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PFLP
18th Anniversary

*All Efforts
to Restore the PLO
to the National Line*



Democratic Palestine is an English language magazine published by the PFLP with the following aims:

- conveying the political line of the PFLP and other progressive Palestinian and Arab forces;
- providing current information and analysis pertinent to the Palestinian liberation struggle, as well as developments on the Arab and international levels;
- serving as forum for building relations of mutual solidarity between the Palestinian revolution and progressive organizations, parties, national liberation movements and countries around the world.

You can support these aims by subscribing to *Democratic Palestine*. Furthermore, we hope that you will encourage friends and comrades to read and subscribe to *Democratic Palestine*. We also urge you to send us comments, criticisms and proposals concerning the magazine's contents.

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The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine is a Marxist-Leninist organization and an integral component of the Palestine Liberation Organization. A primary motive for establishing the PFLP was to inject a clear class perspective in the Palestinian national liberation struggle. Experience shows that the most oppressed classes-the workers, peasants, sectors of the petit bourgeoisie, the camp Palestinians-are those most in contradiction with imperialism, Zionism and Arab reaction. It is they who carve history with determination that can persevere in a protracted war against the enemy alliance.

The PFLP is deeply committed to the unity and independent, national decision-making of the Palestinian people and their sole legitimate representative, the PLO. To this end, we work for strengthening the role of the Palestinian left, thereby accentuating the PLO's anti-imperialist line in common struggle with the Arab national liberation movement.

The process of liberating Palestine relies on radical, national democratic change or development in one or more of the surrounding Arab countries. This will provide the PLO with a strong base for liberating Palestine. Thus the struggle for a democratic Palestine is linked to the creation of a united, democratic, and ultimately socialist, Arab society. This will provide the objective basis for eradicating the poverty, exploitation, oppression and the problem of minorities, from which the people of the area suffer.

As a cornerstone in this process, the establishment of a democratic, secular state in Palestine will provide a democratic solution for the Jewish question in this area, while simultaneously restoring the national rights of the Palestinian people. After liberation, Jews in Palestine, like all citizens, will enjoy equal rights and duties. The decision of the PLO to establish an independent Palestinian state on any liberated part of the national soil is a step in this direction. It is the sincere hope of all Palestinian revolutionaries that more and more Israelis will recognize that they, too, have become victims of Zionism's racism, expansionism, exploitation and militarism, and will join us in the struggle for a democratic Palestine.

Handicraft Exhibition

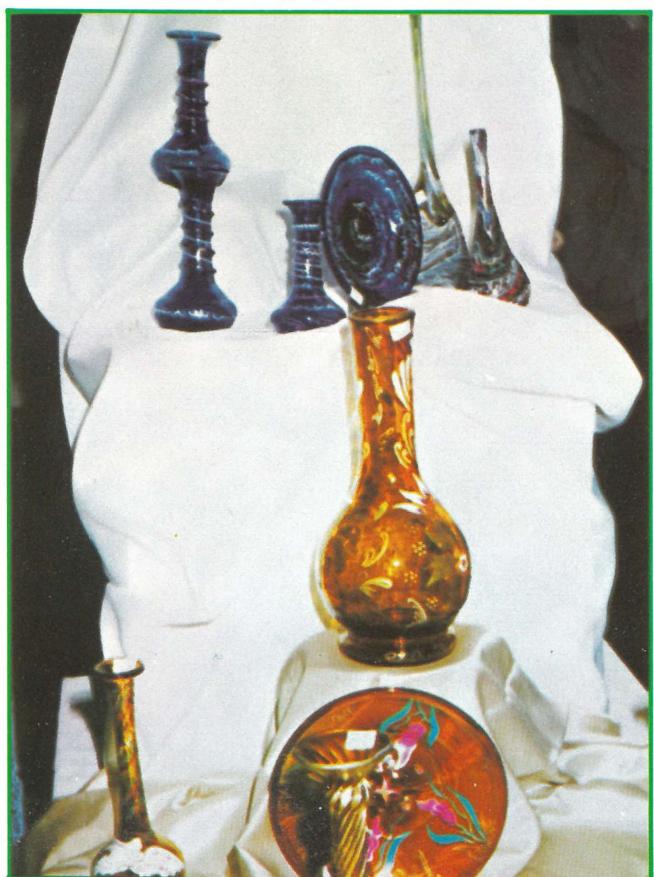


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Editor's Note: Special Issue

On the occasion of the PFLP's 18th anniversary, we publish a special issue of «Democratic Palestine». The theme of this issue is the PFLP itself in terms of political line, practice and experience in various fields of struggle, currently and historically. Due to the extensiveness of this topic, we have covered current events only briefly, except for developments in occupied Palestine. We hope you bear with us in this lack which we plan to make up in the forthcoming issues of «Democratic Palestine» by publishing more frequently. On the other hand, we hope you will find this issue useful in further clarifying what the PFLP stands for.

Perhaps you have comrades or friends who might be interested in this special issue as a form of introduction to the PFLP and «Democratic Palestine», or further clarification of our political line. If so, write for one or more free sample copies to be distributed to interested persons or organizations. We extend this offer of free extra copies to all those who have paid their subscription fee or who have an agreed exchange arrangement with us. If you have yet to pay your subscription, do so immediately and at the same time request an extra copy if you wish. Though you are receiving «Democratic Palestine» from Cyprus, our work and mailing address remains: Box 12144, Damascus, Syria.

PFLP Politbureau Statement

Press Release December 4, 1985

The PFLP Politbureau held an extraordinary session on November 30th and December 1st. After discussing the current developments, the Politbureau focused on the following important issues:

1. The imperialist-Zionist-reactionary aggression aims at eradicating the PLO by converting it into a capitulationist organization. The most serious of the dangers is the embodiment of Peres' plan, the project of settlement with Jordan, through the appointment of Thafer al Masri in place of the legitimate mayor of Nablus, Bassam Shakaa.

2. The Arab reactionary circles that are linked with Washington, are paving the way for direct negotiations with the Zionist enemy.

3. Arafat's Cairo announcement, which contained the response to the enemy's demand (that the PLO relinquish armed struggle), is an indication of

the extent of the PLO leadership's deviation.

4. The aim of the Zionist terrorist activities is to pave the way for imposing substitute leaderships who collaborate with the occupation authorities and follow the Jordanian regime.

5. The PFLP Politbureau stressed that the Lebanese crisis must be solved on the basis of the national democratic program, and also emphasized the necessity of implementing the Damascus agreement which ended the camp war.

6. With regard to the Arab summit called for by Saudi Arabia, the Politbureau stressed the PFLP's position that Arab solidarity should be regulated on a clear basis opposed to the imperialist-Zionist projects. The Politbureau rejects the call to return the Egyptian regime to the Arab ranks. It calls on Democratic Yemen, Libya, Algeria and Syria to overcome all obstacles to reviving the Steadfastness and Confrontation Front.

7. The Politbureau highly estimates

the Soviet Union's sound policy for confronting Washington's escalation of tension. It highly estimates the Soviet initiative to find a just solution for the Middle East crisis on the basis of restoring the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

8. The Politbureau emphasized the necessity of uniting the Palestinian nationalist ranks to confront the deviating trend. It underscored the importance of hastening the convening of a Palestinian people's conference to cancel the Amman accord and pave the way for restoring the PLO to the nationalist line.

The Politbureau expressed its high estimation of the Salvation Front's press release of November 7th, calling for cooperation between all Palestinian organizations opposed to the Amman accord. The Politbureau views the communique of the DFLP and the Palestinian Communist Party as a meaningful call for meetings which aim at Palestinian national unity opposed to capitulationist trends.

Editorial

Summing Up the Year 1985

By the time this issue of *Democratic Palestine* reaches you, the year 1985 will be over. What has happened to the Palestinian revolution and the PLO during this year can only be described as serious, if not tragic. The year 1985 witnessed the signing of the Amman accord between King Hussein of Jordan and Yasir Arafat, which marked a turning point in the history of the PLO and the Palestinian revolution, for the following reasons:

One: Arafat's leadership thereby unilaterally took a unique, illegitimate step allowing the Jordanian regime to share in the representation of the Palestinian people. The PLO earned the right of sole, legitimate representation through our people's sacrifices. The deviating leadership has no right to compromise this.

Two: Due to the above, the PLO and the Palestinian revolution, the vanguard of the Arab forces fighting imperialism and Zionism, has concretely split into two trends. The trend of Arafat and his followers is groveling for any kind of solution to the Palestinian cause, even an imperialist solution, and ready to pay any price.

The other trend consists of the eight Palestinian organizations that reject Arafat's line and the Amman accord, and believe that armed struggle against the enemy is the most effective means for the Palestinian masses to achieve their aims.

Three: Arafat's leadership, by signing the Amman accord, has linked itself to the unholy alliance of Arab reaction. This alliance is exerting all efforts to harmonize with imperialism's interests. In order to be accepted by imperialism, this reactionary Arab alliance is trying its best to meet the US conditions.

Four: By entering the Arab reactionary alliance (Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Morocco and Saudi Arabia), Arafat's trend has positioned itself in antagonism to the interests of the Arab masses, and to progressive forces on the regional and international levels, including the socialist countries.

The Amman accord, which split the PLO, has only served the foes of our people, who are trying to capitalize on the difficulties of the Palestinian situation. The Zionist enemy, by

implementing the iron fist policy, is trying to crush the resistance of the Palestinian masses against the occupation. The Zionist enemy has made a secret agreement with Hussein for joint Israeli-Jordanian administration of the West Bank. Appointing Thafer al Masri as mayor of Nablus was a step in that direction.

The Jordanian and Egyptian regimes are pressuring Arafat to accept UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, and to recognize 'Israel', in order to legitimize their own recognition and concessions to the Zionist enemy.

Despite Arafat's capitulationist steps, he was treated in the most humiliating manner: The Israelis launched an air strike on the PLO's headquarters in Tunis. British imperialism cancelled the scheduled meeting with the joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation. The Jordanian regime blamed the Palestinian delegates for the cancellation.

In Lebanon, sectarian forces tried to benefit from the split in the PLO, launching a fierce attack against the Palestinian camps in an effort to disarm the Palestinians.

Revolutionary accomplishments

On the other hand, the year 1985 has witnessed positive developments in the Palestinian struggle:

1. There was a massive escalation of armed struggle against the Zionist occupation. This shows that our people will not give up armed resistance until their rights are fulfilled. It also means that Arafat's policies do not represent the aspirations of the masses. The escalation of military struggle was so effective that the Israeli Defense Minister and other officials declared that the situation has become dangerous, because the Palestinians under occupation have taken the initiative in launching military operations.

King Hussein also sensed what this escalation meant for his schemes against the Palestinian cause. He used this as a card in urging the Israelis to reach an agreement with him, in order to abort this resistance before it expanded to an uncontrollable level.

2. The formation of the Palestine National Salvation Front (PNSF) in March was a political response to the right-wing's deviation. The PNSF is intended to achieve the following ends: (a) restoring the PLO to the national line; (b) preserving the PLO's position in the anti-imperialist, anti-Zionist trench; (c) forming a unified national front to represent the Palestinian people until the PLO is restored to the national line.

3. The PNSF recently called on the DFLP and the Palestinian Communist Party to join in a united front to face the right's moves and prevent it from representing the Palestinian people in any conference that discusses the Palestinian question. This call was positively received.

All Palestinian nationalist forces must work to achieve the following tasks on the Palestinian level: (1) blocking US imperialist plans to abort the Palestinian cause; (2) escalating armed struggle against the Israeli occupation of Palestine and other Arab land; (3) mobilizing all Palestinian nationalist organizations, trade unions, associations and personalities for the purpose of abrogating the Amman accord; (4) defeating the Israeli and Jordanian plans in the occupied territories; (5) preserving Palestinian armed struggle in Lebanon.

Graphic by Imad Abdel Wahab, exhibited at Soviet Cultural Center.



Interview with Comrade Habash

In anticipation of the PFLP's 18th anniversary, comrade George Habash, General Secretary, made an extensive interview with «Al Hadaf» magazine. Below we include some of the most important questions.

How much has been achieved in terms of transforming from a revolutionary democratic organization into a Marxist-Leninist party?

