

settlement-building, the Committees for the Defense of the Land were formed, as a broad framework for all social groups ready to struggle against the enemy and its policies in this field. Through their broad uprisings, our masses were able to force the Zionist enemy to refrain from establishing the Elon Moreh settlement on the chosen site near Nablus, although the enemy did not cancel the idea of building it.

Another case is the defense of the Jerusalem District Electric Company, the largest Palestinian national institution in the occupied land, when the Zionist authorities attempted to take over some of its concessions. Our masses, first and foremost the workers of the company, achieved a political and moral victory in this battle which is still going on.

Our masses in the occupied land have shown heroic resistance, confronting the Zionist authorities' deportations of Palestinian national leaders and activists, despite the enemy's forceful continuation of this policy in flagrant disregard for international law. Our masses have been able to reverse some of the deportation orders, foiling for example the decision to deport Bassam Shaka'a, the legitimate elected mayor of Nablus.

In line with confronting the occupation, our militants in the Zionist prisons are continuously struggling against the enemy's measures to liquidate them physically and kill their spirit. There are many examples of the prisoners' steadfastness and confrontation of the occupation. The most significant was the hunger strike in Nafha prison which lasted over five weeks.

I have mentioned some examples to indicate that the enemy will not succeed in subordinating a people who are determined to free themselves from occupation and exercise their national identity by establishing an independent state where they rule themselves. The leaders of 'Israel' themselves have begun openly admitting that their methods did not succeed in subordinating the Palestinian people under occupation. Zionist figures indicate that there were 1224 operations against Israeli military targets in 1985. These are constantly on the rise, in addition to other forms of ongoing resistance.

What is your position on armed struggle within the territories? Is it the right of all Palestinians to resist the occupation by whatever means? In your view, should the armed struggle be waged outside the territories any longer?

Our position on armed struggle is the natural position of a people whose land is subject to invasion and occupation. Our position on armed struggle against the Zionist invasion and occupation, is the same as that of the European peoples during the Nazi occupation of their countries. It is the same position as that of the Vietnamese people vis-a-vis the US invasion of Vietnam. It accords with the position of the United Nations which gave the right to those peoples who are subject to invasion and occupation, to struggle by all means, including armed struggle.

We are a peace-loving people. We love freedom; and we know that the price for peace and freedom is very high, especially as we are facing an invader like Zionism which is supported by the strongest imperialist power in history. We distinguish clearly between Israeli civilian targets and military targets, in contrast to what the enemy forces are doing against our people inside and outside occupied Palestine. Didn't the Zionist occupiers commit a mass poisoning against our people in 1983, in occupied Palestine? Didn't the Zionist enemy commit a horrible massacre against unarmed Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila camps, after we left Beirut in 1982? Don't the Zionist settlers attack our people daily in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, using all methods of terror? Is it the Zionist enemy that does not distinguish between civilian and military targets. The Zionist enemy is the one committing massacres and breaking international law.

Having said this, I confirm that our right to confront Israeli occupation does not differ from the right of any people to confront any foreign occupation. The methods which we use do not differ from the methods used by the different peoples of the world confronting occupation.

As for armed struggle from outside the occupied territories, I can compare it with the resistance of the Algerian people against the French occupation, from areas outside French control in

Tunisia and Morocco. We can compare it with the Vietnamese resistance against the US intervention, from outside what was called South Vietnam.

If that was the case, then our people have the right, just like other people of the world, to struggle against occupation from within and beyond the occupation lines. This is especially so in view of the feeling of the Palestinians living in the Arab countries surrounding Palestine, that Palestine is their usurped homeland, that the people under occupation are their people whom they have the duty to support in confronting the occupation and freeing them from its control. This is the role of the armed struggle from outside Palestine. It is one of supporting our people under occupation to help them get rid of the occupation. It is the right of any people's liberation struggle seeking the restoration of national rights, as stated in UN resolutions and international law. It is the right of the Palestinian people until our occupied land is liberated and an independent Palestinian state established there.

How should the people of the occupied territories view the disunity and conflict of the past years within the ranks of the Palestinian leadership? What would you say to those in the occupied territories who despair of their leaders coming together, who feel that their cause is weakened by infighting?

The Palestinian people rallied around the Palestinian revolution and the PLO with its national platform and the programs of the legitimate Palestinian National Council sessions, which represent a consensus among the different resistance organizations. On this basis, the revolution and the PLO received popular and official support on the Palestinian, Arab and international levels.

In the light of this, the departure of Yasir Arafat and his followers in Fatah's Central Committee from the national platform and the consensus resolutions adopted by the PNC, prior to the 17th session, damaged the Palestinian cause and the PLO's unity. This departure, and its organizational consequences had the worst effect on the morale of our people. It also damaged the political, diplomatic and militant gains of our people.

Look, for example, at the recent calls of King Hussein for the Palestinian people to choose a substitute leadership for the PLO. He is constantly calling into question the legitimacy of the PLO's representation of the Palestinian people. King Hussein would not have dared to do so, were it not for the agreement he signed with Yasir Arafat on February 11, 1985. That sinister agreement included a concession by Arafat, that compromised the right of the Palestinian people to establish an independent state, instead positing a confederate state with Jordan. That agreement also compromises the PLO's right to be the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people at any international conference or forum that would discuss the Palestinian cause.

King Hussein, the Zionist leadership and the US administration are trying to exploit the current weakness of the PLO, which resulted from the policy pursued by Arafat beginning in 1982, and especially after the signing of the February 11th agreement. The enemy forces began a carefully planned and organized campaign, aiming to plant despair in the minds of our people, to get them to question the national struggle and its usefulness. This reached such an extreme that King Hussein equated the Palestinian struggle with the Zionist terror, and asked Arafat to condemn armed struggle. Arafat responded to this and announced, in Cairo, that he condemns armed actions outside the occupied territories.

In order to prevent our people's enemies from benefitting from the PLO's current weakness, we in the PFLP have constantly called for adherence to the national platform and the resolutions of the legitimate PNC sessions, the last of which was the 16th session held in Algiers. We consider that this possibility is conditional on cancellation of the February 11th agreement by Fatah's Central Committee. We have also said that safeguarding the PLO from the present dangers and the conspiracies planned for it, requires a serious review of the previous course of the PLO. It requires reinstating a political and organizational