

in forming a government because there are six Arab members of the Knesset who wanted to vote for him, but all the extreme right-wing parties refused to vote for him if he accepted the support of the Arab members. So what does this mean? You can go to the Knesset if you recognize that Israel is a state for the Jewish people, and you are an outsider. What, then, is the purpose of going to the Knesset? There is no strong democratic non-Zionist party with whom we could possibly form a coalition to establish a new, progressive regime in Israel. That is impossible now. All of them, excepting the Arab members, are Zionists and can form a coalition against us. So, our position in the Knesset is not important. After what happened with the Arab Knesset members wanting to support Peres and the right wing refusing this, a conference was held in Nazareth in which the Arab Knesset members were shouting, after 42 years: This is outrageous! It's political transfer for the Arabs! We replied: Good morning! We've been saying this for 15 years!

From the Palestinian perspective, we think *Abna Al Balad* represents a new thing inside the green line. We represent the strategic solution to the Palestinian question for the Arabs and Jews in Palestine. We are building a national organization for Jews and Arabs to implement this strategic solution, because the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip only solves the problem of the Palestinians in those areas, who make up just 40 percent of all the Palestinian people. What about the refugees?

What are the other main points of *Abna Al Balad*'s program?

The other thing that is important for us is that if we are struggling for national liberation, we also want democracy. We are not against Jews. We are suggesting a democratic secular state for the Arabs and Jews in Palestine. Also, we are socialist. We have been speaking about Marxism-Leninism for the last ten years, which is another point some of the founders of *Abna Al Balad* who left the organization didn't agree with. After they left, we began to build a new *Abna Al Balad* and have been continuing to do so for the past five years.

What kind of activities do you organize?

Our activities are organized to respond to the objective situation we live in. Therefore, our efforts are concentrated on popular political struggle. We organize strikes and demonstrations. We push for all forces to engage in more militant political struggle than the Communist Party and others have been

organizing. The important thing is the positions we have been representing through unified action. For example, on Land Day the supporters of *Abna Al Balad* raised the Palestinian flag. This means a lot; this is smashing all the other programs that talk about two nations and two states. This is the deep importance of *Abna Al Balad*. We need organizations like *Abna Al Balad* to represent this position, to say to everybody - to the PLO leadership and to the Israelis - that we're an integral part of the Palestinian problem. And without solving *all* the Palestinian problem, there will not be real peace. Peace means a just peace in all Palestine. You won't find another progressive program like *Abna Al Balad*'s inside the green line. During the past few years, all the anti-Zionist Jewish groups have been coordinating with us. This is possible because *Abna Al Balad* is not an Arab nationalist organization; it is for Jews and Arabs alike.

Which anti-Zionist organizations are coordinating with you?

The Trotskyists, for example. All the persons that were in the *Tariq Al Sharara* organization, Matzpen-Tel Aviv. Matzpen-Jerusalem (all three are leftist Israeli organizations) and anti-Zionist individuals. Uri Davis, for example, is not a Marxist but he and some persons like him also coordinate with *Abna Al Balad*. There is no other organization to struggle with them. The Jews in the Communist Party are not anti-Zionist. Now we are having coordinating meetings between *Abna Al Balad* and Matzpen Trotskyists to establish a secular democratic front. We will publish a magazine in Arabic and Hebrew to raise this issue and let people know that there is a strategic alternative.

How did the masses respond to *Abna Al Balad* when it was formed, and how has this response changed over the years?

At the beginning, the response was similar to that to the Palestinian revolution. The masses looked to us as representing the PLO, all the PLO. But many people are afraid to join *Abna Al Balad* because the authorities have jailed our members. About forty active comrades, including myself, were under house arrest for four years without trial. They have prevented us from working or fired us, and have kept us from entering university. We've been suffering and struggling under very difficult circumstances. Other forces besides the authorities are against us as well, like our parents.

Heads of the Arab local councils at Land Day meeting