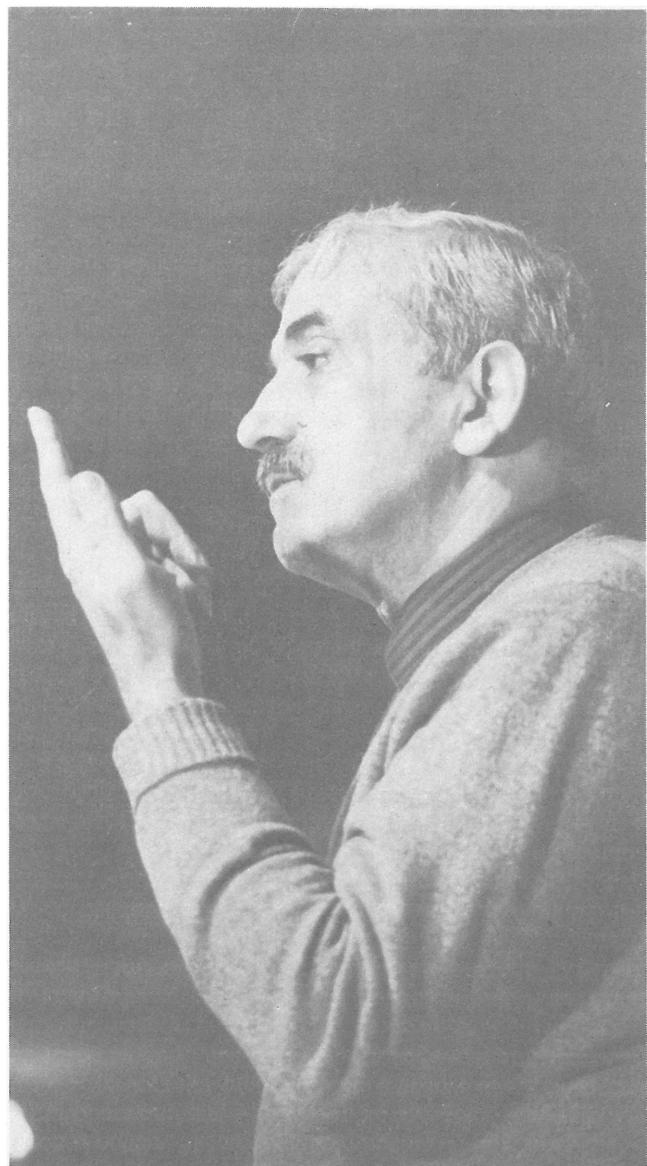
First, allow me to clarify that the PFLP is not the only front that has put forward the slogan of transformation. Transformation from revolutionary democratic positions to that of scientific socialism has become an international phenomenon. Transformation is governed by the following objective and subjective conditions, without which it would be impossible:

First: The transition of capitalism to its highest stage, imperialism, and its dominance on the international level, with all the consequences this entails. The most important consequence, in this respect, is the failure of the local bourgeoisie in the countries where capitalist growth has been retarded, to accomplish the aims of the national democratic revolution. This transfers the task to the revolutionary classes, led by the working class party and ideology.

Second: The victory of the great, socialist October Revolution, and the rise of the Soviet Union as a force supportive to national liberation movements in the backward countries. Speaking of transformation makes us remember Lenin's greatness and clear vision. He was the first to give sufficient attention to the liberation movement of the people of the East. Lenin considered this movement as a main contributor to the world revolutionary movement, and valued its role in the struggle against imperialism and reaction. Lenin even predicted that the national liberation struggle of the oppressed peoples would assume a socialist perspective. He creatively developed the slogan «Workers of all countries, unite» into «Workers of all countries and oppressed peoples, unite.» The experience of revolutions in the backward countries, especially where a revolutionary democratic movement transformed into a communist workers' movement, proves that this process can only occur in the era of transition to socialism, as begun by the October Revolution.

Third: The nature of the petit bourgeoisie as a class which vacillates between capital and wage labor. The petit bourgeoisie aspires to ownership and the position of the bourgeoisie. On the other hand, part of the petit bourgeoisie shares the conditions of the masses of the workers and poor peasants. This particularity is the objective basis of the transformation process. There is no strategic perspective for an independent movement of the petit bourgeoisie. Rather, the petit bourgeoisie has two options: either to follow the bourgeoisie or to transform to the position of the working class, if subjective conditions permit this.

Fourth: The subjective factor needed for complete transformation. Objective conditions, without the subjective factor, cannot go into effect. Also, the subjective factor, without the objective conditions, will fall short. The objective factors needed for the transformation process have existed for many years on the international level. What is needed for the completion of this process is the subjective factor, i.e., the vanguard



organization. If this vanguard does not exist from the beginning, there must be elements whose experience leads them to feel that Marxism-Leninism is the only scientific theory which provides answers to the challenges and obstacles facing the revolution. These elements would adopt Marxist-Leninist theory and begin a persistent struggle to complete the transformation process.

These are the subjective and objective conditions. They are universal, not only for this or that country. These factors have special qualities. They may take different forms, depending on the conditions, the level of social development, and the nature of the revolutionary process in the specific country. ▶

From this in particular, the concept of transformation gains its universality.

As for the progress the PFLP has made in the transformation process, this is a matter for the 5th National Congress, for which we have begun preparations. I personally do not rule out the possibility that the next congress will judge that we have completed the transformation process, or are on the verge of completion. In the 4th National Congress, we said we had made great and essential progress in this direction. Yet we did not dare say that we were on the verge of completion, despite great accomplishments on the political and organizational levels. We stressed the necessity of completing the transformation in the field of ideology and the social structure of our party.

Today we give overwhelming attention to realizing the dialectical link between all aspects of the party. Since transformation is a dialectical process, one cannot separate one element from another. Nonetheless, we sometimes give central attention to a particular matter when we feel it is the weakest link. This occurred in the late seventies when we focused on the organizational issue. We succeeded in building the internal life of the party on a Leninist basis. We deepened the foundation of democratic centralism in the party life. Currently we are focusing on ideological transformation. We are applying programs for this, ranging from theoretical courses, educational programs and increasing the members' concern for the educational field. I announce no secret when I say that over two-thirds of our leaders have completed the Marxist-Leninist requirements in the cadre schools of the socialist countries, as have a large number of party cadres.

Transformation in the social structure of the party is a constant item on our agenda, and we evaluate the results every year. There is noticeable progress in this direction. Thus, we are more convinced that we are headed in the right direction with scientific steps and thorough programs.

Concerning the obstacles facing the PFLP's complete transformation into a Marxist-Leninist party: Based on my own experience in the PFLP, from its foundation until now, I can assure you that there are no real obstacles. We have passed this stage of whether or not transformation is possible. Our choice has become clear, and our identity is well defined. What we need today is more time and efforts to apply our programs and plans, so that our cadres and leadership can finish the distance remaining in this process.

There are still many obstacles to convening a people's conference for restoring the PLO to the national line. What is the next step?

Allow me to take the chance to correct any wrong interpretations of our call for a people's conference. We see this as a step towards returning the PLO to the national line after cancellation of the Amman accord and all its consequences. The idea of a people's conference is a step forward, not the end of the road, for returning the PLO to the national line and besieging the deviationist trend. The dominating leadership of the PLO has pursued a deviationist policy as preparation for entering a unilateral solution. This leadership has sought to meet Richard Murphy as a prelude to direct negotiations with the Zionist enemy. Consequently, it was a must to say that this policy does not represent the Palestinian people in any way. Rather, it is a bold departure from the decisions of Palestinian national consensus taken in the legitimate sessions of the PNC. After these dangerous possibilities, there was a need for a practical step that would lead to other steps in the confrontation process. The

people's conference was planned in order to produce a forum that would follow up the eventualities facing the Palestinian struggle, and take the required position, especially if meetings with the US began, and more particularly, if direct negotiations began with the Zionist enemy.

For this reason, we are still working for the convening of a Palestinian people's conference. It is a weapon in our hands, that must not be abandoned or underestimated. Objectively speaking, we need a forum for assembling all the Palestinian nationalist factions, mass organizations and personalities. We firmly believe that future political developments will reassert the need for such a conference.

Some may think that the PNC is the appropriate place to judge the official policy of the PLO, and to try those responsible for it; on this basis, they have reservations about the people's conference. However, it is known that the structure of the PNC does not reflect the balance of forces in the Palestinian arena; it is dominated by rightist elements supporting the deviating trend. Thus, we do not think it is adequate for putting the deviationist policy on trial and determining that it does not represent our people and nationalist forces. Therefore, we call for convening a people's conference.

There are several obstacles to convening this conference. The most important concerns the aim of this conference, because some factions think it should declare the creation of a new PLO, or that the delegates will announce themselves as the PLO. In either case, the result would be the same - consecration of the final split in the PLO. On the other hand, there are factions who fear that this conference might become the final split, consecrating the existence of more than one PLO.

We reject the divisive choice, and adhere to the PLO as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Thus, we see no reason to fear the consecration of the split. We are convinced that convening a people's conference, in accordance with the political rules that I have indicated, would not lead to this.

Why do we fear division, and exert all efforts to avoid its consecration? This question leads us to look into the nature of the PLO and the reasons why we strive to keep it united. We agree with the definition of the PLO as the front for encompassing all national forces and influential persons, as stated in a PNC resolution. We recognize it as the Palestinian entity and the symbol of our people's national identity. In addition, we see the importance of the recognition it has on the Arab official and mass level, and internationally, as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, in accordance with its national political program. The PLO has observer status in the UN, and is recognized by the General Assembly as the representative of our people. The PLO is a full member of the non-aligned movement and the Islamic Conference. Even though Palestine is not an African country, the PLO is an honorary member of the OAU, in addition to other international organizations. The PLO has full diplomatic status in all the socialist countries and a number of friendly countries.

We realize that some Arab and foreign countries recognize the PLO only hesitantly or under pressure. They are waiting for the chance to back out of this. I don't think they will find a better chance or excuse to do so than if the PLO is split into two organizations. Then they would back out of their recognition which was imposed by the Palestinian national uprising from the mid-seventies until the 1982 invasion. Our fear of division and its destructive consequences forces us to be patient in treating this crisis.

This is the substance of the problem concerning the

people's conference. Once the main problem concerning the aim has been overcome, the other problems, such as the form or location, will not present obstacles.

In the meantime, the obstacles to convening the people's conference have revealed the difficulties stemming from the different political thinking of the forces that are expected to constitute the revolutionary alternative to the deviating bourgeois leadership. The disagreements between these forces, on matters of this type, points to the depth of the difficulties involved. The dialogue that followed the proposal of the conference showed the extent of the problems blocking its convention. Still, I would like to assure that these obstacles will not alter our adherence to the idea. We will continue struggling for such a conference, because we feel it is needed, especially if we are faced with more deviating steps. To make it easier to overcome these obstacles, we must accomplish an immediate task: Gathering all the national and democratic forces and independent figures on the basis of a clear political program for confronting deviation and returning the PLO to the national line as spelled out in legitimate PNC sessions. If such agreement is reached, it would form the main prerequisite for convening a successful people's conference.

Many initiatives have been proposed for solving the PLO's crisis. What is your opinion about them?

To us, it is understandable that there is such a variety of opinions about how to solve the crisis. The PLO is the significant achievement of our people over 20 years of struggle and sacrifice; it is dear to our hearts and minds; we would sincerely like to extricate it from the crisis. The ideas for this vary in accordance with the ideological and class origins of the forces involved in the Palestinian national liberation movement, just as they do on positions, alliances and actions.

I will not go into details about all the initiatives that have been proposed, but generally, they fall into two main categories: First is the idealistic view that thinks that comprehensive dialogue, extensive meetings and calls for unification can solve the crisis, restoring national unity in the framework of the PLO. This view is only supported by moral arguments. We will not be able, in this way, to root out the causes for the disruption of national unity, most important the Amman accord.

The second view is a scientific one that sees that the bourgeoisie has deviated and is following a policy dictated by its own nature and interests. Accordingly, national unity can only be achieved by a long process of struggle that would block the US solution in practice, and force the deviating leadership to retreat from its position. Then, comprehensive national unity could be established on a strong base. In the light of this evaluation, it is clear that we support any initiative that seriously aims at cancelling the Amman accord, restoring the PLO to the national line, and mobilizing the broadest forces to make the needed changes in the PLO's structure.

Since its formation, the PNSF has not progressed beyond agreeing on a political program and enacting some coordinated steps. In this light, what is your evaluation of the PNSF?

To start with, I would like to draw attention to the difficulties encountered in front work. How we evaluate front work usually differs radically from how we evaluate party issues, especially concerning how to deal with issues of difference and how they are expressed. A front framework means that there are issues

agreed upon, while other issues constitute points of difference. There must thus be a common ground guaranteeing a formula for joint action, with each faction reserving the right to express its views on points of difference without impairing the fundamentals of front work.

Front work is even more complex for a national liberation movement which lacks a deep understanding of the rules for front work, and has not produced a successful vanguard experience in this field. This is especially true at dangerous turning points like that experience by the Palestinian revolution today. Although Palestinian experience in front work has not been comprehensively evaluated during the past twenty years, we can say that we have encountered many obstacles which seriously hampered or paralyzed such work. The main reason for this is the hegemonic and individualistic policy of the Palestinian bourgeoisie within the PLO's institutions. This undermined many fundamentals of front work. In addition, some ultraleft concepts infiltrated the Palestinian national arena. Although these were not primary, they did leave their mark on front work.

