

Editorial

The Requirements of National Unity

In the light of the dramatic events of the past months, we find ourselves again obliged to write about Palestinian national unity, discussing the ways of regaining the split that took place in the PLO, as a result of Arafat's 1983 visit to Cairo, and the deviationist policies then followed by the PLO leadership.

In the last two months, the dangers threatening the Palestinian national struggle and cause have become more concrete. US imperialism has decided to give new momentum to the process of implementing its schemes in the Middle East. In line with this, Shimon Peres of 'Israel' visited King Hassan of Morocco to discuss ways of implementing a US-style settlement in the Middle East. Not long afterwards, another reactionary agreement took place in Alexandria, between Peres and Mubarak, on September 11-12th, to discuss the Middle East question and solve it at the cost of the Palestinian people.

If one adds to these events the vicious moves of King Hussein against the PLO and the Palestinian independent identity, and the continued visits of the US envoys to the area, one understands the pressing need for reuniting the PLO on the national platform, clearly antagonistic to imperialist Zionist and reactionary plots. The importance of clarity in the PLO's program becomes ever more necessary as the Zionist and imperialist plans have become clearer than ever in their antagonism to the Palestinian revolution and all patriotic Arab forces. At the same time, the role of Arab reaction has become more concrete, especially that of King Hussein (See article on the plan for «improving the quality of life» in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.) For this reason, we have been calling for an immediate, comprehensive Palestinian national dialogue to start after the cancellation of the Amman accord signed by Yasir Arafat and King Hussein. We have also stressed that the focus of this dialogue is regaining Palestinian national unity and the unity of the PLO, based on clear political and organizational principles. The political and organizational principles agreed on must be stated very precisely, leaving no opportunity for the rightist leadership to interpret them in another way.

THE WEAKNESS OF THE PRAGUE DECLARATION

With varying motivations, five Palestinian organizations held a series of meetings to discuss Palestinian unity. The five are the Central Committee of Fatah, the Arab Liberation Front (tied to Iraq), the group of Abu Abbas which was encouraged by Arafat to split from the Palestinian Liberation Front, the Palestinian Communist Party and the DFLP. So far, these meetings have resulted in the Prague Declaration, issued on September 5th, which put forth eleven points, and called upon all other Palestinian factions to restore the PLO's unity in accordance with them.

The Prague Declaration has more than one major defect, which make it unsatisfactory as a basis for national unity. The Prague Declaration made no mention of the position of the PLO on relations with the Egyptian regime. This is in spite of the fact that the conferees know very well that the split in the PLO actually started from the point of Arafat's visit to Cairo. Ironically, not long after this declaration, Mubarak held his summit with Peres, before which he had contacted Arafat.

The Prague Declaration did not cancel the Amman accord which is almost unanimously considered fatal for the Palestinian struggle. It merely stated that the Amman accord is «no longer operative» and «no longer constitutes a basis for the PLO policy and activities and practice.» Obviously, the Central Committee of Fatah refused to use the word *cancel* or any of its derivatives, in connection with the Amman accord. Why? Because this is exactly the kind of statement which Arafat insists upon, because he can interpret them in his own way. Not long after signing the Prague Declaration, he insisted on saying that the Amman accord was not cancelled. In an interview with *Al Ittihad* newspaper in Abu Dhabi, September 21st, Arafat said that the Amman accord was stopped, but not cancelled, because only the PNC should decide on its cancellation or approval. He added that the accord remains one of the options for solving the Palestinian question!

Moreover, when progressive allies of the PLO, namely the leadership of Democratic Yemen, asked Arafat to sign a paper pledging to cancel the Amman accord at the opening session of national dialogue, Arafat replied that Abu Mazen, Fatah Central Committee member, could do that. Why? To have his hands free, because Arafat considers himself leader of the PLO which is larger than Fatah, of course. In any coming PNC, he will say: Lets vote on what the organizations have agreed upon, knowing that the majority in the PNC, as it was previously constituted, is in his favor. If this should happen, what would the leftist organizations have done? People will say that the left was used by Arafat as a cover for gaining approval and legitimizing the accord with the Jordanian monarch.

Another evidence of how Arafat can manipulate the situation concerns UN Security Council resolution 242. The second point of the Prague Declaration emphasizes «rejection of separate, partial and liquidationist projects and solutions, such as the Camp David plan, the Reagan plan, autonomy, functional division of administration; reject resolution 242 because it ignores the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people» (Prague declaration, September 5, 1986). On September 5th, 1986, in the non-aligned summit in Harare, Arafat declared that he is ready to recognize resolution 242 among all other UN resolutions that deal with the Palestinian question!

Another important blunder concerning the Prague Declaration is that two leftist, patriotic organizations, the DFLP and the Palestinian Communist Party, hurried to negotiate unconditionally with the rightist leadership, without trying to primarily agree with the other six patriotic organizations. This, of course, weakened the position of the DFLP and Palestinian Communist Party, and gave Arafat the opportunity to reach a politically weak agreement, as seen in the Prague Declaration.

This is deplorable because the unity of the Palestinian left on a common position is an asset that would serve not only the leftists, but also the Palestinian people and cause as a whole. Potentially, it is one of the best means to force the rightist leadership of the PLO to stick to the national program.

We reiterate that public cancellation of the Amman accord by those who signed it, is a precondition for any dialogue with the Central Committee of Fatah. This dialogue should result in a clear organizational and political program with all the i's dotted and t's crossed.