

she moved to another house, she once again built a hideout that we used from time to time.

## GUEVARA OF GAZA

One of the most beloved, respected and effective figures at that time was comrade Mohammad Al Aswad, rightfully known as Guevara of Gaza. His most outstanding characteristic was his cheerfulness. When we visited a family, he always attracted the hosts with his special style. We used to joke with him, saying: «Your presence makes us nothing... everybody talks to you and forgets us.» He used to answer: «It's not your fault, it's something in my face that makes people like me.»

Guevara always made himself our equal. He had guard duty just like everybody else. I remember one time I was on guard from midnight until 2 a.m. I had a watch which was then a rare commodity among us. At 1:30 I set the watch forward to 2, then went and woke Guevara up. He knew that it was not yet 2, but he just smiled and went on guard. He treated us in a truly comradely manner. I remember we had a comrade who was a former army officer. His manner was just like that in the army - shouting, cursing, ordering, etc. This made us dislike him, especially compared with Guevara.

Comrade Guevara was decisive in any nationalist or organizational issue. He paid attention to even the smallest matter, the things we used to neglect. He always asked us to pay for the food we ate when we entered a house. He stressed the importance of good conduct with the masses, citing examples from Vietnam and other revolutions. He was constantly reminding us that if we passed through a garden and ate from the fruits, to leave money in place of what we picked.

Once we arrested a collaborator and were taking him for investigation. He managed to run. We shot and injured him. Comrade Guevara was nearby. When he heard the shooting, he came running and saw the collaborator on the ground wounded. Though we had conclusive evidence that this man was a traitor, comrade Guevara insisted that we conduct intensive investigations to make the indictment more concrete. He ordered us never to shoot any person unless a decision had been taken by our military court, approved by the commander and unanimously agreed upon. In combat, comrade Guevara stressed the necessity of shooting first. He said: «Don't let the enemy start the battle.» This tactic later proved to be effective.

## PURSUED

One rainy day when mud covered the roads, I was sitting with Ibrahim, and a young man from the PLA, named Abu Difaa, in a house located in an area full of trees which gave it special protection. Suddenly a man came in; we later found out he was from the PLF. He called Abu Difaa and said he wanted to tell him about a disturbing dream. I told Ibrahim I wanted to go out and hear what they were talking about. I left my klashnikov with Ibrahim. As I was listening, I heard someone saying in Arabic, but with an accent: «Come here!» I immediately headed for the house. Before reaching it, I heard shots, so I retreated in the opposite direction. On my way, I met Abu Difaa and asked him to give me his klashnikov. He refused and I asked for his grenades which he gave me. He then told me to withdraw from the area entirely, so as not to be caught. I refused. Due to my insistence, he agreed to accompany me to a nearby house which had two gates, one opening onto the main road and the other onto the garden. When we

entered the house, I asked the daughter to run to where Ibrahim was to bring back news. As soon as she left, the dogs started howling, signalling that strangers were coming. The woman of the house went out to look. As she opened the door, she screamed: «Escape, escape!» A soldier stormed into the house. I was in the yard. When I saw the soldier coming, I threw a bomb at him. At the same time, Abu Difaa aimed his rifle and started shooting, as he ran in the opposite direction. As we ran, we met a girl I knew. She said: «Ibrahim was here a minute ago.» I couldn't believe it. I wanted to kiss her I was so happy. We asked her where he had gone and headed in the same direction. On our way, other people reaffirmed what the girl had said. I asked one man how many klashnikovs Ibrahim was carrying, and he said only one. Thus I realized that my gun was gone. When we met Ibrahim, we embraced. He handed me his gun. I refused at first, but on his insistence I accepted. He then told us everything that had happened.

We could not stay in any one place long, sometimes not more than an hour. The Zionists had intensified their pursuit of the fedayeen, employing new methods. The special forces were brought in large numbers, greatly increasing the Zionist military presence in the area. Large numbers of checkpoints were erected, as were concentration centers for emergency needs. They began employing a method whereby troops were positioned in a U-formation. This way, when a resistance group attempted to retreat, it would be surrounded on all sides. We therefore decided not to withdraw from such traps, but to clash with the enemy troops. The Zionist authorities also used Arab Jews to pose as resistance fighters, claiming they had arrived from Lebanon. They would ask people about the location of the fedayeen, even naming the fighters they wanted to contact. We informed people about this trick, asking them not to answer anybody who asked about our whereabouts.

Once I was with a group of comrades, many of them new members, in a house in the middle of a garden. Suddenly a man showed up, looked at us and then just ran away. A few minutes later a woman came and said there were some Zionists claiming to be fedayeen. We left the house, looking for them in the direction she pointed. I asked my comrades to shout at them first. If they didn't stop, we would shoot. When we saw them, we shouted, and they started shooting at us. We shot back. We were in a hilly area and we started to retreat, first crawling and then running. After less than 300 meters, we heard the buzzing of helicopters over our heads. Luckily the area was full of trees, so the helicopters could not locate us. As we were running, we met two PLF fighters who ran with us. I asked where their weapons were. They said they had gotten stuck in a fence, and they could not get them out. We later found out that the Zionists had executed a civilian from Al Jaradat family in sheer revenge. They claimed that the guns they found in the fence were his.

## LEAVING GAZA

I left the occupied territories as a result of the increasingly tight situation. The idea started as a joke based on two factors: my bad health, since my wounds had never healed completely, and Ibrahim's wound; and the difficult situation which meant we could never rest. After a while we started to take the idea of leaving more seriously. We knew a man who collected old clothes from door to door, and passed them through a mill which shredded them into lumps. We suspected the driver who transported this material of being a collaborator. We told him