

Press Conference

On October 4th, following the conclusion of the PFLP Central Committee meeting, a press conference was convened. Dr. George Habash, General Secretary of the PFLP, answered a series of questions posed by Arab and international journalists. Below are some of the questions:

What is the PFLP's position on the Algerian initiative to reunite the PLO?

When President Shadli Ben Jidid launched his initiative, the PFLP welcomed it, specifying that official and announced abrogation of the Amman accord would be the proper prelude to overall Palestinian national dialogue. This dialogue would discuss the political and organizational basis for Palestinian national unity in the light of the lessons of the complicated period we have experienced since the PNC's 16th session. The PFLP considers that the reunification of the PLO, on a correct political and organizational basis, is the central task to which we will devote all the efforts needed. At the same time, this unity should be genuine, not a formality. This means drawing the main lessons of the past four years, in order to establish real unity that will enable the PLO to seriously confront the US-Zionist-Arab reactionary plans for the region.

I want to clarify that this stand is not in any way geared to the stand of our Arab or international allies. At the same time, we know very well that serious confrontation of the imperialist-Zionist-Arab reactionary plans definitely requires that the PLO be united on a clear, correct political and organizational basis, and have a serious alliance with Syria and the other Arab nationalist countries. If for any reason, there are obstacles to this formula, the PFLP would go ahead in the process of reunifying the PLO on a correct basis, and struggle for establishing the alliance with Syria later on. This is because Syria is steadfast, and the PLO's alliance with Syria is important in order to confront the imperialist-Zionist-Arab reactionary plans.

Some Palestinian forces, especially Fatah's Central Committee, say that the PFLP's stand vis-a-vis the unification of the PLO is determined by the Syrian stand, and that the PFLP will never be able to take a stand independent of Syria. This is not correct. We challenge Fatah's Central Committee to cancel the Amman accord in order to start the national dialogue. If this happens, the PFLP will immediately join the dialogue... Two months ago, I gave a statement to the Kuwaiti news agency, saying that we challenge the Central Committee to cancel the Amman accord and then see whether the PFLP's stand is really geared to that of Syria...

Why do we consider that cancellation of the Amman accord is a condition for starting the dialogue? Because we have had a painful, regrettable experience these past four years. With good reason, we fear that if we enter the overall Palestinian dialogue without cancellation of the Amman accord, we will never arrive at a clear-cut cancellation. This would mean continuation of the unclear, vacillating policy which has been pursued by the PLO Executive Committee the past four years. The Amman accord has a special character. In fact, it is a new political program for the PLO, directly contradictory to the national program for return, self-determination and an independent Palestinian state. This is really a very big, serious mistake committed by the official PLO leadership. The Amman accord is a signed document between the PLO and the Jordanian regime. It is our right to insist that it be officially and publicly cancelled.

Of course, when we start the overall dialogue, the PFLP will have its point of view on the political and organizational basis for genuine Palestinian national unity. For example, we will insist that the PLO break relations with the Egyptian regime,

as was stipulated in the Aden-Algiers agreement signed by Fatah's Central Committee, the PFLP, DFLP, PCP and PLF. In addition to the political issues, the PFLP will present a detailed point of view on organizational issues. The organizational section of the Aden-Algiers agreement provides an acceptable basis for the process of reform in the PLO. Through dialogue, we will insist on exact implementation of this.

Some consider that these are difficult conditions for reuniting the PLO. We do not consider them difficult in relation to the lessons of the past four years. I want to remind you that the 14th PNC adopted an organizational program that stressed collective leadership and democratic relations among the organizations that are united in the PLO. What happened after that? Arafat put the entire program on the shelf... We stress these things so that the unfortunate situation of the PLO will not be repeated. Most of you remember the policy of saying neither yes nor no, which was pushed by Arafat at the 16th PNC. Depending on the ambiguity of the political articles adopted at this session, Arafat and his leadership interpreted these as they chose, drawing the PLO to their preferred line - away from the political basis agreed upon. When asked about his departure from PNC decisions, he always relied on the ambiguities. In this way, he even justified the Amman accord, considering it a correct application of the 16th PNC's decisions!

The PFLP wants Palestinian national unity, but we are not ready to repeat the unfortunate situation of the past four years. We welcome the Algerian initiative, and will work with our Algerian brothers to continue their efforts, for our current, central task is reuniting the PLO on a correct political and organizational basis.

What exactly does the PFLP mean by official cancellation of the Amman accord?... Peres himself has said that it is dead, based on information from the US, Egypt and Jordan. What does the PFLP want after all these indications? Some in the PLO leadership think that your conditions only aim to cut the PLO's relations with all Arab countries, so that it would be liquidated. They think that your conditions do not open the door to unity, but close all doors on the PLO...

What we mean by cancellation of the Amman accord is for Fatah's Central Committee to cancel it, to be followed by official cancellation by the PLO Executive Committee which was formed in the Amman PNC. Although we do not recognize this Executive Committee, it endorsed the accord. We have clearly stated that this is what we mean by cancellation, on a number of occasions and in all our publications on the subject... In an official message sent to our comrades in Democratic Yemen, we clearly stated this understanding: The Central Committee cancels it, then instructs Arafat, as a member of this committee, to convene the Executive Committee of the PLO to cancel the accord, in order for us to be sure that it is cancelled officially.

The most important point is: Was the Amman accord really cancelled? Despite the Moscow and Prague meetings... Taher