

From this in particular, the concept of transformation gains its universality.

As for the progress the PFLP has made in the transformation process, this is a matter for the 5th National Congress, for which we have begun preparations. I personally do not rule out the possibility that the next congress will judge that we have completed the transformation process, or are on the verge of completion. In the 4th National Congress, we said we had made great and essential progress in this direction. Yet we did not dare say that we were on the verge of completion, despite great accomplishments on the political and organizational levels. We stressed the necessity of completing the transformation in the field of ideology and the social structure of our party.

Today we give overwhelming attention to realizing the dialectical link between all aspects of the party. Since transformation is a dialectical process, one cannot separate one element from another. Nonetheless, we sometimes give central attention to a particular matter when we feel it is the weakest link. This occurred in the late seventies when we focused on the organizational issue. We succeeded in building the internal life of the party on a Leninist basis. We deepened the foundation of democratic centralism in the party life. Currently we are focusing on ideological transformation. We are applying programs for this, ranging from theoretical courses, educational programs and increasing the members' concern for the educational field. I announce no secret when I say that over two-thirds of our leaders have completed the Marxist-Leninist requirements in the cadre schools of the socialist countries, as have a large number of party cadres.

Transformation in the social structure of the party is a constant item on our agenda, and we evaluate the results every year. There is noticeable progress in this direction. Thus, we are more convinced that we are headed in the right direction with scientific steps and thorough programs.

Concerning the obstacles facing the PFLP's complete transformation into a Marxist-Leninist party: Based on my own experience in the PFLP, from its foundation until now, I can assure you that there are no real obstacles. We have passed this stage of whether or not transformation is possible. Our choice has become clear, and our identity is well defined. What we need today is more time and efforts to apply our programs and plans, so that our cadres and leadership can finish the distance remaining in this process.

*There are still many obstacles to convening a people's conference for restoring the PLO to the national line. What is the next step?*

Allow me to take the chance to correct any wrong interpretations of our call for a people's conference. We see this as a step towards returning the PLO to the national line after cancellation of the Amman accord and all its consequences. The idea of a people's conference is a step forward, not the end of the road, for returning the PLO to the national line and besieging the deviationist trend. The dominating leadership of the PLO has pursued a deviationist policy as preparation for entering a unilateral solution. This leadership has sought to meet Richard Murphy as a prelude to direct negotiations with the Zionist enemy. Consequently, it was a must to say that this policy does not represent the Palestinian people in any way. Rather, it is a bold departure from the decisions of Palestinian national consensus taken in the legitimate sessions of the PNC. After these dangerous possibilities, there was a need for a practical step that would lead to other steps in the confrontation process. The

people's conference was planned in order to produce a forum that would follow up the eventualities facing the Palestinian struggle, and take the required position, especially if meetings with the US began, and more particularly, if direct negotiations began with the Zionist enemy.

For this reason, we are still working for the convention of a Palestinian people's conference. It is a weapon in our hands, that must not be abandoned or underestimated. Objectively speaking, we need a forum for assembling all the Palestinian nationalist factions, mass organizations and personalities. We firmly believe that future political developments will reassert the need for such a conference.

Some may think that the PNC is the appropriate place to judge the official policy of the PLO, and to try those responsible for it; on this basis, they have reservations about the people's conference. However, it is known that the structure of the PNC does not reflect the balance of forces in the Palestinian arena; it is dominated by rightist elements supporting the deviating trend. Thus, we do not think it is adequate for putting the deviationist policy on trial and determining that it does not represent our people and nationalist forces. Therefore, we call for convening a people's conference.

There are several obstacles to convening this conference. The most important concerns the aim of this conference, because some factions think it should declare the creation of a new PLO, or that the delegates will announce themselves as the PLO. In either case, the result would be the same - consecration of the final split in the PLO. On the other hand, there are factions who fear that this conference might become the final split, consecrating the existence of more than one PLO.

We reject the divisive choice, and adhere to the PLO as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Thus, we see no reason to fear the consecration of the split. We are convinced that convening a people's conference, in accordance with the political rules that I have indicated, would not lead to this.

Why do we fear division, and exert all efforts to avoid its consecration? This question leads us to look into the nature of the PLO and the reasons why we strive to keep it united. We agree with the definition of the PLO as the front for encompassing all national forces and influential persons, as stated in a PNC resolution. We recognize it as the Palestinian entity and the symbol of our people's national identity. In addition, we see the importance of the recognition it has on the Arab official and mass level, and internationally, as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, in accordance with its national political program. The PLO has observer status in the UN, and is recognized by the General Assembly as the representative of our people. The PLO is a full member of the non-aligned movement and the Islamic Conference. Even though Palestine is not an African country, the PLO is an honorary member of the OAU, in addition to other international organizations. The PLO has full diplomatic status in all the socialist countries and a number of friendly countries.

We realize that some Arab and foreign countries recognize the PLO only hesitantly or under pressure. They are waiting for the chance to back out of this. I don't think they will find a better chance or excuse to do so than if the PLO is split into two organizations. Then they would back out of their recognition which was imposed by the Palestinian national uprising from the mid-seventies until the 1982 invasion. Our fear of division and its destructive consequences forces us to be patient in treating this crisis.

This is the substance of the problem concerning the