Front work is based on coalition on the common ground, and each faction's own expression on matters of difference. This means that not everything is dealt with in a national front. The concept of democratic centralism, where the minority adheres to the majority's decision, cannot be applied here. In this context, we can understand the problems and obstacles encountered by the PNSF, for it is an extension of the Palestinian experience in this field. Thus, persistent efforts are needed to overcome obstacles and factionalism, and to establish the principles of front work.

To return to the question, its implication about the problems of the PNSF is correct. This must be admitted in order to put a finger on the problems, diagnose and overcome them. At every PFLP Politbureau meeting, we examine the situation and development of the PNSF, because in truth it has not met the standard to which we aspired. However, in the last analysis, we view the PNSF as an important step. It brought together six nationalist factions opposed to the deviationist trend. This in itself is a great step forward, and we treat the problems of the PNSF with the intention of safeguarding it. This, however, is not to belittle the serious problems that exist, the most important ones being the following:

1. Though the PNSF brought together six factions, two nationalist factions remained outside: The Palestinian Communist Party and the DFLP. When a solution to this problem was sought, two opposing views emerged. One side, while adhering to the PNSF program, thought that a broader framework should be sought to include these remaining factions and a larger number of prominent nationalist figures. The PFLP adopted this view. Our adherence to the framework and program of the PNSF does not conflict with being sufficiently flexible to continue the process of rallying the forces opposed to deviation.

The other side advocates keeping things as they are, without rallying or gathering more forces, in order to avoid venturing into the political flexibility this requires. They have a maximalist view of the PNSF program when dealing with new developments after the Amman accord. We see them asking for amending the PNSF program in a way that does not correspond to the purpose for which it was created, i.e., restoring the PLO to the national line.

2. Other problems encountered had to do with the differences which arose among some of the PNSF factions with respect to assessing the political developments after the

Amman accord. The main issue of difference was how these new developments affected the program of the PNSF.

The PFLP emphasized, from the very start, that the PNSF was a temporary framework for restoring the PLO to its national line, not a substitute for the PLO. We have constantly been careful to prevent the PNSF from making the mistake of perpetrating the final split or creating substitutes. This is based on our deep awareness of the danger such a split would entail. Yet we feel that this stand will not last forever if the rightist leadership continues to make concessions to the imperialist-reactionary-Zionist alliance. We are of the opinion that if things reach the point where the rightist leadership actually gets involved in direct negotiations, claiming to speak in the name of our people, then we will not hesitate to declare that we are the PLO and that they represent only themselves. We do not overlook the problem of timing and preparation concerning such an historical step. We consider this issue to be of utmost importance. We are anxious for it to be dealt with in complete coordination with our main Arab and international allies. We are neither willing or able to tackle issues of such historic importance on a strictly national basis.

In contrast to our point of view, there are those who advocate taking the recent developments as an opportunity for revising the program of the PNSF in a way that proposes the PNSF as the PLO. They call for such a declaration to be made. Objectively, this would finalize the split. At least, this is how it would be understood internationally. We did differ with this view which does not give sufficient consideration to our international friends and allies. We feel that we should think carefully, especially when our international allies warn us, before embarking on any new, qualitative step, because we are all part of one movement, and coordination between us is of the utmost importance.

3. There are other problems related to more far-reaching political issues, for example, how to understand the PLO and the decisions of the PNC (especially the 16th session); the international conference and the Soviet initiative; and the interim program of return, self-determination and an independent state.

Two points of view emerged on the above issues. The first considers that those who want to inherit the PLO and continue its course, must not abandon the PLO's heritage - the National Charter, the decisions of the legitimate PNC sessions, and its Arab and international alliances. Otherwise, it cannot be said that they represent the PLO. They must also be aware that when the world recognized the PLO, and established alliances with it, this was on this condition, in accordance with this heritage. Whosoever deviates from this heritage deviates from the PLO itself.

The other point of view considers it necessary to radically revise this heritage, including the program and principle tenets. They justify this by saying that this heritage is the product of the right-wing, so it must be taken apart and reassembled. Needless to say, this view opens the door wide to various dangers and 'revisionist' trends which could drag the Palestinian arena into a whirlpool of internal splits and conflicts.

These are, in short, the most important problems confronting the PNSF, which we are constantly trying to overcome in a positive spirit and with patience, because we want to safeguard this experiment, and because we are confident that it can be successful. I can record the success of the PNSF in terms of overcoming the camp war, at the same time preserving its own unity. That period was, as you know, very difficult for the entire revolution. This experience gives us confidence and

hope. In addition, the fact that everyone considers the main battle to be that levelled at the deviationist trend, objectively motivates all to persevere in overcoming obstacles.

Some of the revolutionary democratic forces joined the PNSF, while others remained outside. How do you view this, and how can it be overcome?

Before answering the question specifically, I want to say that the failure of the first unity experience of the revolutionary democratic forces (PFLP and DFLP) does not mean that the principle is wrong or sterile. We firmly believe in the principle of the unity of the revolutionary democratic forces, because its historical value is an established fact. Moreover, this principle has been organizationally approved by our leadership, and dealt with extensively in our basic documents.

Our presence in the PNSF does not prevent us from continuing to consider the unity of the revolutionary democratic forces. We will strive enthusiastically and persistently to realize this goal. We are ready to deal with any new unity experience between the revolutionary democratic forces with an open mind and heart, when the conditions are ripe. We are aware that the division of the revolutionary democratic forces has negative effects on the Palestinian arena; it had consequences which we didn't wish for.

Today we are pleased that there is a degree of closeness between the revolutionary democratic forces and coordination in joint activities. At such moments, talk of unity intensifies. However, as you know the situation is always moving, and the region is always pregnant with possibilities. I am afraid we would not reach united answers to changing events. I say this because of past joint experience. To illustrate, after some time we will be confronted with two possibilities: One is that the deviationist leadership will continue making concessions until arriving at the negotiations table with the Zionist-imperialist enemy. The second is that the leadership might retreat from the miserable option it has chosen after realizing its futility in the face of the Zionist enemy's intransigence, and that the plans to eradicate the PLO and Palestinian cause are continuing. What will be our answer to these two possibilities?

In the case of the first possibility, we will not hesitate to declare that we are the PLO, the sole, legitimate representative of our people, and those negotiating represent only themselves. We will find that all progressive national forces will



stand by our side in such an event, as will the Soviet Union and socialist countries.

In the case of the second possibility occurring, we will demand clear abrogation of the Amman accord and cancellation of all steps resulting from it, most importantly the Cairo declaration. Secondly, the destructive political trend of this leadership should be brought to trial and accountable. If things came to that, we would furthermore demand that the composition of forces within the leadership and legislative bodies of the PLO be reconsidered, so that the revolutionary, democratic and nationalist forces are able to defeat the deviationist trend and prevent the PLO from sinking into a new crisis after two or three years.

With these answers, we do not risk confusion in the face of future possibilities. The only thing I fear is that the answers of the revolutionary democratic forces will not be unanimous with regard to these possibilities. Furthermore, any serious thought about the unity of the revolutionary democratic forces requires a (common) perception of the future, an analysis of the various possibilities and phases which might occur, and a perception of the method of confrontation. To guarantee the success of a new unity effort, we should agree on how to confront the possibility of the rightist leadership's recognizing resolution 242 and the right of 'Israel' to exist; the possibility of its meeting with the US, and entering direct negotiations. Our response to each possibility should be decided.

We hope that through persistent dialogue, we will be able to reach a joint perception of the future, to form the basis of strong unity between the revolutionary democratic forces. We also hope that through dialogue we can solve any contradictions between the two slogans: «Gathering the maximum number of Palestinian nationalist forces to face the deviationist trend» (the basis of the PNSF's formation) and «Uniting the revolutionary democratic forces.»

Some presented the Gorbachev-Reagan summit as a new Yalta. How do you evaluate this meeting?

There is no doubt that the Geneva summit was the most prominent international event, not only of this year, but of the past several years. Convening this summit became a necessity in order to avoid the extinction of the human race. The whole world is threatened by the nuclear arms race and its spreading to outer space as a result of the US military plan known as «Star Wars».

The summit did not result in essential agreements or resolve the many pending questions, but the event itself and its results have a value which must not be underestimated. Probably the most prominent result is the relative decrease in international tension, and the agreement on the importance of continuing mutual contacts. This will be at the summit level with meetings decided on for 1986 and 1987; it will be between foreign ministers who are charged with following up major regional issues; it will involve specialists and advisers to follow up bilateral relations, cooperation agreements, and talks on halting the arms race and decreasing nuclear arsenals.

The failure of the summit to reach an agreement on «Star Wars» and regional questions is basically due to Washington's aggressive policy. The Reagan Administration persists in the arms race, militarizing space and igniting «hot spots». During Reagan's first term in office, the US repeatedly tried to impose its hegemony in the international arena and achieve clear military superiority over the Soviet Union, via the cold war policy, escalating international tension and using the big stick.

Obviously, this aggressive policy is an expression of the

increasing influence of the military industries in the USA. After the relative setback experienced by the oil monopolies, the need to revive the US economy has been addressed by escalating military production and marketing its products internationally. It became clear towards the end of Carter's term and the beginning of Reagan's, that a new policy was establishing itself based on demolishing detente, escalating the arms race and the antagonism towards the Soviet Union.

In the light of this, we did not expect dramatic results from the summit. Nor did we think that Washington would stop its aggressive drive. Several US officials went back to using the aggressive tone which had prevailed before the summit. The US's acceptance of talks with the Soviet Union is the result of the firm, principled stand of the latter, together with the socialist community, the people's struggle in the world, and the movements for peace, democracy and liberation. We must not underestimate the peace movement which swept across Europe after the decision to deploy new nuclear missiles. It has played a role in creating international public opinion opposed to the missile deployment and the militarization of space. The growth of this movement has to a certain extent influenced the positions of the Western European governments. These countries have displayed discontent with Washington's military policy because it constitutes a threat to European security. Moreover, their economic situations are worsened by the revival of the US economy and the extraordinary rise of the dollar. This is basically a result of the aggressive arms policy, the dominance of the military monopolies and their increasing influence in the economic and political life of the US.

Washington is well aware that the Soviet Union will not allow it to achieve the superiority it desires. The US therefore strives to exhaust the Soviet Union by opening new fields of competition in the arms race, especially by invading outer space, hoping to increase the problems of the socialist economy. However, Washington will sooner or later be faced by the impossibility of realizing its dreams due to the solidity and ultimate superiority of Soviet socialism, as compared to capitalism. Based on this analysis, we do not expect immediate results from the summit concerning the Middle East. The Middle East was not dealt with due to Washington's insistence on dominating the region, and because the Arab forces are unable to benefit from the principled Soviet support or from the international balance of forces which is tilting towards socialism, peace, progress and liberation.

The deceptive description of the summit as a «new Yalta» is used by the Palestinian and Arab right wing. This stems from a wrong understanding of the original Yalta. The imperialist and reactionary media claim that the world was divided up at that time, and that a new division of the world would be engineered through the Geneva summit. Those who promote this misconception want to insinuate that the Soviet Union, like the US, acts according to its own interests, as does any imperialist super power. In this way, they make no distinction between the enemy and the friend. They repudiate the historical record of Soviet support to the Palestinian and Arab people, while turning a blind eye to the US's criminal record of conspiracies against our people and national cause.

The results of the Geneva summit serve to expose the depth of the differences between the USA and the Soviet Union. They emphasize the Soviet's adherence to its unwavering principled stand alongside our people and their just struggle. They expose the US's insistence on pursuing its aggressive policy. These results thus dealt a blow to the theory of a «new Yalta» and to those who advocate such misconceptions.

What is the PFLP?

The following is the entry on the PFLP as it appears in the pages of the second volume of «The Palestinian Encyclopedia (Al Mauwsou'a Al Falastinia).» This encyclopedia, a four-volume, 2500 page achievement, the first of its kind, was published in 1984, in Arabic. Work began on these volumes on 1974, as the result of an agreement between the PLO and the Arab Organization of Education, Science and Culture. The subject matter was compiled by a number of prominent national and progressive figures, researchers, specialists and historians. The encyclopedia is a Palestinian national statement covering a comprehensive range of details on Palestine - the people, the cause, geography, history, economy, etc. It is an objective document of facts which refute the Zionist misrepresentation about Palestine and the Palestinians.



Establishment and Organization

The formation of the PFLP is closely connected with the Arab defeat in the June war of 1967, and the organizational, political and theoretical lessons singled out and crystallized by this defeat. The foundation of the PFLP is also connected with the Arab National Movement (ANM), its Palestinian branch and struggle experience after the disaster of 1948. It is also connected with the lessons gained from this experience, which guided the ANM from the beginning of the sixties until it began preparations for armed struggle.

