

people's conference. Once the main problem concerning the aim has been overcome, the other problems, such as the form or location, will not present obstacles.

In the meantime, the obstacles to convening the people's conference have revealed the difficulties stemming from the different political thinking of the forces that are expected to constitute the revolutionary alternative to the deviating bourgeois leadership. The disagreements between these forces, on matters of this type, points to the depth of the difficulties involved. The dialogue that followed the proposal of the conference showed the extent of the problems blocking its convention. Still, I would like to assure that these obstacles will not alter our adherence to the idea. We will continue struggling for such a conference, because we feel it is needed, especially if we are faced with more deviating steps. To make it easier to overcome these obstacles, we must accomplish an immediate task: Gathering all the national and democratic forces and independent figures on the basis of a clear political program for confronting deviation and returning the PLO to the national line as spelled out in legitimate PNC sessions. If such agreement is reached, it would form the main prerequisite for convening a successful people's conference.

*Many initiatives have been proposed for solving the PLO's crisis. What is your opinion about them?*

To us, it is understandable that there is such a variety of opinions about how to solve the crisis. The PLO is the significant achievement of our people over 20 years of struggle and sacrifice; it is dear to our hearts and minds; we would sincerely like to extricate it from the crisis. The ideas for this vary in accordance with the ideological and class origins of the forces involved in the Palestinian national liberation movement, just as they do on positions, alliances and actions.

I will not go into details about all the initiatives that have been proposed, but generally, they fall into two main categories: First is the idealistic view that thinks that comprehensive dialogue, extensive meetings and calls for unification can solve the crisis, restoring national unity in the framework of the PLO. This view is only supported by moral arguments. We will not be able, in this way, to root out the causes for the disruption of national unity, most important the Amman accord.

The second view is a scientific one that sees that the bourgeoisie has deviated and is following a policy dictated by its own nature and interests. Accordingly, national unity can only be achieved by a long process of struggle that would block the US solution in practice, and force the deviating leadership to retreat from its position. Then, comprehensive national unity could be established on a strong base. In the light of this evaluation, it is clear that we support any initiative that seriously aims at cancelling the Amman accord, restoring the PLO to the national line, and mobilizing the broadest forces to make the needed changes in the PLO's structure.

*Since its formation, the PNSF has not progressed beyond agreeing on a political program and enacting some coordinated steps. In this light, what is your evaluation of the PNSF?*

To start with, I would like to draw attention to the difficulties encountered in front work. How we evaluate front work usually differs radically from how we evaluate party issues, especially concerning how to deal with issues of difference and how they are expressed. A front framework means that there are issues

agreed upon, while other issues constitute points of difference. There must thus be a common ground guaranteeing a formula for joint action, with each faction reserving the right to express its views on points of difference without impairing the fundamentals of front work.

Front work is even more complex for a national liberation movement which lacks a deep understanding of the rules for front work, and has not produced a successful vanguard experience in this field. This is especially true at dangerous turning points like that experience by the Palestinian revolution today. Although Palestinian experience in front work has not been comprehensively evaluated during the past twenty years, we can say that we have encountered many obstacles which seriously hampered or paralyzed such work. The main reason for this is the hegemonic and individualistic policy of the Palestinian bourgeoisie within the PLO's institutions. This undermined many fundamentals of front work. In addition, some ultraleft concepts infiltrated the Palestinian national arena. Although these were not primary, they did leave their mark on front work.

Front work is based on coalition on the common ground, and each faction's own expression on matters of difference. This means that not everything is dealt with in a national front. The concept of democratic centralism, where the minority adheres to the majority's decision, cannot be applied here. In this context, we can understand the problems and obstacles encountered by the PNSF, for it is an extension of the Palestinian experience in this field. Thus, persistent efforts are needed to overcome obstacles and factionalism, and to establish the principles of front work.

To return to the question, its implication about the problems of the PNSF is correct. This must be admitted in order to put a finger on the problems, diagnose and overcome them. At every PFLP Politbureau meeting, we examine the situation and development of the PNSF, because in truth it has not met the standard to which we aspired. However, in the last analysis, we view the PNSF as an important step. It brought together six nationalist factions opposed to the deviationist trend. This in itself is a great step forward, and we treat the problems of the PNSF with the intention of safeguarding it. This, however, is not to belittle the serious problems that exist, the most important ones being the following:

1. Though the PNSF brought together six factions, two nationalist factions remained outside: The Palestinian Communist Party and the DFLP. When a solution to this problem was sought, two opposing views emerged. One side, while adhering to the PNSF program, thought that a broader framework should be sought to include these remaining factions and a larger number of prominent nationalist figures. The PFLP adopted this view. Our adherence to the framework and program of the PNSF does not conflict with being sufficiently flexible to continue the process of rallying the forces opposed to deviation.

The other side advocates keeping things as they are, without rallying or gathering more forces, in order to avoid venturing into the political flexibility this requires. They have a maximalist view of the PNSF program when dealing with new developments after the Amman accord. We see them asking for amending the PNSF program in a way that does not correspond to the purpose for which it was created, i.e., restoring the PLO to the national line.

2. Other problems encountered had to do with the differences which arose among some of the PNSF factions with respect to assessing the political developments after the