

this evaluation of the outcome of the split, but I have two questions. The first is: What was the qualitatively new thing which the DFLP represented in the Palestinian arena? The second is: What was the effect of that split on the conflict between the Palestinian left and right, at that time and today?

As for the future, I can say with confidence that the PFLP has overcome the experience of splits. The greatest proof of this is that all the rumors of impending splits in the PFLP over the past ten years, and especially after 1982, have proved to be mere illusions on the part of those who spread these rumors. Having courageously studied the experience of the past split, the PFLP today views with great satisfaction the high level of political, organizational and ideological unity in our ranks. We are confident that all these illusions and rumors will be shattered on the rocks of our unity.

TRANSFORMATION

How far has the transformation process come?

I believe that our coming fifth congress will deal with the big question: Did we conclude the transformation process, or do we still need more time to achieve this goal? Personally, I will be supporting the viewpoint, based on knowledge, that the transformation process has proceeded successfully, and that we have become one of the models for the transformation of a revolutionary democratic organization into a communist organization; that we have concluded or are near the conclusion of the transformation process.

The yardstick for measuring the correctness of this judgement is how the Leninist principles are practiced. The most important of these principles concern the party's ideological and class nature, its adherence to the principle of democratic centralism, the practice of criticism and self-criticism, etc. Evaluating the PFLP by this scientific yardstick, I can confirm that we have concluded, or nearly concluded the transformation process, and this will be my viewpoint at the fifth congress...

The process of concluding the transformation over the coming years is intertwined with two main tasks. The first of these is to consolidate relations between the Palestinian revolutionary democratic forces, so that they become the guarantee of the revolution... We deeply believe in the necessity of unifying the Palestinian left in order to build the united Palestinian communist party.

The second task is to struggle on two fronts. The first front is to strengthen the political line of the PLO in order to maintain its nature as a liberation movement opposing imperialism and Zionism, and to confront any deviationist trends. The second front is to consecrate democratic principles in the PLO's institutions and bodies. These tasks may need several years to achieve.

Does the role played by the PFLP today measure up to the original expectations at the time of its foundation?

I want to answer this honestly and clearly. We have hoped to have a bigger role among the masses and in the revolution and the PLO. However, there are reasons for the gap between our dreams and the reality.

First, in Jordan, the revolution was made up of two main groups, and we succeeded in making the left a competitive and

equal pole in relation to the right. We have worked so that the positions of the working class in the revolution would be distinguished in programs, organization and behaviour, in contrast to the bourgeois program represented by Fatah... Despite the bitter experience of the splits, we succeeded in maintaining this competitive pole... This was expressed spontaneously in the slogan shouted by the masses at that time: «For national unity - Fatah and Popular Front.»

Second, in Lebanon, the situation was somehow different, especially with the PLO's achievements, like its gaining Arab and international recognition. This helped the influential (bourgeois) pole in the PLO to exploit these achievements to its own advantage. Here we should point out that the alliance between the Palestinian right, which was leading the PLO, and the Arab right is organic. It stems from many factors, mainly the Arab right's need for a Palestinian cover for its capitulationist policies. Naturally, this alliance provided the Palestinian right with great material support, including arms, which helped the balance of forces in the Palestinian arena to tilt in its favor.

After 1982, the importance of the Palestinian revolution's primary operation base, i.e., occupied Palestine, was increased. The PFLP gained more strength in the Palestinian balance of forces, due to its influence in occupied Palestine, which gave it a bigger role among the masses and in the revolution...

The important thing here is that we have always hoped the Palestinian left would have a bigger role in the revolution, because we believe that the left is the guarantee for protecting the Palestinian national achievements and for the revolution's continuation... Again, I want to reaffirm that the Palestinian right and left are in a state of national unity in confronting the enemy camp, and especially the Zionist enemy.

THE PLO

The relationship between the PFLP and the PLO has fluctuated over the years. Can you describe the most prominent stages in this relationship and explain these fluctuations?

Participating or not participating in the PLO institutions and leading bodies cannot be the only measure of the PFLP's relationship to the PLO, although it is an essential measure. This phenomenon, connected to the political and organizational conflict in the PLO, was never an expression of change in the PFLP's position towards the PLO as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

Participation in the PNC is among the essential criteria for adherence to the PLO, but it should be clear to all that the PFLP participated in the PNC except for a few specific occasions and for specific reasons that had nothing to do with the PFLP's conviction in the importance of the PLO. We did not participate in the 5th and 17th sessions of the PNC; we participated only symbolically in the 6th session. In all others, we participated, which shows that our lack of participation has been minimal.

In fact, our literature has always outlined the reasons for our not participating in these sessions. Concerning the fifth session, we proposed during the discussions to include Arab reaction in the enemy camp. We had in mind the upcoming battle with the Jordanian regime and the need for a scientific understanding of Arab reaction's position on the Palestinian revolution. To us, this issue was not superficial or unimpor- ►