

your personal weapons? Where are your hideouts? Where did you get food? Who were your contacts and how did you make contact to the outside? (referring to the resistance outside of Palestine) Who are your comrades? Where is Guevara hiding? What operations did you carry out?»

«When I refused to answer, he ordered torture. A number of methods were used: beating me on all parts of my naked body; cursing me and spitting in my face; deprivation of food and sleep. They also threatened to kill me, and made me sign a paper saying that I was going to commit suicide. Using psychological torture, they tried to encourage individualism, getting me to think of saving myself, quoting traditional sayings like: 'A hundred mothers crying, but not mine' and 'Kiss the hand you cannot bite.' They said that my comrades were happy, together with their wives. They tried to make us suspect the leadership of the resistance outside, saying that they were comfortable while we were suffering.»

Zuhdi said that he couldn't add to what had already been said. Instead he stressed: «While under torture we gained strength from our belief that our cause is just, and our belief in our party; that enabled us to be steadfast in the face of the enemy.»

IN SOLITARY

We asked each of the comrades how long their period of interrogation and torture was, and how their feelings were during the times when they were in solitary confinement, deprived of the morale support of comradeship.

Zuhdi began, «For me, that period lasted 45 days. I felt strange. Mainly I worried about the things that I knew concerning the whereabouts of other comrades and weapons. Still, that concern gave me strength.»

Abu Waffa spoke next: «I stayed for two periods, from May 9th until June 7th, and from June 16th until June 23rd (1968). They gave my body nine days of rest because of my physical condition. Under such torture as we have described, even the revolutionary will have confused feelings like anyone else, but his ability to be steadfast depends on his revolutionary experience and awareness.»

Zakaria said, «I stayed two months in that situation, because I was sent to a different area in the 1948 occupied land, to be interrogated about different operations. I thought mainly about the comrades outside, and how to protect them and not give any information.»

Abdul Hamid told us that he remained under interrogation about a month. «In the first period of torture, you think of how to end it without harming the party and other comrades. You think about when you will get a rest, relief. What can you feel when you are in the hands of such sadists? You sometimes wish for martyrdom. I stayed altogether four months in soli-

tary confinement. There you wish for the period to end, because you want to be back with other comrades in the jail, at least to know what is going on. One of the main weapons of the enemy is making you feel lonely.»

Mohammad stayed under interrogation and torture for seven months, in three different stages. The first was when he was arrested. The second was after he tried to escape. The third was after a traitor spoke about him, and he was brought to trial another time. He explains his feelings: «During the torture, I was in such severe pain that I only wanted to be returned to the cell. In the cell, I would not talk with anybody. I would remember my family and friends, the sun, walking freely, my painting - I am a painter. At night I dreamt of freedom. In the morning I woke up and stayed in a corner of the dark cell. The morning means a new round of torture. When the door opens, everybody freezes. They call a name and that person goes with the guard. We relaxed for five minutes. Then the door opens again and another name is called...»

PRISONER SOLIDARITY

We asked the comrades how it was to enter the 'normal' prison after the interrogation was finished. Abdul Hamid began, «In prison, the revolutionary is welcomed warmly by the other prisoners. They contribute personal belongings to make life easier. Your morale is raised greatly after the difficult period of torture... There were 45 of us in a room fit for 15. There was no space for sleeping. If you woke up in the night to use the bathroom, you lost your space and had to sleep sitting. There were not enough blankets, just four old rags with a dirty, thin piece of plastic for a mattress. However, the crowded room had one benefit in the winter - body heat! The food was very bad - a bowl of rice for six militants, four pieces of bread, and so-called soup which was only hot water with salt and onions or bread in it.»

«The quality and quantity of food changed because of the prisoners' struggles. After the uprising in Ashkelon prison in 1971, we started seeing fruit. Before that, there was none. In the beginning, books and radios were not allowed, but after hunger strikes in which several prisoners were martyred, they allowed books, papers and pencils. We started studying. Through struggle, we also gained the right to sports and to write to our families. With organized work, we were able to transform the imprisoned national movement into a cadre school. As Sahar Khalifeh wrote, the prisons were intended to be the graveyard of the Klashnikovs, but they turned out to be universities of nationalism.»

Zakaria's experience was similar: «After interrogation we were moved to a room three by four meters with about fifty militants. They gave each of us

two plates, a spoon and cup, a shirt and overalls or pants. We each had a space 20 cm wide to sleep. In my time, the food was horrible. In the morning, we got half an egg, four olives and a cup of cold, horrible liquid that was only tea in name. Sometimes they gave us half a tomato. For lunch, three times a week, there was macaroni; two times a week, half a plate of rice and 20 grams of bad quality fish; and two times a week, 20 grams of bad quality meat with soup, i.e., hot water with salt and a carrot in it. Supper was boiled potatoes and half an egg and a piece of cheese. We were not allowed books in the beginning. Then they let in trashy novels and religious books; but after our struggles, we were allowed some Marxist books. We spent our time studying, holding meetings and doing sports.»

«Being received by the comrades in the jail after the interrogation period is like a miracle,» said Mohammad, «just to see people in solidarity with you after the torturers and sadists. The comrades and brothers in the cells give you soap, clean clothes and a toothbrush. These are small things, but priceless after the period of torture... We used to speak about the revolution, our families, the outside and our aspirations. We were allowed a hot bath once a week; the toilet and bath were all in the cell... We used to joke a lot.»

Abu Waffa said, «After the period of interrogation, when we were moved into prison cells, the militants suffered from different injuries and an average weight loss of 20 kilos. Still, we were proud of our steadfastness and kept our belief in victory. I especially remember the comrades of that time, that I shared the prison experience with: Abdullah Al Ajami, Fuad Al Ghosain, Ahmed Al Karawi and Al Arori.»

REVOLUTIONARY CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

In any society there will be social problems and conflicts among individuals. This is more so in the prison, where many people are compressed in a small, closed space, in uncomfortable conditions at best. For the imprisoned national movement, resolving daily problems is an integral part of keeping up the prisoners' morale, solidarity and ability to struggle together in the face of the enemy attempts to divide them, break their will and find collaborators. For these reasons, the political prisoners gradually worked out a code of behaviour within the prison, and enforced it with the few methods of control at their disposal.

An internal structure emerged whereby every cell was led by a coordinator, usually the most respected person in the group. There was an overall committee in each prison with representatives of the different resistance organizations, to regulate any problems that arose among the organizations, such as competition in recruiting, or who had the final say in whe-