After the 1967 war, the Palestinian branch of the ANM strove to find a framework for a front which would encompass the various nationalist factions. Such a front was considered a major condition for victory, and the PLO, with its formal structure at that time, was not suited to fulfill this role. The result was the formation of the PFLP which, in addition to the ANM's Palestinian branch, included the Palestinian Liberation Front, the Heroes of Return organization, independents and a group of Nasserite Unificationist officers. The PFLP issued its first political communique on December 11, 1967. Due to differences of opinion on political issues, the Palestinian Liberation Front withdrew from this framework in October 1968, forming the PFLP-General Command.

In the light of the development undergone by the PLO, the PFLP later found it unnecessary to pursue the idea of forming a national front, because the PLO represented the broad framework for such a front. Objectively speaking, this development meant that the PFLP became a specific political organization, especially so after the Heroes of Return organization merged completely with the Palestinian branch of the ANM.

From then on began the process of transforming the PFLP into a Marxist-Leninist political organization. However, this process was faced with many obstacles and internal differences. A number of the members of the PFLP were of the opinion that it was impossible to transform a petit bourgeois organization into a Marxist-Leninist one. This difference of opinion led to the DFLP's split from the PFLP.

In February of 1969, the PFLP held a congress where the document «The Organizational and Political Strategy» was approved. This represented an important landmark on the path of the PFLP's aspiration to transform itself into a Marxist-Leninist organization. The PFLP founded a school in Jordan to build its party cadres and started *Al Hadaf* magazine; the editor was politbureau member Ghassan Kanafani. However, the transformation process was delayed due to the leadership's total involvement in efforts to escalate the PFLP's efficiency and military, political and mass activities against the Zionist enemy.

The third national congress of the PFLP was held in March of 1972. The document «Tasks of the New Stage» was approved as was an amended set of internal rules and regulations. These gave priority to the transformation process and the building of a revolutionary party on the political, organizational and ideological levels, based on conviction that the ability of a revolution to remain steadfast and continue, depends on the strength of the organization. In the new rules and regulations, the PFLP stipulated the primary principles of democratic centralism, collective leadership, the unity of the party, self-criticism, a revolutionary party's popularity among the masses, and that every politically conscious member is a militant, and every militant should be politically conscious. The internal rules and regulations also defined the conditions for member-

ship and the rights and duties this entails. The organizational structure of the party was also defined. The central bodies of the organizations include the national congress, the central committee and the politbureau. Then there are the leading bodies for the Arab region, i.e. the leadership, the central committee and the congress. This is followed by the district leadership and congress, the section leadership and congress and the unit leadership and congress. Finally there are cells and (study) circles.

The fourth national congress was held from April 28th to May 3rd, 1981, under the slogan: «The 4th national congress is an important step towards completing the PFLP's transformation into a Marxist-Leninist party; establishing a united Palestinian national front; stepping up the armed struggle; defending the revolution and reinforcing its militant positions; aborting capitulationist settlement efforts; and strengthening militant inter-Arab and international relations.» The congress discussed the reports proposed and elected a new central committee and politbureau. It re-elected Dr. George Habash as secretary general. The congress issued a political report which clarified the general Palestinian, Arab and international situation, as well as the tasks of the Front for the coming stage. In addition, it defined the strategic tasks and the lessons extracted from the experience of the Palestinian revolution. The most important of these are: the necessity of providing supportive operational bases for the Palestinian revolution; struggle in stages; and struggle against the settlement trend and its effects on the masses.

Fundamental Political Tenets:

1. The importance of political ideology

The PFLP emphasizes the importance of political ideology and a correct political line, and the role this plays in the success of the revolution: «A primary condition for success is a clear vision of matters, a clear vision of the enemy and of the revolutionary forces. In the light of this, the strategy for the battle is defined. Without this, the patriotic work would be spontaneous and improvised.»

2. The imperialist role of the Zionist entity

The primary aim of the Zionist invasion of Palestine was to entrench an armed population base on which imperialism could rely to confront the Arab liberation movement whose victory would pose a threat to imperialist interests in this vital region of the world. It is not true that the Zionist invasion was a result of the oppression of the Jews in Europe. It is also incorrect to separate this from imperialist plans for the region. Moreover, it is incorrect to separate the battle with the Zionist entity from the overall conflict between the masses and imperialism, because there is an organic bond between 'Israel' and the Zionist movement on the one hand and international imperialism on the other. The PFLP emphasizes the slogan: «No coexistence with Zionism». It stipulates that eliminating the Zionist entity is a precondition for establishing a just and lasting peace in the region. The Front also considers that confronting Zionism necessarily entails confronting imperialism as well.

3. The position of Arab reaction in the conflict

The PFLP considers the contradiction with Arab reaction as primary, not secondary. The PFLP does not advocate the slogans «Non-interference in the affairs of the Arab states» or «The Palestinian cause is above Arab conflicts». It considers

that the scientific specification of the position of Arab reaction in the enemy camp protects the Palestinian revolution from its maneuvers and plans. The absence of this specification rules out clear vision. This does not mean that the Palestinian revolution should shoulder the responsibility of inducing change in the Arab countries and overthrowing their regimes. Rather it means allying with the Arab mass movement and progressive forces to overthrow any regime which betrays the Palestinian cause.

4. The Arab bourgeoisie is unable to liberate Palestine

The developments which followed the death of Gamal Abdul Nasser in Egypt prove that the nationalist petit bourgeoisie, which starts out by confronting imperialism upon coming to power, gradually shifts to a position which converges with imperialism, because of the growth of the interests of this class while it is in power. Thus the relationship between the revolution and the national bourgeoisie and its regimes is one of alliance and conflict. There is alliance with this class and its regimes, because of their hostility towards imperialism and 'Israel'. There is conflict with them because of their strategy in the battle of confrontation.

According to the PFLP, there are two strategies: «The strategy of the petit bourgeoisie which, in theory and in practice, promotes the line of classical warfare by rebuilding the military institutions. In contrast, there is the strategy of the working class which, in theory and practice, is directed towards guerrilla warfare and protracted people's war fought by the masses and led by the working class.» These two strategies will coexist until the strategy of the working class finally triumphs in the Palestinian and Arab arena. The PFLP adopts this view of the bourgeoisie in order to protect the revolution and masses, by preventing exaggeration of the role played by this class. The PFLP cautions against the dangers involved if the bourgeois class leads the alliance of the masses confronting imperialism. It also stresses the fact that the bourgeoisie can remain in the nationalist ranks when the working class and its program lead the liberation battle.

5. The workers and peasants are the pillars of the revolution, its main class material and its leadership

The number of heroic deeds and sacrifices made by the Arab and Palestinian masses in the conflict with the Zionist enemy clearly negates the claim of those trying to blame the masses for defeat. The PFLP relates this defeat to the class structure of the leadership which headed the mass movement, and considers that only the working class is capable of leading the mass struggle to victory. The necessity of the Palestinian and Arab working class leading the liberation battle is the most important tenet of the PFLP. This does not, however, mean confusing the stage of liberation with the stage of building socialism. Nor does it mean ignoring the broad class alliance which includes, in addition to the workers and peasants, the petit bourgeoisie and sections of the national bourgeoisie.

6. The necessity of interlinking the Palestinian and Arab national struggle

It is wrong to merge the Palestinian struggle within the framework of the Arab national struggle. The slogan «For independent Palestinian decision-making and action» is correct when it pertains to protecting the Palestinian revolution from the efforts of the bourgeois and reactionary Arab regimes to

contain it. However, the slogan loses validity if taken to mean limiting the battle of liberation to the Palestinian people, because this would mean depriving the Palestinian national struggle of the objective Arab conditions required for the battle to liberate Palestine. The Palestinian revolution needs supportive operational bases bordering Palestine, to provide the geographic and demographic depth for a protracted people's war. There is an organic relationship between the Palestinian national struggle and the Arab national liberation movement. The Palestinian revolution and cause plays a vanguard role in the realization of the national goals of the Arab nation.

7. Jordan is the main and special arena and supportive operational base for the Palestinian revolution

Because of the nature and size of the Palestinian population there, Jordan has distinguishing features. Sixty-five percent of the population is Palestinians who have become Jordanian citizens, not merely refugees as is the case in the other Arab countries. This is a result of the merger and annexation process achieved in the Jericho conference of 1948.* The Palestinian revolution is responsible for mobilizing and recruiting the Palestinian masses in the different areas, including Jordan. While the role of the Palestinian revolution in the process of revolutionary change in the other Arab countries is a supportive one, in Jordan it is a major partner. The Jordanian arena is considered a supportive operational base for a number of reasons: It has the longest border with Palestine; it offers the Palestinian revolution the opportunity of extensive contact with the Palestinian masses in the occupied territories; it plays a special vanguard role in the liberation of Palestinian land.

8. The Palestinian revolution is part of the international revolution against imperialism, Zionism and reaction

The PFLP considers that the suffering of the Palestinian people from oppression, injustice, slavery and banishment, is nothing other than the direct results of the practices of international capitalism and its development into the stage of imperialism. The Zionist entity is a colonial state established by imperialism and provided with the support needed to remain strong and to thrive, so that imperialism can rely on this entity to insure continued domination of the region, the plunder and exploitation of its resources, as well as the benefits of its strategic location. As a result the Palestinian people stand in the same trench as all other oppressed peoples and classes which are harmed by colonialist and capitalist regimes. Thus the struggle of the Palestinian people is part of the world-wide battle against imperialism and the reactionary forces connected with it.

9. Protracted people's war is the only way to liberation

The liberation of Palestine can only be achieved by the use of force. All other forms of struggle must complement armed struggle. However, the technological-military superiority of the imperialist-Zionist enemy means that quick, classical warfare is to its advantage. Therefore, the successful method for confronting the superior enemy, as concluded from the experience of the peoples, is guerrilla warfare. In the first stages of struggle, this begins by wearing down the enemy gradually, thereafter continuously mobilizing the masses of the Palestinian and Arab people in a protracted war which will ultim-

mately be able to achieve victory.

10. The importance of the organizational issue

The political organization is vastly important. Without it, political aims, despite being correct and just, will remain dreams and hopes. The third national congress of the PFLP (1972) gave priority to the task of building the revolutionary party. The second priority was the united national front. The revolutionary party is one which adopts the ideology of the working class as its theoretical guideline. In class terms, such a party is composed of the vanguards of the working class. It adopts the principle of democratic centralism in its internal relations.

The united national front, on the other hand, is the organizational framework which includes the various classes of the revolution and their parties and organizations. The PLO is the broad national front through which the PFLP struggles on the basis of the following principles: (1) collective leadership; (2) democratic relations between the factions of the revolution; (3) the right of each faction to ideological, political and organizational independence; and (4) representation of all factions in the PLO's institutions, proportional to the growth of their role in the revolutionary process.

11. The aim of the Palestinian revolution is to liberate Palestine and found a popular democratic state on all of the Palestinian land

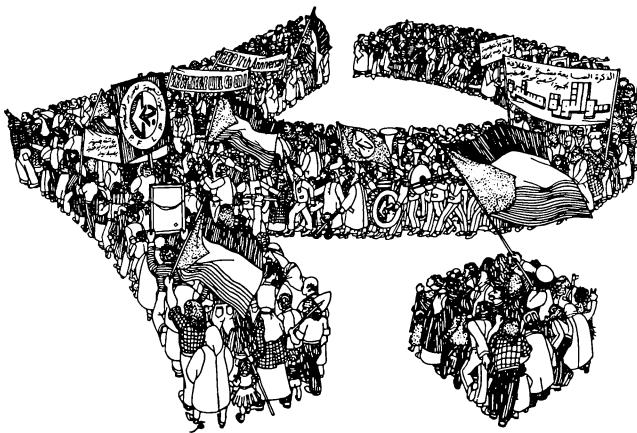
The aim of the Palestinian struggle is the liberation of Palestine from the expansionist, colonial, imperialist, Zionist presence. The conflict with the Zionist enemy is not based on national or religious chauvinism. Thus, the revolution aims at establishing a popular democratic state wherein both Arabs and Jews enjoy equal rights and duties. The process of liberating Palestine also entails liberating the Jewish masses who were recruited by Zionism and imperialism, as cannon fodder in the war against the people of the region. Thus it is natural that the Palestinian revolution should find an ally in Jewish opposition to Zionism and imperialism. The democratic Palestinian state will unite with the other Arab countries in a progressive Arab society. After liberation, the Jews will be citizens of a democratic socialist society.

Major Political Stands

1. On the Jordanian regime

The PFLP considers that Jordan, by virtue of its geographical location, exercises great political and military influence on the Arab-Zionist conflict. From the very start, the PFLP regarded coexistence between the Palestinian resistance and the Jordan regime as impossible. This explains the many clashes between the two. The PFLP also considers that the resistance's hesitation to confront the regime meant the loss of an invaluable opportunity, and enabled the regime to strike the resistance in September 1970 and drive it out of Jordan in July 1971. With this, the Palestinian resistance lost its most important base - most important because of Jordan's special features and because it is the primary and most natural base for the revolution.

