

Despite the positive aspects of the report, it ignored many important issues such as the PLO's relations with the Egyptian regime despite the latter's adherence to the Camp David accords. The report also tended to equate the PLO's relations with the Arab nationalist regimes with its relations with the reactionary regimes. The report failed to review the problems that have arisen in Palestinian-Arab relations, and the bold intervention of some Arab regimes in Palestinian internal affairs. It was moreover not clear if the political report was presented in the name of the PLO's political department or the Executive Committee.

Meanwhile, the ten committees concerned with the PLO's different fields of work had begun meeting. They continued their meetings on the fourth day of the council. At the council's general session, the Palestinian Communist Party was officially accepted as a PNC member. The council then accepted 21 new members - four from the Palestinian Liberation Front, seven from the PCP and ten independents.

On the fifth day of the session, the committees had finished most of their work. Five reports were discussed in the council - those of the education committee, the social committee, the economic and finance committee, the literature and information committee, and the committee on the occupied territories. The report of the military committee was forwarded to the Executive Committee. On the sixth day of the session, the recommendations of the committee on popular organizations were approved by the PNC.

RELATIONS BROKEN WITH EGYPT

The atmosphere was tense the last day of the council because of fear that the achievements so far made would be disrupted. All concentrated on the developments between the organizations concerning relations with Egypt, to the extent that the general session was largely neglected. The majority of members and guests were waiting for the results of the political committee's meeting dedicated to discussing the statement to be issued concerning relations with Egypt, in the final communique.

A meeting between the PFLP and Fatah delegations had reached agreement on the issue, but Fatah, under pressure from the Egyptian regime, attempted to alter the agreement. The changes requested by Yasir Arafat undermined the basis of the agreement. The PFLP protested this postponement, pointing out that the PNC had been convened on the basis of a political and organizational agreement that was binding.

Faced with the PFLP's firm position, and the position of some Fatah leaders as well, Arafat yielded and accepted the original agreement with the omission of one phrase. The agreement stated that relations with Egypt would be based on the decisions of previous PNCs, especially the 16th session, and on Arab summit resolutions, in particular those of the Baghdad Summit. The phrase omitted was that naming the Baghdad Summit in particular. After the removal of this obstacle, most observers considered that the matter was finished and national unity had been achieved.

However, the issue was brought up again. In a meeting with the PFLP's

delegation, Arafat said that he had received a warning from Egypt's President Mubarak. Arafat said that a solution should be found, for the PLO could not break relations with Egypt, Jordan and Morocco at one time. PFLP Deputy Secretary General Abu Ali Mustafa explained that the PFLP would not accept any changes in the formula agreed on about relations with Egypt, especially after the Egyptian threats which constituted interference in Palestinian national decision-making. Following that, the political committee adopted the resolution as it had previously been agreed.

A second warning was issued by the Egyptian regime, delivered to Arafat by the head of the official Egyptian delegation at the PNC. It stated that the delegation was withdrawing from the council session. Arafat and some Executive Committee members once again asked for changes to be made in the resolution. The PFLP again rejected such changes, stressing that bowing to these warnings would degrade the PLO's independence. The PFLP threatened to withdraw from par-

