

Views on a Palestinian People's Conference

In September, the PFLP solicited the views of prominent Palestinian nationalists in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, on the idea of a Palestinian people's conference. The opinion of prominent Palestinian unionists was also sought. Below is a sample of their responses.

Bassam Shakaa, legal mayor of Nablus, West Bank:

«The Amman accord is being implemented daily, inside and outside the occupied territories. The PLO leadership claims that the British initiative (Mrs. Thatcher's invitation of a joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation to London) is positive - a new development in the British position and a step in the thousand-mile journey. This claim is only proof that this leadership is determined to pursue its policy of depending on the US plan. Therefore, it is important to confront this policy with total awareness. To make the idea of a people's conference succeed, it is necessary to conduct broad and deep consultations. This will make the conference more effective, stronger and more influential.»

Dr. Haider Abdul Shafi, President of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society in the Gaza Strip:

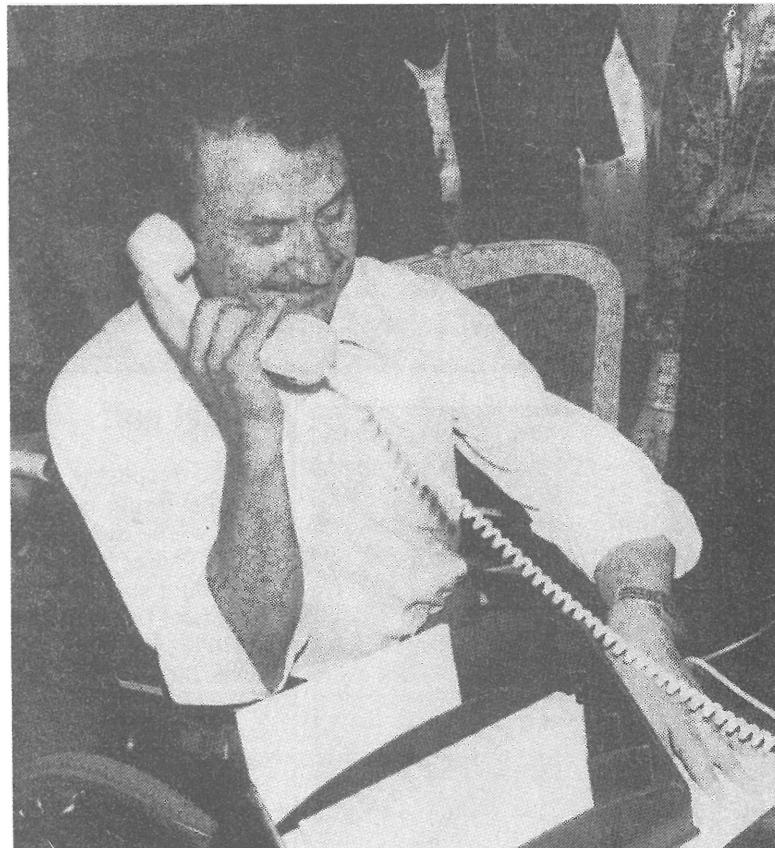
«There is no doubt that the call for such a conference aims to reach a positive solution to the crisis of the Palestinian situation, and to confront the threats brought about by the Amman accord. To guarantee success for this positive step, the prerequisites should be created. There should be informational efforts to illustrate the idea and the goal. Answers should be given to all possible questions involved in this matter.»

«The Amman accord has had a negative impact on the situation in the occupied territories. The reasons behind the sufferings of our Palestinian people at the hands of the Zionist enemy, do not alone stem from the racist nature of the Zionist enemy's policy. They also stem from the fact that the Zionist settlers are now feeling that the Palestinians are about to surrender. The clauses in the Amman accord give evidence of that surrender. The Zionist settlers thought that they should finish off the Palestinians as long as we are in such a deteriorating situation. However, our Palestinian masses are still able to continue the confrontation and give sacrifices despite the Amman accord and its implications.»

Abdul Rahman Natshe, Association of University Graduates, Hebron, West Bank:

«It is a beautiful idea. It will put things in the right direction. The people are the real authority. Convening such a conference would be a truthful expression of the opinion of the Palestinian people. It would be an affirmation of concern for the goals of the Palestinian revolution: the goal of self-determination and establishing an independent Palestinian state.»

«Such a conference would bypass those who put themselves in contradiction with the Palestinian march. I believe to make this step a success, the call should be extended to all who have proven their loyalty to the Palestinian cause, and are really committed to the Palestinian people and revolution - those who are really concerned about rectifying the errors of



Bassam Shakaa

the Palestinian movement. The call to such a conference should be based on a clear agenda and clear slogans which cannot be violated. I suggest such a slogan, to express rejection of capitulation, squandering or authorization (of another to speak for the PLO).»

Mamoun al Sayed. Chief editor of «Al Fajr» newspaper, Jerusalem:

«The present Palestinian situation necessitates that all Palestinian nationalist organizations, forces and personalities, who are against the Amman accord and concerned about the unity of the PLO on a clear-cut militant basis, meet as soon as possible to crystallize the basis for abrogating the Amman accord, the line of deviation and all attempts to sell out our national cause at a cheap price.»

«The Amman accord is being implemented, particularly after the British initiative. Therefore, the responsibility of nationalist organizations, forces and personalities is doubled. Such a step (the people's conference) should be taken seriously and without hesitation.»