2. Confrontation of the settlement trend after the 1973 war and the foundation of the Palestinian Front to Reject Capitulationist Settlements



The PFLP believes that the developments which followed the October 1973 war were a conspiracy aimed at ending the Arab-Zionist conflict on the basis of accepting the Zionist presence as a *fait accompli*. This entailed containing the Palestinian revolution, tempting it with the offer of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, in exchange for its foregoing its demand to liberate all Palestinian land. The deletion of the slogan «No negotiations with the Zionist enemy» from the political program of the PNC's 12th session, was the reason behind the PFLP's withdrawal from the PLO's Executive Committee. The PFLP, with three other factions, then formed the Palestinian Front to Reject Capitulationist Settlements.

This division in the Palestinian political stand persisted until Anwar Sadat made his visit to Jerusalem. As a result of this visit, the first conference of the Steadfastness and Confrontation Front was held in Tripoli, Libya, and all factions of the Palestinian resistance movement agreed on the Tripoli Document. This document rejected the Geneva peace conference for the Middle East and the settlement trend; it emphasized the principle of no negotiations with the Zionist enemy. It stipulated that any interim (tactical) goal of the Palestinian revolution be subject to the conditions and provisions which would make it a step in line with the overall strategy, not a substitute for this.

3. The civil war in Lebanon

The PFLP does not view the battle between the Palestinian resistance and Lebanese National Movement on the one hand, and the fascist Lebanese Forces on the other, as limited or temporary battles caused by emergency conditions or irresponsible practices. In the PFLP's view, the fighting of May 1973 was a prelude to the extensive battles which have occurred in Lebanon since April 1975. The PFLP posits that the nature of the battle, and the nature of the imperialist-Zionist-reactionary plans for Lebanon, do not allow for a halfway solution. The present conflict is an antagonistic one which cannot be resolved unless one of the opposing sides is defeated.

The PFLP called for the progressive and nationalist forces involved in the conflict to determine their stands and tactics on this basis. The PFLP believes that maintaining the open, armed Palestinian presence in Lebanon means continuation of the Palestinian revolution. This in turn means sustaining the greatest moral, material and political support for the Palestinian people in occupied Palestine. The PFLP also considers that the Palestinian armed presence is a major obstacle to imposition of the «autonomy» plan, and to any Arab regime wanting to join Camp David. It also believes that keeping the Palestinian gun raised means continued generation of a

revolutionary atmosphere whose repercussions would spread in the Arab region.

In addition to this, the PFLP considers that the imperialist-Zionist-reactionary plans target the Lebanese National Movement as much as the Palestinian resistance, with the object of imposing hegemony over the Lebanese masses. The PFLP therefore advocates the necessity «of considering the Lebanese National Movement as the main party in the confrontation of these attempts in order to defeat them...the role of the Palestinian resistance is one of support and participation.»

The Military Aspect

The Palestinian branch of the ANM began preparing for armed struggle before June 5, 1967, and practiced military activity before that date. The first martyr to fall was Khaled Abu Aisheh on November 2, 1964. After the June war, the PFLP practiced armed struggle from within the occupied territories and outside. Its activities constituted a part of the struggle of the military factions of the Palestinian revolution.

This military activity dealt Zionism painful blows in the hills of Al Khalil (Hebron), and in the Gaza Strip. A revolutionary nucleus was formed which cost Zionism heavy losses. However, adverse objective conditions, the halt of the war of attrition on the Egyptian front, the 1970 events in Jordan, and the Zionists' massive operations against the resistance, led to the liquidation of the PFLP's first rank leadership in the Gaza Strip branch which was led by the martyr Mohammad Mahmoud al Aswad (Guevara Gaza), member of the PFLP's politbureau. A number of the PFLP's revolutionary groups in other areas of the occupied territories were also wiped out. These setbacks, however, did not prevent rearrangements and the continuation of armed struggle.

The PFLP expended military efforts on border operations from outside the occupied territories. Its forces ambushed and attacked Zionist enemy patrols and bases; they planted land mines and attacked the Zionist border settlements, throwing the enemy into confusion and wearing down its strength.

The PFLP also leveled military blows against imperialist interests as in the case of blowing up the pipelines traversing the occupied Syrian Golan Heights, and the operation against an oil tanker in the Bab Mandab Straits. It also struck Zionist interests and economic institutions outside the occupied territories. The PFLP has played its role in defending the Palestinian resistance and its armed presence, together with other Palestinian factions, in the face of attacks aiming at its eradication.

In Lebanon, the military section of the PFLP present in Tel al Zaatar, headed by Central Committee member and martyr Abu Amal, played an effective role in the camp's heroic steadfastness alongside the Palestinian masses and fighters of the different factions of the Palestinian resistance. Similarly, the fighters of the PFLP, along with the other fighters of our revolution, steadfastly defended the city of Sour during the Zionist invasion of South Lebanon in March 1978.

The vision of the PFLP, with regard to the process of military confrontation of the Zionist enemy, focuses on the necessity of struggle in order to move from the stage of limited guerrilla warfare, launched against bases and institutions of the racist Zionist enemy, to protracted people's war, relying on secure, supportive operational bases in Arab states bordering the occupied territories.

* A group of pro-Jordanian, Palestinian notables met in Jericho and approved the idea that the West Bank become part of Jordan.

PFLP's Political Relations on the Palestinian, Arab and International Levels

On the occasion of the PFLP's 18th anniversary, we asked Comrade Abu Ali Mustafa, Deputy General Secretary, to evaluate the Front's political relations historically.

Inter-Palestinian Relations

Would you describe the PFLP's political relations on the Palestinian level at the start?

At the initial stage, relations among the principal Palestinian organizations were characterized by two fluctuating currents. The first was enthusiasm for national unity with a clear democratic program and democratic front relations. The PFLP was the main organization calling for this, as it was composed of three fighting forces: the Palestinian branch of the Arab National Movement, the Palestinian Liberation Front (today PFLP-General Command) and the Heroes of Return, in addition to a number of national figures.

The PFLP made serious overtures to Fatah, for unity and democratic, national front relations, and was willing to overcome difficulties due to the importance of the matter. However, despite seeming enthusiasm, earnest ideas and plans, Fatah's leadership was pretentious and evasive. Its deceptive approach climaxed in its disengagement from the 1967 agreement (concerning unity efforts). Instead, it unilaterally called the Cairo meeting and proclaimed the existence of eight non-existent organizations. As an example, one of these was the General Society of Support for the Palestinian People, headed by Issam Sartawi; this was originally a medical society which Arafat transformed into a political organization. Arafat, in a theatrical gesture, issued a communique to hinder efforts for Palestinian unity, claiming the support of these fictitious organizations and ignoring those organizations which carried most weight in the Palestinian arena.

The second current was the latent and open conflict with the leadership of the PLO at that time. This conflict focused upon the legitimate representation of the Palestinian people - whether this was the right of the PLO leadership or of the armed organizations. This was especially so since the latter were enhanced by the popular will to carry the gun and fight after the tragic June 1967 defeat. The masses persisted in their determination despite the defeatist propaganda mouthed by submissive Palestinian figures like Sheikh Jabari and Aziz Shahade. The enthusiasm of the masses raised the prestige of the resistance organizations. This helped to defeat these submissive figures and their propaganda. It also overshadowed the reputation of the PLO, because the resistance organiza-



tions took the initiative and engaged in prominent battles with the Zionist enemy (Karameh, Bait Farek, in the hills of Ramallah and Al Khalil (Hebron), and in Gaza).

Then there was conflict between two lines of thought. The first advocated accepting the PLO as a framework for a front, provided reforms were introduced. The second rejected the PLO as a framework for a front, because it was an official representative of the Palestinians in the Arab League, and the Palestinian revolution should not get lost in the labyrinth of political tactics.

In 1968, the PFLP adopted the first line, making acceptance of the PLO's leadership conditional on reforming it on an appropriate basis (the PNC, PLA, Executive Committee, program and charter). The PFLP submitted practical suggestions to this end. It is noteworthy that during this debate, an infantile left group which later split from the PFLP, considered national unity with the bourgeoisie as treason and harmful to the revolutionary cause.

Fatah's leadership explicitly rejected the principle of cooperating to consolidate all efforts for national struggle and instate front relations within the PLO. Instead, they persistently connived to dominate the PLO with the help of some Arab regimes (at that time, Nasser).

The resistance enters the PLO

The next stage started during the PNC's 5th session in

1969, at which Fatah assumed the leadership of the PLO. The PFLP boycotted this session on the basis that the PLO should be an embodiment of national unity. The PFLP advocated extricating the PLO from its bureaucratic structure which kept it from being a framework for national unity. We also criticized the classical nature of the PLA. We insisted that unless the PLO was revolutionized in line with its stated purpose, we would not participate in its institutions. The PFLP advocated recognition of all armed Palestinian organizations and not dissolving them into the *Kifah Musallah* (literally *Armed Struggle* - a body formed in Jordan to coordinate between these organizations), for this could lead to the dissolution of their military power. The Executive Committee, however, looked upon the *Kifah Musallah* as a suitable body for resolving other problems.

The PFLP considered it pointless to participate in any institution tied to the Executive Committee without being actively represented in the PNC. A declaration to this effect was issued during the 6th session of the PNC, in which the PFLP did not participate fully. The declaration stated: «The PFLP did not participate in the PNC session, the Executive Committee or the leadership of the *Kifah Musallah*, because we are convinced that our remaining outside the PLO, in its present state, is to the long-run advantage of forming a more solid, clearer and more efficient formula.»

National Unity in the PLO

After the February 10, 1970 fighting between the Palestinian resistance and the Jordanian regime, and the escalation of events in Jordan, the various factions of the Palestinian resistance movement intensified their contacts and their discussions. They formed a unified leadership which reached agreement on several points as was declared in a communique on May 6, 1970. This communique stated that the PLO constituted the broad framework for national unity; it emphasized participation in the coming PNC and the institutions that grew out of it.

In this context, the 7th PNC was convened, resulting in the formation of a National Central Committee which replaced the unified leadership. The National Central Committee consisted of the Executive Committee, representatives of all the organizations, the head of the PNC and of the PLA. However, the representation of the PFLP was symbolic, to test the seriousness of intentions and practice.

The PNC defined the National Central Committee as the supreme leadership of the Palestinian struggle in the matters proposed to be in its jurisdiction. The Executive Committee was obliged to carry out the decisions of the National Central Committee. The Central Committee could present its proposals directly to the PNC and moreover had the power to freeze the membership of the Executive Committee.

This phase was distinguished in that it injected a spine into the body of the PLO, which had been a flabby mass. The PLO gained two feet to stand on. However, this period of national unity was short-lived and full of ambiguity about the question of unity on the part of the PLO leadership and the organizations themselves. The Executive Committee wanted to simplify our struggle through the *Kifah Musallah* (which eventually came to play the role of a military police). It belittled the importance of looking for a united front which could fulfill the tasks of that stage. However, the Executive Committee's proposal about *Kifah Musallah* was not implemented. Instead, they formed a coordinating body which aimed to restrict the size of the military forces.

Factional, individualistic mentality dominated in the Fatah leadership. While it was their right as the largest organization to be the leadership, the fault lies in their not searching for a viable unity formula. The National Central Committee was forgotten without anyone giving an explanation. Also forgotten was military unity, although decisions were made regarding it from the PNC's 7th session and onwards.

There is no doubt that the blame for these breaches rests with the executive leadership of the PLO. However, this does not exempt us from specifying our responsibility as the PFLP. We made the political mistake of refraining from entering the PLO and waiting for it to become revolutionary, instead of participating in the revolutionizing process and practicing the policy of unity and conflict. An idealistic mentality prevailed in the PFLP, and we did not treat matters scientifically. The PFLP was aware of matters of utmost importance as seen in the communique of January 16, 1968, stressing revolutionizing the PLO, including the active forces, organizing elections for the leadership bodies, and stressing that the PLO is the broad framework for a national front. Yet in practice we overlooked these matters as seen in the contents of the other communique which stated: «Our remaining outside the PLO, in its present state, is to the long run advantage of forming a more solid, clearer and more efficient formula.»

Our explanation for this is the organizations' fear of losing their identity within the framework of unity. However, unity should have been understood as a common denominator which is complemented by ideological and organizational independence, leaving room for discussion and contradictions. Whether we are talking about the mentality of the PLO leadership and its methods of work, or the thinking of the PFLP at that time, there was an absence of the maturity needed for a united front in the stage of national liberation. Conflict overshadowed national alliance at a time when a balance should have been maintained between the two. National alliance should have usually taken priority over conflict, while secondary conflicts should have been subordinated to the demands of the main conflict with the enemy.

