

Editorial

Efforts have escalated to resolve the crisis in the PLO, restoring its unity and active role. The recent series of inter-Palestinian talks were primarily initiated by the PFLP, DFLP, the Palestinian Communist Party and Palestinian Liberation Front. On the basis of their agreement in late March, the four organizations, now known as the Democratic Alliance, opened talks with Fatah's Central Committee, as well as with the National Alliance, which is composed of PFLP-General Command, Saiqa, Popular Struggle Front and the Fatah opposition. The aim was combatting right-wing deviation in a correct manner that will restore the PLO's unity and reinforce its anti-imperialist line. Meanwhile, efforts continue to reconcile Fatah's Central Committee and Syria, for this would greatly facilitate the PLO's reunification and return to the frontlines of the struggle.

Agreement in Aden

On June 28th, a statement was issued by the Palestinian organizations that had been meeting in Aden for five days. This was the fourth round of the talks between the Fatah Central Committee and the Democratic Alliance, which started in April. These talks have aimed at the reunification of the PLO on a clear national, anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist political platform and on the basis of the formation of a collective leadership, committed to safeguarding the political platform.

The statement announced that agreement had been reached among the five organizations on a political and organizational program that will serve as a basis for an overall Palestinian national dialogue. The statement suggests that this dialogue start immediately and that it be led by the PNC's Secretariat, the PLO Executive Committee and the leaders of all the Palestinian organizations. Comprehensive national agreement should enable the convening of the PNC.

The June 28th statement is of great importance. It announced to the Palestinian people and to Arab national and progressive international forces, the start of a solution to the crisis of the PLO. This, however, does not mean an automatic end to the crisis, for there are still many questions to be resolved. The most important of these is succeeding in reaching an agreement with the National Alliance, for these organizations have waged a persistent struggle against right-wing deviation.

Damascus talks

Just as important as agreeing on a common platform with Fatah's Central Committee is joining forces with the National

Alliance, which shares the Democratic Alliance's general evaluation of the current political situation and opposition to right-wing deviation. Meetings between the National Alliance and the Democratic Alliance commenced in Damascus on June 19th, presided over by PNC President Khalid Fahoum and attended by a number of PLO Executive Committee members. A second round was held on June 26th, and these talks are scheduled to continue. Prospects for a positive outcome are enhanced by the fact that the National Alliance recognizes the necessity of reforming and unifying the PLO *within* the Democratic Alliance's proposed broad national front to fight deviation within the PLO, and the National Alliance's proposed national salvation front to the same end.

By restoring the nationalist basis for unity, the Aden agreement should encourage all parties to reach a common denominator for jointly rebuilding the PLO's unity. An agreement with the National Alliance should complement the Aden agreement by strengthening the cooperation between those forces who will fight any deviation from the national program through the formation of a broad national front in the PLO.

Factors pushing for unity on the national line

Progress in the recent talks has been possible due to a set of objective and subjective factors. For one no serious Palestinian national force could overlook the positive alternative forwarded by the Democratic Alliance, which has won broad mass support for having shown consistent concern for Palestinian unity and advancing the popular struggle. Nor could anyone overlook the position of our people against deviation or abandonment of the PLO's adopted goals. In the occupied homeland and among Palestinians in Jordan, there is adamant opposition to any attempt to mandate King Hussein or anyone else to speak on their behalf. Many in the occupied territories, including people affiliated with Fatah, have joined in activities supporting the Democratic Alliance's initiative, based on sincere desire to find a solution to the crisis. There is also heightened awareness among all forces about the dangers of trying to resolve the conflict by other than democratic means, and about the futility of setting of an alternative to the PLO.

In a broader perspective, the assumptions upon which the right-wing based their post-Beirut policy have proven untenable. Relations with the Jordanian and Egyptian regimes were deliberate steps towards dealing with the imperialist solutions, based on the premise that the entire area had irretrievably fallen under US domination. Yet the nationalist victories in Lebanon shattered this premise and opened new horizons before