

Analyzing the relation between Zionism and British imperialism, Ghassan concludes that without the support of imperialism in this stage Zionism could not have succeeded in usurping Palestine after the Second World War. The British slaughter of the revolt destroyed the leadership of the Palestinian nationalist movement and inflicted heavy losses upon the masses. Thus, «the period taken to complete the second chapter of the Palestinian defeat - from the end of 1947 to the middle of 1948 - was amazingly short, because it was only the conclusion of a long and bloody chapter which had lasted from April 1936 to September 1939» (p.27).

In the period of the revolt, Ghassan points out that the depth of the alliance between Zionism and British imperialism clearly can be seen from the fact that British as well as Zionist tactics and strategy were based on the existence of an alliance. The Palestinian leadership, however was not able to

out the task of mobilizing Palestinian Arabs. But despite their small number, their relative isolation and their failure to reach the Palestinian Arab masses, the communists threw all their weight into the 1936 uprising.

The aim of this analysis is of course not to minimize the heroic struggle of the Palestinian nationalists, or to minimize the immense brutality with which the revolt was crushed. On the contrary, through the history of the world, it has so many times been demonstrated that imperialism is prepared to use the most horrendous weapons at its disposal, when threatened by a strong, popular anti-imperialist or socialist movement: the Paris Commune, the Spanish Civil War, the Greek Civil War, Chile etc. However the world history also shows that a strong revolutionary movement, which learns from its mistakes, can achieve victory although having to fight the strongest power in the world: the experience of the Russian Revolution, Cuba, Vietnam, Democratic Yemen, etc.

Learning from history

In this way the studies of Ghassan Kanafani provide necessary lessons for the Palestinian revolution of today. True, the class composition of the Palestinian revolution has changed, and the main imperialist force in this area is no longer Britain but the USA. Yet because Ghassan analyzes the class forces of the revolution and its strategy when fighting Zionism and necessarily imperialism and Arab reaction, his conclusion is as central now as it was then. Though the Palestinian bourgeoisie truly is fighting for the national cause and has a role to play in the revolution, it cannot lead the revolution to victory. Also, as Ghassan never ceased to point out, the network of imperialism clearly puts Arab reaction on the enemy side. Therefore understanding and fighting imperialism becomes as central for Ghassan as it was for Lenin, when he pointed out the consequences of imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism. Therefore Ghassan's works are not only important for understanding the conditions for the Palestinian revolutionary struggle, but also a contribution to the world-wide anti-imperialist struggle.

Continuously Ghassan showed that imperialism is not a myth or a word of the mass media, it is a mobile body, an octopus which colonizes and exploits, spreading itself through western monopolies. Addressing himself to a group of students, Ghassan said, «The goal of education is to correct the march of history. For this reason we need to study history and apprehend its dialectics, in order to build a new historical era, in which the oppressed will live, after their liberation by revolutionary violence, from the contradiction which captivated them.» Ghassan had not only achieved the knowledge of dialectical materialism, but applied it in his work. The concept that he believed in and lived for was distinct in what he said and wrote. As the primary contradiction, the one with imperialism, Zionism and racism, is an international contradiction, and the only solution is to destroy these threats by a united and steadfast armed struggle, he encouraged and raised the spirit of internationalism among all the people he addressed or knew. This belief made him reject all compromises, all bourgeois and deviating solutions, which do not encompass or apply the thesis and development of the revolution and its long path towards liberation, striking the interests of imperialism and consolidating with the masses.

Ghassan Kanafani's commitment remains, as does his deep love for the cause of the oppressed masses and their struggle, and the results of his work with them, for which he was martyred.



see or draw the political consequence of this fact, but believed that British imperialism would give them concessions. This was the only reason for them to stop the revolt in a situation where British imperialism had taken a clear position for the Zionist bourgeoisie, and only the force of the revolt itself objectively served the interests of the Palestinian nationalist movement, including its leadership.

Turning to the main Palestinian left-wing organization, the Palestine Communist Party, Ghassan explains that already in the early 20s and 30s, the progressive labor movement - Arab as well as Jewish - had suffered crushing blows. The Zionist movement sought to isolate and destroy the CP, most of whose leaders were Jews who resisted being contained by Zionist labor organizations. In 1930, the party admitted that it had «adopted an erroneous attitude towards Palestinian nationalism». However, the party proved incapable of carrying