Unimplemented decisions

The third period was between 1971-1982, after the bloody events in Jordan and the massacres which the regime perpetrated against our people and patriots. Looking back, we find that the documents of the PNC's sessions, from the 8th until the 15th, unanimously agreed on the importance of national unity and bringing about a qualitative leap in the PLO's form. In the 8th session, under the title of organizational structure for national unity of the Palestinian revolution's forces, the following six clauses were adopted:

1. *The PLO is the framework which includes all the Palestinian revolution's forces which practice armed struggle for the liberation of all of Palestine. The PLO has a charter which governs its course, specifies its goals and organizes its work. It has a national council which chooses its leadership. This leadership is the highest executive authority of the organization as stated in the basic program. The leadership draws up an overall united plan for Palestinian work in all different fields, which is carried out by the PLO's institutions which include all the instruments of the revolution.*

2. *All national guerrilla organizations and fighting forces, unions, associations and figures participate in national unity on condition of complete commitment to the Palestinian*

National Charter and PNC decisions.

3. The merger of the guerrilla organizations adopting the same ideology and political thought is a national necessity. Until this is achieved, each organization reserves the right to preserve its organizational structure on condition that all its other institutions are dissolved and merged into the PLO's institutions.

The PLO legislative bodies and higher executive take into consideration the principle of democratic centralism, collective leadership and minority adherence to the decisions of the majority. Every organization reserves the right to raise its views again for discussion through the legislative and executive bodies on condition that they meanwhile remain committed to the decisions already taken in the PNC. Cadres have the right to practice constructive criticism concerning all decisions of the legislative and executive bodies.

National work in the Jordanian arena is governed by the program of the National Front.

4. The PNC draws up a strategy for the current stage as well as political, military, financial and informational strategies which all are obliged to abide by.

5. An active leadership is formed to take the responsibility for leading the Palestinian struggle on all levels.

6. A basic condition for unity is abiding by the decisions of the leadership which is responsible for carrying out its own decisions and those of the PNC. The leadership is also responsible for dealing with cases of violation of decisions within limits that correspond to the higher interests of the revolution.

Following this session, the unity of the military forces was emphasized.

At the 10th session, proposals were passed concerning the committee of national unity. The 11th session drew up the practical steps for implementing what had been agreed upon. The 12th and 13th sessions dealt with important and dangerous political issues, the question of a settlement, especially since the Palestinian right had begun to retreat from a firm national position after the 1973 war. The right-wing policy began to have an impact on the decisions and programs of the PNC, but the 14th session reinstated a clear-cut political and organizational position, better and more mature than the previous one. The PFLP, along with the other democratic and nationalist forces, played a basic role in the formulation of the final decisions and curbing right-wing influence in the leadership.

Evaluation

However, three things become clear after the passage of 10 years (1971 to 1981, the 8th-15th PNC sessions) with respect to Palestinian national relations.

One: There was an unrealistic evaluation of the organizational situation. There was an attempt to jump from a situation where there were no particular bylaws for internal relations, to one speaking of democratic centralism and merging the organizations with the same ideological line and then uniting all.

Two: There was a departure from all the decisions in this field. In place of these decisions, the factional domination of Fatah was imposed. Calls for united front relations were replaced by neglecting to look for the causes of the problem and its solution. There was moreover failure to follow up the execution of decisions.

Three: There was confusion between structure and principles and concrete measures. Analysis also reveals a distinct

duality: At a time when the charter stipulated election of the Executive Committee as leader of the Palestinian people's struggle, the PNC adopted the fifth clause of the organizational program at the 14th session, stating: «A leadership is formed which will shoulder the responsibility of Palestinian struggle.»

What are the reasons for this?

First is the political and class nature of the prevailing PLO leadership, which is governed by bourgeois understanding of national relations and the mentality of special tenure (the political counterpart of private ownership in the economic sphere). Such a leadership strives to weaken its partners during the national struggle in order to expand its own influence; it practices methods of domination and individualism, neglecting all principles of collective leadership.

The second reason is that the establishment of the PLO and all the resistance organizations was governed in one way or another by the conditions that have prevailed on the Arab level since the sixties. This had its effect on the social structure of the Palestinian society in exile.

The third reason is the predominance of factionalism and narrow interests at the expense of front work and national interests. This overshadowed the institutions of collective work.

Fourth was the absence of the fundamentals of front work and of any plan for national unity and relations. There was no process for implementing decisions, not to mention cases of outright refusal to implement them.

Despite the importance of these reasons, they did not impede the continuation of the struggle for national unity and correct relations within the organization. Much more dangerous was that the leadership, motivated by its class nature, was laying the foundation for bringing about a major political step which would release it from all commitment to the national program. This would leave it free to deviate and capitulate while retaining the PLO in form but not content, to be steered by the policies of Arab reaction. These intentions became clear after the 1982 war. It became clear that the right-wing intended to subjugate the PLO to Arab reaction's capitulationist plans, despite all the political and struggle gains that had been made on the Arab and international level. Although the PFLP made all positive efforts to develop the policies of the PLO, revolutionize its institutions and organize its work, we find that all the sessions of the PNC, especially after 1971, foretold the consequences of the individualistic leadership.

The PFLP also demonstrated a high level of responsibility in its strivings to unite the revolutionary democratic forces, as stipulated in the political report of the 4th congress. In this, the PFLP was motivated by awareness of the importance of strengthening the position of the left, so it could play a more influential role capable of enforcing a sound, militant national program and firm front relations. We are well aware that the factors of the current political crisis in the PLO, and the extent of the differences, only makes the going harder. However, the PFLP still regards the solution to confronting the revolution's difficulties to be strengthening and unifying the role of the revolutionary democratic forces, and rallying all the democratic and nationalist forces to confront the dangers facing the PLO, the revolution and cause. This is actually what the PFLP is doing in its capacity as an organization which enjoys the confidence of the masses. Mass support enables us to popularize the rejection of deviation, and continue to struggle against the imperialist-Zionist enemy, emphasizing a unanimous national program for return to the homeland, self-determination and an independent Palestinian state.

Relations on the Arab official and mass levels

How have the PFLP's political relations progressed on both the Arab official and mass levels? What factors influenced these relations?

The PFLP has a long history going back to the Arab National Movement. This movement was very influential in the Arab people's struggle, especially in the Mashraq (Arab East), the Gulf and Arab Peninsula, due to its national unification ideology. Reliance on this great heritage of militant mass struggle helped reinforce the Front and the Palestinian struggle.

In the Front's history, there was a period of transformation from the nationalist ideology of the petit bourgeoisie to the formation of a strict, militant party adopting Marxism-Leninism. This period witnessed hesitation about the following stage. Signs of differences and confusion began emerging on three levels:

One: Differences emerged with the late Abdel Nasser with whom the Arab National Movement's relations had been very strong in terms of action and relations on the Arab level. To a certain degree, Nasser acknowledged this transformation, but he could not take the criticism articulated by the PFLP's 2nd congress (February 1969), concerning the reasons for the 1967 defeat. This left its mark on the relations, especially as the Front's position was distorted by the regime's media and institutions. Later, the relations were severed when Nasser accepted the Rogers plan and there were demonstrations in Amman (organized by the Palestinian resistance) against this plan.

Two: The Arab National Movement had split into two trends. One adopted scientific socialism, while the other stuck to its original thinking. Yet even the trend that had adopted the new ideology was split in two over the validity of the concept of transformation. The group that did not believe in this concept sought to form a new party and later became the DFLP.

Third: The Arab communist parties, which were an effective force in the Arab mass movement, viewed this new trend with skepticism concerning two issues. The first was the thesis that it was possible to transform a petit bourgeois force into a revolutionary democratic one, and then go on to develop into a communist party. This issue elicited a broad discussion, ranging from supporters of the concept to opponents. Later, with time, the validity of the transformation thesis was proven.

The second issue concerned the means of struggle, and the perspective of the struggle against the Zionist enemy, whether or not it can be defeated. Some communists had reservations about armed struggle that to us was the highest and main form of struggle. Armed struggle was termed adventurist or Guevarist. This view was weakened and gradually vanished, but it was one of the main subjects of debate at the time. As to the perspective of our struggle with the Zionist enemy, some of these communist parties have still not settled this question politically, theoretically or in terms of struggle.

In addition to these external reactions to the new trend, there were internal factors which played a role in weakening the Front in the early years. Among these was the split, led by a team of infantile leftists who propounded theses such as forbidding any work within the trade unions, ruling out national unity with the bourgeoisie, limiting armed struggle to the occupied homeland, and the right of the minority in the party to express its opinion to the masses in the streets. In addition, this group had an infantile approach to educating the masses in Marxism-Leninism, and negative practices that led to weakening the credibility of the Front and alienating the masses. Later, with time, this thinking and practice was proven wrong.

In the years following 1970, there was an important transition in the path of the Front, especially after the 3rd congress. The program adopted, and the vision that was outlined of the next stage, constituted a leap in the life of the Front and the range of its role, based on the dialectical link the program established between the general and the specific, the Palestinian national and pan-Arab dimension. The Front gained respectability due to its accuracy and credibility in this field. Its position was reinforced by its high militant ability in confronting the imperialist-Zionist enemy in the region and internationally. The Front was distinguished by its principled relations with communist parties, revolutionary democratic forces and Arab nationalist forces.

On the official level, the documents of the Front defined the level and mode of relations with the Arab regimes in a way to serve the national struggle. Especially concerning the national bourgeois regimes, we outlined a policy of alliance and conflict. The exception to this policy is found in our relations with Democratic Yemen, which are based on political and ideological convergence and supported historically by joint militant relations that date back to before the October 1964 revolution.

Today, on the PFLP's 18th anniversary, we can assess what we have accomplished on the basis of our documents, especially the documents of the 4th congress and their accuracy. The PFLP is in a very strong, effective position in its relations with the Arab national liberation movement, as a Marxist-Leninist faction with its own class, national and pan-Arab analysis and vision of the struggle.

Relations with national liberation movements

How do you evaluate the Front's political relations with the national liberation movements of the world, from 1967 until now? What changes have occurred in this field?

Since its foundation, the PFLP has given this matter a great deal of importance. We realized that the revolutionary forces hostile to Zionism, imperialism, reaction and fascism, must unite their efforts in a broad international front. Despite the importance of this awareness, the matter was not thoroughly studied from a theoretical point of view. We lacked organization, continuity and follow-up in overall relations. These relations were sometimes determined by immediate tactical gains or spontaneous initiatives. These initiatives involved a mixture of trends ranging from forces that were ideologically conscious of the requirements and outlook of the struggle, to Trotskyist trends, Maoists, New Left forces, etc.

In the mid-seventies, there was a change in this field. The Front settled its view of these relations on the basis of political-ideological vision and protracted militant alliance. This is one of the aspects of the progress made in the transformation process where we arrived at a mature understanding of the three forces of world revolution. As specified in the documents of the 4th congress, these are the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, the national liberation movements in the three continents, and the working class parties in the capitalist countries. This resulted in organizing the militant relations between the front and the national liberation movements. Cooperation was programmed to serve the common goal of reinforcing militant unity against imperialism and the danger it poses to the people of the world, who are struggling for independence, social progress and world peace, to save humanity from imperialism's wars and evil practices. Today we can register ➤

our progress in this field, even though it is still less than we had expected.

Relations with the socialist community

How do you evaluate the Front's relations, from its foundation until now, with the socialist community? What are the factors that brought these relations to their current level?

First I would like to point out an important matter in this field. Anyone who reads the Front's documents, especially the one from the 2nd congress in February 1969, realizes the leap that has since occurred in our understanding and view of the socialist community, regulating our policy for relations based on ideological understanding. In the 1969 document we find that a Maoist tinge prevailed in our understanding of the socialist community, although we did not adopt all Maoism's slogans, such as «the two imperialisms» or «the aging imperialism and the young imperialism.» Still, it is clear that themes of Maoist rather than Marxist-Leninist origin were influencing the level and mode of relations with the socialist community. The Front's concept of armed struggle seemed to be derived from the Chinese theses on the revolution and the masses, considering their recent victory in the late 1940's. In addition, there was our enthusiasm about any force whose position on the Palestinian cause was based on non-recognition of the Zionist entity. All this led us to fall into an indefensible underestimation of the forces who have truly abided by Marxism-Leninism and exerted most influence on the international level, i.e., the socialist community, first and foremost the Soviet Union.

On this basis, we can in retrospect evaluate our relations with the socialist community until the mid-seventies, when things were put in their proper perspective and broad solidarity relations were developed, and enacted through political and militant support to the Palestinian people's struggle. Of course, there are issues that cause secondary differences, such as how to envision the perspective of the confrontation with the Zionist entity, but these do not affect the relations of solidarity. These issues are not a matter of a simple yes or no. Rather they are related to two parallel developments which, with time, will clarify and settle the differences in opinion:

1. Exposing the true nature of Zionism as a reactionary, racist movement, as stated in UN resolutions, to our friends and international opinion in general. This will help to unveil the truth about the Zionist entity as the embodiment of reactionary, racist ideology. Such exposure will help create a change in outlook as to how to solve the conflict with this entity that harms the interests of the Palestinian and Arab people. Due to the role it performs for imperialism, the actions of the Zionist entity also pose a threat to the people of the three continents and threaten to ignite a larger confrontation that would endanger all humanity.

