

PLO Delegation to Moscow

On the invitation of the Soviet leadership, a PLO delegation arrived in Moscow on April 7th. The delegation was headed by Yasir Arafat, Chairman of the PLO Executive Committee. It included PLO Executive Committee members Abu Ali Mustafa, Farouk Qaddoumi, Yasir Abed Rabbouh, Suleiman Najjab, Mahmoud Darwish, Jamal Sourani and Abdullah Hourani. There were several discussion sessions with Comrade Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU, and Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, as well as with the secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, the head of the Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee, the head of the Oriental Studies Institute and the dean of the Soviet Diplomatic Academy. The talks focused on the developments in the occupied territories and the means to support the current Palestinian uprising, developments in the Middle East and the issue of the international conference, the US maneuvers in the area and the aims of Schultz's most recent trip, the efforts to reconcile Syria and the PLO, and improving Palestinian —Soviet relations. (Editor's Note: The PLO visited Moscow before the PLO—Syrian reconciliation began later in April.)

Interview with Comrade Abu Ali Mustafa

After the talks with the Soviet leadership were concluded, *Al Hadaf* magazine interviewed Comrade Abu Ali Mustafa, Deputy General Secretary of the PFLP, regarding the delegation's visit. The following is a summary of the interview:

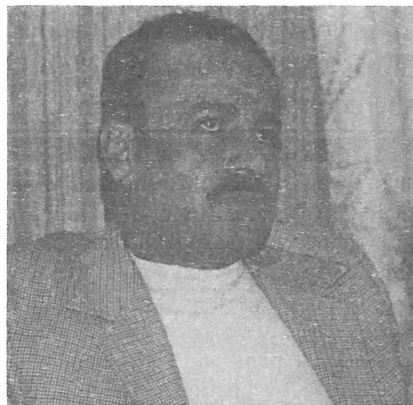
THE UPRISING

The Soviet leadership expressed full support to the Palestinian uprising and reaffirmed the significance of its continuing. They condemned the fascist Israeli crimes against the Palestinian people. The Soviet comrades confirmed that it was high among their priorities to raise the issue of political support to the uprising and to the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people at international forums. The Soviet Solidarity Committee informed the Palestinian delegation of the material support that Soviet social institutions have decided to donate to the uprising.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

The Soviet leadership reiterated its position that an international conference on the Middle East should be fully empowered and include all concerned parties, including the PLO on an equal footing. What is new regarding the Soviet position is presenting UN Security Council resolution 242 as a legal basis for convening the conference. The Soviet leadership however, emphasized the necessity of linking this with the Palestinian people's right to self-determination. During the talks,

both sides confirmed their adherence to all UN resolutions concerning the Palestinian and Middle East question. It was clear from the contents of the discussion that the Soviet leadership makes a distinction between merely calling for an international conference on the one hand, and the substance of the issues to be discussed on the other. The Soviet comrades pointed out how the US administration is avoiding giving a clear answer concerning the international conference, and that the



Schultz plan is only an attempt to abort the Palestinian uprising and save the Zionist state from its crisis.

Comrade Abu Ali said that he believed that it is an illusion to depend on resolution 242 as a basis for entering an international conference. He questioned why the world ignores UN resolution 181 (the 1947 Partition Plan), regarding the Palestinian question. He also said that one should not fall into the trap of considering the international conference as an end in

itself rather than a means towards a solution. Abu Ali expressed his conviction that the Soviet leadership is well aware of this distinction, based on their principled support to the Palestinian national rights of return and a Palestinian independent state, led by the PLO, the sole, legitimate representative of our people.

DID GORBACHEV ASK THE PLO TO RECOGNIZE ISRAEL?

Comrade Abu Ali confirmed that neither Gorbachev nor any other Soviet leader who met with the delegation presented the issue of the PLO recognizing the Zionist state. The Soviet comrades confirmed their adherence to the Palestinians' national rights, based on their conviction in the justice and legitimacy of these rights. This is a constant and principled Soviet position.

THE US PLAN

Comrades Gorbachev and Shevardnadze have rejected Schultz's proposals because they offer no solution to the Middle East conflict; the US administration through its various maneuvers in the area is only seeking to protect its own interests and those of 'Israel'. The Soviet leadership thinks that the US proposals are heading towards a deadend. The Palestinians and the Soviet comrades agree on rejecting the Schultz plan. In the Soviet view, the US moves and acknowledgment of the importance of convening an international conference, even while seeking to devoid it of real substance, have come about due to the impact of