

It is our duty to increase the support of our masses in the 1948 occupied territories to the uprising, and to develop the subjective factor, in order to actually reach the stage where we can say that they are participating in the uprising. The PLO should shoulder its responsibility towards this part of our people, and raise slogans that insure their support to the PLO, and to the interim of strategic goals of the Palestinian revolution.

What is Europe's role in relation to a Middle East settlement, and how can we work to develop the European position on Palestinian rights?

Positive developments have occurred in the position of Western European and other capitalist countries, such as Japan, in relation to the Palestinian question. There is an obvious difference between their positions and that of the US administration. As was clear at the EEC summit in Madrid, Europe recognizes the PLO as a party to any solution for the Middle East conflict, and that the Palestinian people's right to self-determination is a basis for such a solution, in addition to viewing the international conference as a suitable framework. Some European countries have a distinguished position: Greece, Spain, France and Italy now allow official Palestinian diplomatic representation in their capitals. Of course, credit for all this goes to the intifada.

On the other hand, there is the position of the US administration that began a dialogue with the PLO, but still doesn't recognize it as the Palestinian people's sole legitimate representative. Rather, via the Shamir and Baker plans, the US is trying to find alternatives to the PLO. It is procrastinating about the international conference, viewing this solely as an umbrella for direct negotiations, and doesn't recognize the Palestinian people's right to self-determination.

Although the European position is becoming more independent, it has yet to completely free itself of the US pressure. European countries that had a clear position in Madrid, later succumbed to US pressure at the summit of the seven industrial powers, which did not express recognition of the PLO's role nor the Palestinian right to self-determination. It only mentioned the international conference - which means procrastination of this issue.

I don't want to belittle Europe's role. Due to the changes that are occurring in the international balance of power, Europe could play a more positive role. Western Europe is now considered one of the main poles in the world, in addition to the Soviet Union, US, Japan, etc. It cannot be ignored when it comes to reaching a settlement in the Middle East. The idea of the international conference involves the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council, reflecting Europe's importance. In addition, French President Mitterand has called for a European-Arab dialogue, in a situation where it has become even clearer that the US is insisting on direct negotiations, in view of the Shamir and Mubarak plans. Clearly, Europe is working to reassert its role in relation to a settlement.

Thus, we feel it is necessary to increase mutual understanding with Europe. The PLO should struggle to strengthen the European position. I welcomed Mitterand's initiative and announced that the PFLP would participate in a European-Arab dialogue

via a PLO delegation. Efforts should moreover be directed towards European public opinion. This could have significant influence on the position of Western European countries. The British Labor Party, for example, recognizes the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, as well as the international conference and the Palestinian right to an independent state. This is very significant, particularly if this party were to gain a majority in the next British government.

There are two points of view about how to bridge the gap between declaring the Palestinian state, and actually realizing it. How do you evaluate the policies of the PLO concerning the means to achieve the state?

From the first months of the uprising, the PFLP noted that there were two different political views and tactics. I personally experienced this at the PNC's 19th session. The right-wing in the PLO leadership was not counting on the uprising's continuation; they were worried it would stop before any political victories were achieved. This trend is overly hasty and willing to give gratuitous concession, due to the lack of faith in the uprising. Its advocates have fallen into the trap of illusions and exaggerating the effect of the uprising on the Zionist entity and Israeli public opinion. Experience has proven otherwise: after two years, the Israeli position is still completely hostile to the Palestinians' aspirations and legitimate rights. Peres is equivalent to Shamir, and Rabin is comparable to Sharon.

The advocates of this trend are also betting on international detente as an additional factor which increases the possibility of a solution for the Palestinian question. They overestimate the effect of detente on our area. They think that as soon as President Bush phones Shamir, Israel would change its position, bearing in mind the historical example of how former US President Eisenhower called Ben Gurion, ordering an Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in 1956. They failed to notice the development of US-Israeli relations over these past thirty (30) years. The time is past when Israel complied to Washington's orders. Israel is no longer just a follower of the US - It has become a junior partner.

The other trend, led by the PFLP, bases its struggle on the fact that the intifada has reached the point of no return. Despite the repression, it will not stop short of achieving freedom and independence, and our people's rights to repatriation, self-determination and an independent state. This position is based on a serious evaluation of the objective and subjective conditions that led to the outbreak of the uprising. As long as these conditions persist, the uprising will continue, regardless of the costs.

The PFLP's view is also based on knowledge of the nature of the Zionist enemy as being colonialist and expansionist, based on a reactionary interpretation of the Torah. The Zionist entity is heading towards right-wing extremism. The Israeli religious parties are on the ascent, and they are not willing to withdraw from one square meter of Palestinian land. Shamir has threatened to dissolve the government coalition, and warned of civil war, if the Labor Party continues discussing withdrawal