2. Stepping up the Palestinian national struggle, creating the conditions for its continuity, and creating conditions on the Arab level that would facilitate supportive bases for the revolution in the countries surrounding Palestine. After creating these conditions, we must increase the effectiveness of the struggle, relying on our own subjective factors and the support of our allies, in order to produce a new reality. This reality would surpass the reactionary program that handled the Palestinian cause by dealing with the colonialists in the forties, a fact which helped in the creation of the Zionist entity.

The reactionary program, governed by a chauvinist men-

tality hostile to the socialist countries, played a role in delaying their understanding of the truth about the Zionist entity and its creation. Today, in the context of the current revolution, we witness another position and view of this entity on the part of the socialist community. This is not fully developed, as we envision it. However, achieving a more developed position does not depend on our wishful thinking. Rather it depends on our ability, as Arabs and Palestinians, to effect a qualitative change in the balance of forces. Now events are going against us and in favor of the enemy camp, due to Arab clumsiness and hesitation about forming genuine international alliances, and the fact that some are only waiting for the chance to enter into imperialism's solutions. As long as this situation persists, any solidarity with our cause given by the socialist community is actually more than we deserve.

The matter is in our hands; our allies are supporters, hoping for the development of a truly progressive Arab position, not only a verbal one. Despite all this, our proletarian internationalist relations are constantly being reinforced; they exist on a genuine, principled basis. We appreciate the stable, principled position of the Soviet Union and the socialist community towards the Palestinian cause. We see this as an essential pillar of support to our cause. There is no doubt that the transformation in the Front's understanding of the international dimension, explains the progress made in these relations. As we develop our struggle, we will find that our allies are our best supporters and will never be an obstacle to achieving our goals, tactically or strategically. On the contrary, they will be a pillar of support in this advance.

We can take a practical example. Since the 1967 defeat, the Soviet Union has called for implementation of resolution 242. This resolution does not deal with the issue as the Palestinian people's national cause; it pertains mainly to Arab land. The Soviet Union, in the light of the defeat and Arab subjective conditions, had only this resolution to deal with. After the 1973 war, the Rabat Summit decision of 1974 and other factors reinforced the Palestinian cause and the PLO's status in the Arab and international arenas. Palestinian struggle increased, proving that this is the cause of a people that requires a just solution. After all this, how do we find our allies dealing with the issue? The basis of support to our people's struggle has become stronger due to better subjective conditions on our part. The Soviet Union and other socialist countries call for an international conference with the participation of the PLO. They fully support our rights to return, self-determination and an independent state. This improvement was considered a defeat of resolution 242.

Yet now the Palestinian right is again lending its ear to reactionary programs and beginning to abandon the PLO's sole representation of the Palestinian people. After the Palestinian right deviated from the national platform, we find the reactionary and imperialist circles again calling for implementing 242. Who do we find alluding to the reactionary program and returning the matter to where it was on the eve of the creation of the Zionist entity? It is the Arab reactionary regimes and the dominant leadership of the PLO. They are doing their best to spin the wheel backwards.

In contrast, our friends in the socialist community stress their adherence to their principled position on solving our cause. We cannot ask our friends to give more than we ourselves give. They cannot be a substitute for us in conducting the conflict with the Zionist enemy. In summary, we stress our satisfaction with our relations with the socialist community and the optimal development of these relations.

Palestinian Armed Struggle Today

In anticipation of the PFLP's 18th anniversary, we asked comrade Abu Ahmad Fuad, Politbureau member in charge of the military department, to address a series of questions related to the current conditions for Palestinian armed struggle.



In retrospect, can you evaluate the Palestinian role, and especially that of the PFLP, in the Lebanese National Resistance to Israeli occupation?

It is known to all Lebanese nationalist forces that almost all the Palestinian resistance factions have participated effectively in fighting the Zionist enemy when its troops were in the mountains, Beirut and the South of Lebanon. All factions of the Palestinian resistance participated with an effort that cannot be denied by any friendly force. In particular, what we know very precisely is our effectiveness as the Popular Front, alongside all the factions of the Lebanese National Resistance Front (LNRF), in upgrading our ability to attack the Zionist enemy and its agents in Lebanon. In fighting against the Zionist enemy, we relied on the following steps:

First, we extended all possible requirements and support to all the factions of the LNRF. Second, we participated side-by-side with them in military operations in the different areas of Lebanon. A number of operations were carried out jointly with the militants of the Amal movement, Hezbollah, the Lebanese Communist Party and other factions of the LNRF.

We know that a great responsibility rests on our shoulders. We consider this part of our duty towards our people and the masses, Lebanese and Palestinian. No one can deny our right to participate in defending Lebanon and liberating it from the Zionist occupation and its agents. There are several examples of our actions in this field, and a number of comrades were martyred while confronting the Zionist enemy in the South or other areas that were occupied until the Zionist enemy was forced to withdraw. We still have our fighting role, as the PFLP and jointly with Lebanese nationalist factions.

When the LNRF was initiated, we took a decision not to claim responsibility for the operations we carried out, either as the Popular Front or the Palestinian resistance. Any announcement of such operations would be by the LNRF. But, unfortunately, some factions of the LNRF allege that the forces of the Palestinian revolution had no role in fighting the Zionist occupation forces in Lebanon. We say to these authoritative

persons who make such allegations from time to time, that they themselves know the role of the Palestinian resistance in confronting the Zionist enemy. All the cadres and fighters of the LNRF acknowledge the effectiveness of the Palestinian revolution in silently fighting the Zionist enemy without claiming these attacks.

What are the difficulties facing the Palestinian armed struggle in Lebanon today, and how does the PFLP propose to solve these? What does it mean that forces with whom we allied in the LNRF now work to hinder the Palestinian struggle?

There is no doubt that the difficulties have increased. The enemy has established new barriers and widened the so-called security zone. Now there is a part of this zone densely occupied by Israeli forces, another part with UN emergency troops, and another filled with the forces of the agent Lahd. In practical terms, fighting units now have to penetrate at least two barriers to reach the Zionist occupation forces and attack them. I do not mean by this that Lahd's forces and those of the Zionist enemy are separate. At many points, they are present jointly, and many LNRF operations have targeted Lahd's forces and the Zionist enemy's forces at the same time. It has been proven that the casualties of these operations were from both.

These obstacles and difficulties affect the LNRF to a certain extent from the military angle. However, we cannot say that overall effectiveness has decreased. Rather, qualitative operations have been carried out since the enemy has taken these new security measures in the South. There were large heroic operations that are a source of pride to all Arab nationalists. In addition, there is the mass struggle in the occupied zone. Of course, we were anticipating that the military effectiveness would be higher than it is.

Currently, all the Lebanese and Palestinian nationalist factions are making certain arrangements to overcome these difficulties and obstacles. The correct method of confronting the occupation forces and those of Lahd is guerrilla warfare and inflicting daily losses in the enemy's ranks. This would lead to an accumulation whereby the fighting forces would be larger and operations spread more widely. This would inevitably lead to the evacuation of the occupation forces from Lebanon.

We believe that all military methods must be used against the enemy, starting from small fighting units, to larger groups and complex operations, and then rocket and tank attacks when this is useful and effective against the enemy. Experience has proven that the best method is mobilizing the masses, recruiting and arming them, then preparing the right conditions for them to launch military attacks. Fighting against the Zionist enemy must become the task of all the masses and not only the vanguards. To a certain extent we can say that the past period proved that most of the Lebanese and Palestinian

masses in Lebanon participated in and contributed to confronting the enemy with all methods and means.

As for the obstacles and difficulties put by some (allied) forces to prevent the Palestinian revolution from exercising its right to fight the Zionist enemy, we will try to overcome and deal with this through continued dialogue. We will prove to these forces that the task of liberating South Lebanon is a joint responsibility and the responsibility of all Arabs. No single force should stand as an obstacle to any other nationalist force, Palestinian or otherwise, which aims at effectively contributing to the task of liberation. We do not accept any excuse on the part of any force that is creating obstacles for the Palestinians' struggle against the occupation.

How has the formation of the Palestine National Salvation Front affected the military struggle?

The National Salvation Front was established to confront deviation and the rightist leadership of the PLO. One of its main tasks, in responding to the deviating right, is to step up military attacks against the Zionist enemy in occupied Palestine and Lebanon. However, the joint military arrangements between the factions of the Salvation Front have not yet been completed. Therefore, we cannot yet judge the Salvation Front in terms of joint military work.

However, each faction of the Salvation Front is carrying out military activities in the occupied homeland and southern Lebanon. The Salvation Front has drawn up a project for joint military arrangements that we hope will be implemented, uniting the military forces of all factions of the Salvation Front outside the occupied homeland, and upgrading coordination between them in Palestine. These matters are now being discussed by the Salvation Front leadership. We have great hopes for the program decided on by the Salvation Front in this field, as well as for the other programs proposed by ourselves and other factions to arrive at the best possible forms for stepping up the joint effectiveness of the Salvation Front in Lebanon and the occupied land.

The PFLP has a policy of cooperation on the ground with nationalist Palestinians who are still affiliated with Fatah's Central Committee. How do you evaluate this cooperation, especially in terms of the military struggle?

In our view, any cooperation between all the factions, including those outside the Salvation Front, with the exception of Arafat's group, would follow a path hostile to Arafat's deviating policies. These factions have taken a clear position against the Amman accord, the Cairo statement and the moves of Arafat and his central committee. This provides common ground for cooperation, since these factions have an effective military and political role against the Zionist enemy in occupied Palestine and outside. These forces also play an effective role against the liquidationist policies that Arafat and his central committee are trying to implement unilaterally. Therefore, we must always look for points of mutual agreement and reinforce them so that all forces unite against the Zionist-imperialist plans for the region. All forces must unite to face the deviationist trend, and work for annulment of the Amman accord and all the isolationist and liquidationist policies.

Can you evaluate the efforts that succeeded in warding off the expected internal strife in the Saida

area, and our relations with the Nasserite Organization there?

The PFLP has a firm, clear position on how to deal with contradictions that arise among the factions of the Palestinian resistance in Lebanon on the one hand, and between the Palestinian resistance and the Lebanese nationalist forces on the other. Therefore, we put forward a proposal for organizing the situation in the camps in Lebanon, especially those in Beirut and the South. The essence of this proposal is preventing internal Palestinian fighting or any battle between Palestinians and Lebanese nationalist forces. To this end, we proposed practical measures in order to attain our expectations of uniting the masses in Lebanon to confront the Zionist enemy, and the danger of deviation and the practices of the right-wing PLO leadership. The PFLP proposed forming mass committees and local leaderships for the camps. These would assume the tasks of solving social problems and meeting the needs of our masses in the camps. Such committees were formed and shouldered their tasks and executed the decisions of the Salvation Front. This resulted in avoiding problems that, at certain times, might have escalated to fighting in the camps.

At one point, it was expected that the Palestinian right-wing would create conflicts inside Ain al Hilweh camp in particular. However, through certain guidelines and responsible methods put forward by the Salvation Front in the camp, we were able to prevent such fighting. In addition, we were able to contain any individual incident that might have escalated. This experiment was put to several tests which proved that it was the best method for solving differences and contradictions in the nationalist ranks. This is especially true in view of the fact that our masses in the camps are against deviation and liquidation. Therefore we feel that the liquidationist trend failed to penetrate our masses in the camps of Lebanon.

As for our relations with the Nasserite Organization led by Mustafa Saad, they have our deepest appreciation. We are proud of our positive relations with this organization, which are being reinforced day by day. We feel this organization's consciousness of the Palestinian revolution and masses. We also know their great willingness to protect and support the continuation of the revolution and armed struggle. We are fighting side-by-side with our brothers and comrades of the Nasserite Organization against Lahd's forces and the Zionist enemy. Our relationship with the Nasserite Organization is a historical one, determined by common destiny. There is no problem between us. Rather there are positive, militant relations with a high degree of coordination. This organization has made many sacrifices and given many martyrs to protect Saida and the line of liberating the occupied part of Lebanon.

How has the lack of Palestinian national unity affected the liberation struggle militarily? How has the PFLP sought to deal with this problem?

Since 1967, we in the PFLP have advocated the importance of unifying the military efforts of the Palestinian revolution. We are fully convinced that the aim of liberation can only be accomplished through uniting all potentials, especially in the military field. Over the years, we have presented several proposals for unifying the military forces of the different organizations of the revolution. We have struggled enthusiastically to achieve this aim, but we were always faced with obstacles, mainly those erected by the then dominating leadership for its own political reasons, the aims of which have since become very clear. At the time, we realized that uniting the Palestinian

forces would enable the revolution's leadership to recruit all the Palestinian militants and the masses of our people who are capable of practicing their militant duties. The rightist leadership had sufficient resources at its disposal to recruit tens of thousands of our people to fight the liberation battle.

