

to the 1982 Israeli invasion. I think that the Palestinian revolution will face this same situation in any of the countries surrounding Palestine, unless we can rely on genuinely national democratic regimes that will say to 'Israel': 'The Palestinians have every right to struggle against you, and we have every right to support them. We will not curtail them for the sake of Zionism'. Thus, the Palestinian revolution should have very close relations with the masses and nationalist forces in Jordan, Syria, Egypt and Lebanon. Only in this way can we continue our struggle.

Third: Today, it is clearer than ever that Zionism aims not only at Palestine; it is aiming to establish a Zionist empire that would include all of Palestine, the Golan Heights, South Lebanon. These areas would be within the borders of 'Greater Israel'. In addition to its territorial ambitions, 'Israel' wants to be an imperialist force in the whole Middle East. Therefore, any Arab people seeking true independence must fight these expansionist and aggressive aims. What is happening in Lebanon is the prime example of this.

If this point can be made very clear to the masses through active propaganda and organizational work, things will change in the years to come. 'Israel' will not retain its present position. We must clarify to the Lebanese people that 'Israel' has specific interests in occupying the South and dominating all of Lebanon. We must convince the Jordanian people that it is impossible to have dignity or freedom alongside the presence of Zionism and 'Israel'. We must work to have the Egyptian people see things as they are; we must ask them if they have real freedom and dignity. We must make it clear to all the Arab people that 'Israel' is a tool in the hands of imperialism, ready to attack anyone that resists imperialism. If these things were apparent to all, there would not be a solely Palestinian revolution, which will fail totally. Instead, there would be a Palestinian-Arab revolution against Zionism and imperialism. This is the correct path.

Objectively, things are moving in this direction. Today it is clear to the Lebanese people that 'Israel' is not occupying the South to safeguard its borders from Palestinian guerrillas. The Lebanese are now fighting 'Israel' directly. This must take place in all the surrounding countries, whereby the aggressive Israeli policies would be confronted by the millions of the Arab masses. Then 'Israel' would have no way to escape.

We will not be able to liberate one inch of Palestine until we have secured a base from which to fight, in an Arab country bordering Palestine. This joint Palestinian-Arab struggle is the key to liberating Palestine. It is equally in the interests of the Arab masses, for it is the only path to justice and genuine peace in this part of the world.

Jewish-Palestinian struggle vs. Zionism

I would like to go beyond the question to mention another important force that we must deal with when speaking of how to liberate Palestine. This is the Jews themselves, the democratic Jews, those Jews who are suffering the effects of Zionism. To be honest, we have not done very well on this point. If we knew how to work, this could be a very important weapon in the hands of the progressive forces in this region. In fact, there are many Jews who are suffering, but the problem is that their leaders were successful in convincing them that the main contradiction is between the forces of Arab national liberation and all the Jews in 'Israel'. If we make it clear to Palestinians and Jews that the real enemy is Zionism, Arab reaction and imperialism, the struggle to liberate Palestine would gain a new dimension. Let us join forces and fight for peace, democracy, freedom and self-determination, for the Palestinians, for everybody. This would be the path for defeating Zionism and its plans.

The correctness of the stand taken by the PFLP and DFLP, as seen especially in the Program for Unity and Democratic Reform in the PLO, was not enough to prevent the inter-Palestinian battle in Tripoli. How will we now work to resolve the Palestinian crisis?

We admit that when the sound of canons rose, the voice of our program was almost inaudible. However, we do not believe that the roar of canons will be the loudest indefinitely. Sooner or later, even the quarreling parties will come to the conclusion that internal fighting does drastic damage to the revolution. Moreover, the weight of our people's opinion, and that of our Arab and international allies, will bring the fighting to a stop. In this case, we can really look into the reasons for this crisis. Knowing the reasons, we can struggle politically for the reforms needed in our revolution, especially since the departure from Beirut.

The PFLP-DFLP program presented a clear analysis of this crisis, its roots and manifestations, and the methods of treatment: the needed political and organizational corrections. However, the question which we now face is whether or not it is a matter of a program. We cannot say that we did our duty by presenting this program and the matter is finished. Some might think that since the fighting has stopped, everything is O.K. This is not the case for us. When the fighting stops, the political struggle must be escalated. Not only we, but our people in general, have come to the conclusion that things cannot continue as they were before we left Beirut. There should be amendments in the political and organizational line, in every field.

Of course, we presented this program because we think it is correct, but we do not regard it as sacred or immune to changes. Let all the Palestinian organizations and people take part in discussing this program. We are ready to listen to all points of view.

The task facing us now is how to apply a mechanism to activate this program, so that it can be implemented. After we and the DFLP agreed on the program, we sent a copy to all Palestinian organizations with a message demanding their opinion. So far, two organizations, the Palestinian Communist Party and the Palestinian Liberation Front, have responded, saying that in general, not in every point, they regard the program as a good basis for unity in the PLO. We are still waiting for an answer and resulting discussion with all organizations, without exception. Yasir Arafat and Abu Jihad gave a general answer, saying that this program could be acceptable. Frankly speaking, we will not accept such answers; we have a long experience with such answers. We will ask Fatah's Central Committee what they really mean: Do they accept this point and that? Are they ready to implement each point? On the political level, the program is very clear: The revolution must fight imperialism, Zionism, reactionary forces. They must say if they really accept this.



Palestinians rally at Bir Zeit, Nov. 7th, to condemn the fighting around Tripoli.