

The Assassination of Abu Jihad

In an attempt to put down the uprising in occupied Palestine, the Zionist state committed a horrendous new crime, murdering Khalil Al Wazir (Abu Jihad), deputy commander of the PLO's armed forces and head of the PLO committee for the affairs of the occupied homeland.

In the early morning of April 16th, a group of thirty Mossad agents surrounded Abu Jihad's house near Tunis. Eight of the Israeli secret service squad entered the house, murdered three bodyguards and emptied their magazines into the body of the great Palestinian leader. In the spirit of the heroic Palestinian people, Abu Jihad, upon hearing the disturbance, had taken his pistol to confront the enemy forces. The Mossad operatives riddled his body with about 80 bullets, in the presence of his wife and son.

Hours after the murder, international news reports revealed that the operation was carried out by the Mossad, having been approved by the Israeli inner cabinet, including Yitzhak Shamir and Shimon Peres. It was also clear, as pointed out by PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat, that the Israeli leaders' decision was taken with the support of the Reagan Administration. While the State Department later issued a general condemnation of the assassination, 'Israel' as the perpetrator was not named. The US subsequently blocked the attempt to name 'Israel' in the Security Council's condemnation of the killing and the violation of Tunisian territory.

This new crime punctuates a long list of crimes committed by the Zionist state against the Palestinian people over the years, inside and outside of Palestine. This crime cannot but remind of the brutal assassinations of other Palestinian nationalist leaders like Ghassan Kanafani, Basil Kubaisi, Kamal Nasser, Kamal Adwan, Abu Yusef Najjar, Walid Zaiter, Khaled Nazzal and others.

Having been forced to realize the important role of the PLO and of Abu Jihad in particular, in directing the Palestinian uprising, the Israeli leadership thought that the murder of a leader could halt the uprising. This attests to the atmosphere of hysteria prevailing in the Israeli cabinet, blinding it to the

fact that the uprising is sustained by one and a half million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and a well-organized, clandestine leadership in the territories. True the murder of Abu Jihad is a great loss to the Palestinian people, due to the historical role he played in the Palestinian revolution. However, the murder only made the Palestinian people reaffirm that their will to continue the struggle will not be broken.

The most immediate result of the murder was three days of the most militant demonstrations witnessed in the course of the current uprising. Twenty-three Palestinians were shot dead by the Zionist troops in these days, and over 500 injured. The United National Leadership called for «turning the days of mourning for Abu Jihad into days of fire, rage and hell against the Zionist enemy.» Throughout occupied Palestine, thousands confronted the Zionist soldiers, displaying Palestinian flags and T-shirts with Abu Jihad's picture.

ZIONIST PLAN BACKFIRES

In a development not anticipated by the Israeli cabinet, the murder of Abu Jihad provided the setting for a recon-

ciliation between the PLO and Syria. For several years now, progressive forces on the Palestinian, Arab and international level have been calling for repairing the relations between the PLO, the vanguard of the Palestinian people, and Syria, the sole Arab frontline state opposing the imperialist plans. In a positive gesture, Syrian President Hafez Al Assad allowed Abu Jihad to be buried in Syria where over half a million people accompanied the martyr's body to the grave, in an overwhelming demonstration of Palestinian national unity and determination to continue the struggle.

A high-ranking PLO and Fatah delegation came to Syria for the funeral and began discussions with the Syrian leadership. A few days later, PLO Chairman Arafat visited Syria for the first time since 1983. This opened the door for restoring relations.

The murder of Abu Jihad elicited worldwide condemnation of the Zionist state with a few notable exceptions such as the Reagan Administration and the South African regime. The murder of Abu Jihad took place less than a month after the apartheid regime's murder of Dulcie September, ANC representative in France, Switzerland and Luxembourg. Both these murders give new proof as to who the real terrorists are.

In a communique addressed to the Palestinian people upon the murder of Abu Jihad, Comrade George Habash, General Secretary of the PFLP, stated, «By killing Abu Jihad, 'Israel' wanted to transfer the battle outside Palestine, thinking that they could defeat the uprising and the revolution. But they

Abu Jihad's family at his funeral

