

slogans such as: «The way to Palestine is through Arab unity!» This tendency dominated the Arab liberation movement in the fifties and up to the mid-sixties. Its prevalence coincided with the emergence of the Arab national bourgeois and their respective struggles for national independence. The period was characterized by almost total absence of a distinct Palestinian role. Our people were subject to continuous attempts at liquidation by both the Zionist enemy and the Jordanian or other Arab regimes.

B. The second tendency was narrow Palestinian nationalism which upheld the motto, «We by ourselves alone,» to justify a secessionist logic of disengaging from the Arab nationalist dimension and following Arab provincialism, receding to extremely destructive conflicts. This tendency originally grew as a reaction to the policies of liquidation (of the Palestinian national identity). It draws its strength from its militancy at times when the Palestinian identity becomes an accusation in many Arab countries. In addition, it expresses a militant affiliation for which its advocates pay a heavy price under the yoke of occupation and the iron fist. Narrow Palestinian nationalism was nourished by the Arab situation which generates all kinds of hated regionalism, communalism and sectarianism. It was also nourished by the miserable status of the false Arab nationalist propaganda of which remains only hostility to Palestinian nationalism and attempts to liquidate it.

We cannot agree with either of these tendencies. Both have been tested during the last forty years; both proved to be lacking the correct perception of the dialectical relationship between Palestinian and Arab nationalism, as well as the scientific solution to this equation. This deficiency has led to a series of problematic consequences.

While engaged in the struggle for national liberation and independence, we cannot but take into consideration a number of invariables, the most important of which are the following:

1. Palestinian patriotism is essential; the particular Palestinian identity, as now embodied in the PLO, has to be stressed. It is the only way to keep our cause in the proper perspective as a question of a people, self-determination and legitimate rights, not one of territorial borders and refugees. Concern for the Palestinian identity, and protecting it from being liquidated or confiscated, is part of the militant confrontation of the so-called 'Zionist identity'. Our Palestinian character is the antithesis of the Zionist character in Palestine. It is an effective weapon against Judaization on the one hand and Jordanization on the other. Needless to say, such emphasis by no means involves any contradiction with the Arab national identity or with the Arab national dimension of the whole conflict; on the contrary, it complements and consolidates that dimension.

2. Also essential is the Arab national dimension of the Palestinian issue. Without an active Palestinian movement interacting in harmony with its Arab nationalist environment, it is impossible to seriously think of the national liberation struggle or to preserve the achievements of our people and revolution. We do not say this solely on the basis of the Palestinian cause's ties to Arab nationalism. We also say it because of the particularity of our cause, the Palestinian dispersion, the importance of rearguard bases, the Arab national aspect of the struggle against the Zionist enemy, the fact that the Israeli factor has become a direct factor in the strug-

gles of many of the Arab peoples, etc. All such considerations make us accept the interconnection of the Palestinian and Arab national struggles. We are now talking in general terms, because of limited space and other considerations. Yet we do understand that the dialectics between the Palestinian and the Arab national dimensions are much more complex than can be covered in such a brief way.

3. Our concern about the Palestinian nationalism and particularity should be no means push us to regionalism or its most harmful expression, chauvinism. Our concern about the Arab national aspect of the struggle must not drag us to positions of liquidating the Palestinian identity, even if the Arab nationalist movement happens to be of a Nasserist or undoubtedly progressive character.

4. The importance of correctly solving the problematic Palestinian / Arab national equation leads us to look into the relationship of the revolution to the Arab masses and regimes. The prevailing mentality was to call for relations with the Arab regimes instead of the popular masses, most often rendering the latter relations temporary and tactical. The PLO's relations with the Arabs should, therefore, be corrected by rectifying the links with the masses, which must remain the axis of Palestinian-Arab relations.

5. Being an essential part of the international forces of liberation, progress and peace, the Palestinian national movement cannot help but be aligned with the progressive Arab regimes, organizations and forces. This alliance should be determined once and for all, because of the very character of the Palestinian revolution and its status in the ongoing struggle locally, nationally and internationally. It is absolutely impermissible to make use of the deviations of some nationalist or progressive Arab forces to justify cancelling the demarcation line between the progressive and nationalist regimes and forces on one hand, and the reactionary, collaborating ones on the other. The most important question is: Is it permissible to get confused between the two camps? Are the progressives in practice equal to the reactionary forces in practice, concerning the cause of Palestine? Consequently, can we maintain the same level of relations with the two?

6. Our alliance with the camp of progress in the Arab world neither prevents nor contradicts the establishment of broader Palestinian-Arab relations, including with what are called the conservative regimes which are not directly involved in conspiracies against the Palestinian people, their patriotic cause and armed revolution.

Taking these invariables into account, the proper attitude towards the dialectics of Palestinian-Arab relations is to concentrate on the preservation of the particular Palestinian national dimension in close dialectic association with the general Arab national dimension. It means to ally with the camp of progress, essentially represented by the Arab masses, without detaching ourselves from the Arab regimes which are not directly involved in the conspiracies to liquidate the Palestinian cause.

This point of view is based on rejection of all Palestinian seclusionism which tries, under the pretext of the Arab weakness, to spread despair and frustration. It also rejects all kinds of regionalism, communalism and sectarianism which are the expression of the weakness and disarray in the current ►