

us. Those carrying out the military operations were people from among us, who in the day time went about their normal life. This friend used to come sleep at our house. He began to ask me for small favors - to expect him at night, to have tea prepared, etc. After a time, he was arrested, and we lost contact.

My friend and I used to sit in front of the school canteen and talk about the fedayeen. At that time, the Zionist authorities began issuing permits for people from the Gaza Strip to go and work in the part of Palestine occupied in 1948. At night my friends and I went out acting as fedayeen and collecting these permits to keep people from working in the Zionist state. We were enthusiastic even though such activities could expose us to death.

In that period, a friend said he wanted to introduce me to one of his relatives. We set a date at the canteen and told Ibrahim. When we met, my friend's relative had two hand grenades and a pistol with him. He asked us if we wanted to become fedayeen and we replied that this was our hope and dream. He explained that he had to test our courage. He gave us the two grenades, told us to attack a selected target and then bring back the grenades' safety pins to show they had been used. We went to an area called Sanafor which is near a railway track. The cars crossing the tracks had to slow down. We decided to throw the grenades when the cars slowed down, to be sure to hit our target. We returned and delivered the pins. We were told that from then on, we were members of the organization (PFLP).

My father's death had provided a strong incentive to join the organization, in addition to my hatred for the enemy. I had been brought up on the idea that one day Palestine would be liberated and we would return home. I could never accept seeing the Zionist soldiers walking freely about on the streets, without our doing something against them.

Until a certain incident, my family knew nothing of my activities. I was very cautious, and afraid of being kicked out of the organization had I told anybody. Then it happened that the comrade who had recruited us encountered some people from the PLF at night; each was carrying a gun. They suspected him and shot. He was wounded in the chest. This happened in the quarter where my comrade, Ibrahim, lived. Hearing the shooting, Ibrahim ran out of his house and saw our comrade lying wounded. He moved him to a nearby garden. Ibrahim came to my house and asked me to come with him. My family was suspicious about my leaving the house so late at night in such a hurry. I didn't come back home until a few days later. That incident revealed to my family my participation in the struggle.

We moved the injured comrade to a house and called a doctor who treated him. In those days, people prided themselves on helping the fedayeen. The family to whose house we had moved our comrade was very hospitable. Then we moved him to Shatti camp, near his family. He stayed there until his recovery and then returned to our camp (Jabalia). When I returned home, none of my family discussed the issue of my having joined the resistance. Nobody even asked me where I had been or what I had done.

OPEN STRUGGLE

After that, we started to know some of the comrades who were pursued and had their houses constantly stormed by the Zionists. We got to know their life style. Older comrades saw us as young and inexperienced, while we respected their age

and experience. I was always hoping to accompany one of the older comrades on a mission. I used to watch every move they made. In particular I noticed their nice treatment of people, despite the fact that they were considered the local authorities. They could do anything without eliciting fear or questions, because the people thought that these men could never do anything wrong. All houses were open to them and to us. When we had to enter a house in the course of our work, the people treated us really well. They fed us, hid us and then left us to sleep. Sometimes members of the family would stand guard while we slept. At first, we acted very secretly. Through our close contact with the masses, they realized that the fedayeen did not come from outside, but were residents of the occupied homeland. They realized that the fedayeen were their own sons, fathers, brothers and sisters who lived among them and shared their life.

Then, the Zionist authorities began instating new, tougher security measures and making wide-scale arrests. They started to recruit collaborators, tempting them with money. Sometimes they got information through confessions extracted from imprisoned, tortured militants. The enemy forces began pursuing the fedayeen, and large numbers of the fighters started to live the life of fugitives. They didn't sleep in their own houses, or in the same place twice, etc. The number of those pursued increased immensely, and the fedayeen decided that since they were anyway wanted and hunted, they would go public and confront the occupation forces openly. Fedayeen started to appear in military uniform with their weapons. More men and women asked the fedayeen to take them into the resistance. People even claimed to be a member of the PFLP just to do anything which would earn them the title of fedayee. Every single patrol that entered the camp, whether on foot or in vehicles, was subject to attack. For this reason, the Zionists changed the direction of the seats in their vehicles, so that the soldiers sat facing the back in order to survey the area and not be surprised.

One time Zionist soldiers occupied a house we used to visit a lot. I was coming from Shatti camp, carrying my klashnikov. I arrived at the house at about 5 a.m. From our experience we had learned to distinguish between the footprints of an Arab and those of an Israeli. I noticed soldiers' footprints in front of the house. I decided to act as if I were an Israeli when the comrade's mother opened the door. I knocked and pointed my gun at the door, with my finger on the trigger. When the door opened, it was an Israeli soldier and I pulled the trigger. I started running, asking the people who came out of their houses to tell the comrades that there was an ambush at the house. Stunned by surprise and fear, I decided to retaliate and give the occupiers some of their own medicine. I ordered all the fighters in the camp to be on alert, ready to clash with any coming patrol. A military vehicle full of soldiers stopped at the rations distribution center. I threw a bomb at them and ran. As I was running, I saw a man we had always suspected of being a collaborator. He performed harmful acts while pretending to be one of the fedayeen. When he saw me, he drew his pistol and started shooting in the air, leading the Zionists to where I was. I just kept running.

WHO RULES THE STRIP?

Operations were going on daily. This had extremely positive effects on the morale of the masses. The people realized who the enemy was. They saw the enemy troops being attacked every day and suffering casualties. The operations even had an