada be starved out?

The UNL has organized a series of

activities in recent months specifically to oppose the settlement drive. Because Zionist plans target Jerusalem in particular, call no. 72 proposed a week of special activities for the capital of the State of Palestine, including mass marches from the West Bank to Jerusalem «to assert its Arab character and express our rejection of its being isolated from the rest of our state.» The UNL is referring to an impending Israeli plan to prohibit entry to Jerusalem to those Palestinians not possessing the required papers and permits on false security premises. This infringes on Palestinians' rights to attend religious rites at Al Aqsa and other holy sites; it would also prevent many from going to work. Roads from the North to the South of the West Bank pass through Jerusalem. A person living in Jenin, for example, would be unable to travel to Al Khalil (Hebron) for work or to visit family.

In call no. 71, June 1st, the UNL directly connects the Israeli policies of slicing up the land and economic warfare with the aim of ending the intifada via internal Palestinian conditions: «the Zionist authorities adopted the policy of imposing siege upon our people, divided our state into four parts, separated by semi-permanent military checkpoints, and used the stick – and – carrot policy in a new manner, in order to create social and economic differences among the classes and strata of the same people and among the several parts of the same country.»

The occupation authorities' attempt to have the intifada «die out by itself» dates back over a year, when the occupation forces began trying to avoid giant head-on confrontations with the people. Meanwhile, they intensified their deadly pursuit of intifada activists and tried to undermine the subsistence of the population at large via tax collection, excessive fines and fees, economic siege, etc. This policy climaxed in the 40-day curfew during the Gulf war. In the aftermath, less than one-third of those who previously worked in Israel were able to return to their jobs, depriving West Bank and Gaza families of their main income, which cannot now be supplemented by family members working in the Gulf. Writing in *Al Fajr*, June 3rd English edition, Frank Collins predicted: «A decline of one-quarter to one-third in the Palestinian per capita income in the year 1991 is likely. In April, unemployment was as high as 40 to 50 percent, reducing many families to abject poverty.»

The continued closure of Palestinian