Yet time passed; the rightist leadership talked about finding a solution to this matter, but it was never serious about seeking a true unification of the forces of the Palestinian revolution. We have suffered a great deal from this dispersion in the military field, since all the PLO's military potentials were in the hands of the right; nothing was allotted to the PFLP. The fighters of the PFLP did not receive the necessary help or provisions. What did exist was a form of *ad hoc* coordination on the leadership level in the time of battle, but this was not the expression of a real unity of the Palestinian revolution. Many battles had negative results due to the lack of a united leadership with a single tool and plan. There is no doubt that this issue is completely linked with the political differences. Yet even when there was agreement on the main political issues, the rightist leadership showed no enthusiasm about uniting the military forces on the basis proposed by the PFLP and other revolutionary democratic forces. The rightist leadership wanted all these factions to be under its command. They were not prepared to give these organizations the right to organizational independence. There were thus many obstacles facing the unity of the forces of the Palestinian revolution.

In addition, there is the role of some of the Arab regimes in preventing the unity of the Palestinian revolution, because of what such a united revolution would constitute in terms of militant, political and fighting ability. The main concern of these regimes has been to abort the revolution, so that it will not become the revolution of all the Palestinian masses, effective and influential on all levels. The right-wing has achieved some of the reactionary regimes' goals in this field.

What applies to unity in the military field applies to unity in the social, political and other fields of interest to our masses inside and outside our land. Among these issues is the Palestinian National Front in the occupied territories which was blocked by the Palestinian right. After all the differences, problems and divisions that have occurred in the Palestinian arena, this slogan of uniting the forces of the revolution must be raised by all democratic and nationalist Palestinian forces, for such unity is essential for confronting the tremendous conspiracy against our people, revolution and cause. This slogan is raised by the PFLP and we seek to achieve it via the Salvation Front and by uniting the forces opposed to the policies of deviation and liquidation.

It is true that this is a very complex and difficult matter which needs a lot of time. Nevertheless, we must start with practical steps. We were always enthusiastic about finding the best platform for unity between the revolutionary democratic forces in the Palestinian arena. We have been through an experience with our comrades in the Democratic Front. This failed, but that does not mean that we stop at that point. Rather we must examine our mistakes and extract the lessons in order to correct any shortcomings or mistakes that have occurred. We must draw up the correct line and implement it in the best possible form to unite the Palestinian arena on a clear political line hostile to imperialism, Zionism and the deviationist and liquidationist solutions. Once we agree on a political platform, we can push for uniting our military forces, since no one faction on its own can defeat the enemy. What is needed is a united plan and leadership. This matter requires a lot of effort, mainly from us as the PFLP. We believe in uniting the forces of the

Palestinian revolution, for this will give great benefits and positive results on the path of liberation and continuing the revolution until our people achieve their goals.

What does Arafat's November statement in Cairo, about limiting the armed struggle, mean for the Palestinian armed resistance as a whole?

We don't evaluate the Cairo statement only in terms of its wording. Rather we see its content which aims to give a card to US imperialism and Mubarak's regime, based on their demand that Arafat denounce armed struggle. In the terminology of US imperialism and its allies, any armed struggle for liberation and ending occupation, injustice and oppression, is illegal - terrorism. These forces view the Palestinian resistance as a form of terrorism. Therefore Arafat was called upon to announce this stand. Thus, we consider that this declaration will eventually lead the rightist leadership to hand over the card of armed struggle to the reactionary regimes and US imperialism, in order to pave the way for dialogue with the US, or direct negotiations with the Zionist enemy.

The PFLP and the Salvation Front have issued statements clarifying our position on this declaration. In practice, this declaration has its effects on some of the nationalist elements who oppose the line of deviation but are still (organizationally) affiliated to the rightist leadership. It didn't in any way effect the other forces in the Palestinian resistance. As a matter of fact, the Palestinian revolution's forces in Lebanon continue to carry out their struggle, side-by-side with Lebanese nationalist forces. The daily struggle of our masses in the occupied land is continuing and increasing.

In our opinion, the nationalist fighting elements that are still under the command of Fatah's Central Committee, will not accept the cancellation of armed struggle. Rather they will continue to struggle against the Zionist enemy, despite the positions of Arafat and his Central Committee. The only effect of the declaration on the militants under the command of Fatah's Central Committee in the occupied land, will be reduction of the support they get from this leadership.

We believe that the masses in the occupied land will reject this declaration. The Palestinian arena will witness an escalation of military activities. The reactionary forces that built their hopes on the Cairo declaration, will find that it only represents the one who made it and his followers. Our masses will tell everyone heading for surrender, that this attempt will fail in the face of their steadfastness.

What military efforts and preparations is the PFLP making to support the ongoing mass struggle in occupied Palestine?

The PFLP considers the occupied land as the primary arena for confrontation with the Zionist enemy. Therefore the main effort of the Politbureau and the military department is directed toward this arena, aimed at stepping up our effectiveness in all fields, especially military attacks. These efforts aim at making our military activities in the occupied land continuous and at the optimal level.

In many cases, our comrades launch operations without our claiming them; there are many reasons for this. In the near future, we will progress more in this field and our military ability will improve in the occupied land. The Front's leadership outside is wasting no time in upgrading our struggle in all fields in the occupied land. This is being sensed by our masses in the occupied land as well as outside.

Palestinian Left Unity

A Current Assessment

The following article deals with the unity of the Palestinian revolutionary democratic forces, a question of primary concern to the PFLP, especially in the past few years.

A major part of this article is devoted to an evaluation of the experience of the Joint Leadership with the DFLP. This was the first time the PFLP tried to implement its convictions about left unity in practice. Though this experiment failed, it contributed valuable experience which will be applied in future unity attempts.

In addition, the overall events in the Palestinian arena at that time (summer 1983 - autumn 1984) provide a background for understanding why the PFLP is today involved in an alliance of a different character. We mean the Palestine National Salvation Front (PNSF) which was established as a political alliance to meet the immediately pressing need for confronting the Palestinian right-wing's deviation, in order to return the PLO to the national platform. The failure of the Joint Leadership, and the formation of the PNSF, do not in any way reflect lessened conviction on the part of the PFLP in the necessity of uniting the left forces. On the contrary, the fact that part of the Palestinian bourgeoisie has definitively deviated from the goals of the national liberation struggle serves to further underscore the need for a strong, united left representing the line of the working class.

Strategic perspectives

The PFLP is deeply convinced that the unity of the Palestinian left forces is a precondition for victory. Our people's struggle, like any national democratic revolution, needs a strong vanguard leadership. Ultimately this means the unity of the left forces in a single communist party. This party would be the leading force in a united national front, insuring the continuation of the revolutionary process in the interests of the working class and dispossessed masses.

With this long term perspective in mind, it is the duty of all Palestinian left forces to find what concrete steps can be taken to catalyze the unity process. Among the various left-wing constellations that have emerged in the course of Palestinian struggle, the PFLP deemed that the revolutionary democratic forces, present in the framework of the PLO, were the optimal point of departure for the unity process. These forces have all adopted Marxism-Leninism and advocate the concept of transformation from a revolutionary democratic standpoint to that of the working class. As a result, they have similar strategies, and share similar, if not identical, political positions, especially on central issues.

Immediate purposes

By starting with the revolutionary democratic forces engaged in the Palestinian revolution, the unity process also contributes to fulfilling more immediate goals. Chief among these is providing a firm basis for Palestinian national unity.



Even before the Palestinian right's definitive deviation, its dominating position in the PLO was often employed to obstruct genuine national unity. The revolutionary democratic forces, on the other hand, share the Palestinian masses' interests in solid unity that would facilitate the total mobilization needed to further the liberation struggle. If united, the revolutionary democratic forces would be capable of confronting right-wing trends and guarding against wrong policies, practices, deviations and compromises that undermine our people's unity and national goals. By uniting, the revolutionary democratic forces could more decisively influence decision-making in the Palestinian revolution; they could guarantee its continuity and make a more substantial contribution to daily organizational work and mass mobilization which strengthens the revolution as a whole.

The effects of unifying the left would be qualitative, not merely quantitative. The unity of two or more organizations would constitute a force with much broader political, military and mass influence than the simple merger of their ranks. Such unity would gradually bring about a change in the balance of forces in the Palestinian arena, favoring the progressive forces. Moreover, the realization of left unity would have a significant positive impact on the Palestinian revolution's alliance with the Arab national liberation movement and progressive forces on the international level.

The Joint Leadership

The decision to form the Joint Leadership between the PFLP and DFLP stemmed from the above considerations, particularly the struggle for genuine national unity and the possibility of confronting the right-wing from a position of strength

within the PLO institutions. From the strategic, ideological angle, the two fronts had advocated the importance of the democratic forces' unity at their respective, foregoing congresses. Though the discussions on the unity process began in 1981, the situation after the 1982 war, and especially the emergence of the crisis in Fatah, served to catalyze the formation of the Joint Leadership in June 1983. The fact that it was formed, despite the lack of total agreement on all issues, attests to the importance which both organizations attached to this experiment at the time.

The original political platform for the Joint Leadership was the Program for Unity and Democratic Reform in the PLO, issued in October 1983. In this program, national unity is dialectically connected to the question of reform in the framework of the PLO. The program attests to the radical nature of the reform which the Joint Leadership was striving to attain. This was the main juncture in the experience of the Joint Leadership and later the Democratic Alliance, comprising the PFLP, DFLP, Palestinian Communist Party (PCP) and Palestine Liberation Front (PLF).

After the adoption of this program, the Joint Leadership underwent several political fluctuations. However, the differences that arose did not negate the common ground which existed between the two organizations. There were difficulties in the wake of the inter-Palestinian fighting in Tripoli as a result of the PFLP's and DFLP's differing assessments of how the problem should be solved. Yet a joint stand was taken, condemning inter-Palestinian fighting, as the result of an internal agreement. The two fronts agreed that democratic dialogue should be adopted as the basis for resolving internal Palestinian conflicts. The Joint Leadership also proposed that the Program for Unity and Democratic Reform should constitute the basis for solving such conflicts.

Upon Arafat's visit to Cairo in December 1983, contradictions grew in the Joint Leadership. This visit was seen by the PFLP as a qualitative development in the line taken by the Palestinian right. We therefore considered that the Program for Unity and Democratic Reform had become insufficient for continuing the struggle to unify the PLO. Moreover, the PFLP considered that Arafat's visit disqualifies him from serving as the common denominator for Palestinian unity. The DFLP, however, did not consider that Arafat's visit constituted a qualitative development of the rightist trend and policy. The DFLP maintained its view of the Program for Unity and Democratic Reform. Concurrently, there were differences with respect to how to deal with Fatah's Central Committee. The PFLP stressed not meeting with them until they adopted a stand on Arafat's visit. The DFLP considered it necessary to continue such meetings despite their not adopting a stand.

Thus, the experiment of the Joint Leadership underwent a difficult situation in the first four months of 1984. The differences centered on the extent of the danger implied by Arafat's visit; the view with respect to Fatah's Central Committee, i.e., to what extent it was in harmony with Arafat; and the ways of confronting the deviationist trend in the Palestinian arena. Despite these difficulties, the PFLP continued to exert efforts to preserve the Joint Leadership. We considered our step of establishing the Joint Leadership as one imposed by the current situation, but in essence a strategical aspiration as part of the effort to unify the left as a whole. In contrast, the DFLP viewed the Joint Leadership from a purely tactical angle.

Then on March 26, 1984, the Democratic Alliance met in Aden, with three Arab communist parties: The Syrian and Lebanese Communist Parties, and the Yemeni Socialist Party.

The discussion of the developments in the Palestinian arena resulted in the Aden agreement which emphasized the necessity of exerting all efforts to preserve Palestinian national unity, and gathering all forces to face the deviationist trend. One clause in the document specified the conditions for meeting with Fatah's Central Committee. Another specified the fundamentals of mutual understanding with the other Palestinian organizations, i.e., the National Alliance (the Fatah opposition, Saiqa, PFLP-General Command, Popular Struggle Front), in order to gather all forces to confront the deviationist trend, and work for unifying the Palestinian revolution on a national, anti-imperialist platform.

This document then constituted the political platform for the Joint Leadership and the Democratic Alliance, governing any situation where differences occurred. After the Aden agreement, the Democratic Alliance was supposed to begin a dialogue with Fatah's Central Committee to confirm the political basis for restoring the PLO's nationalist policy. At the same time, meetings were to begin with the National Alliance, on confronting the deviationist trend, in order to restore Palestinian national unity. The Democratic Alliance began dialogue with Fatah's Central Committee and with the National Alliance. However, the problem arose that all efforts were concentrated on dialogue with the former, while the dialogue with the latter was not followed up.

Why were we unsuccessful in implementing the Aden agreement? Why did our attempt to preserve the Democratic Alliance fail?

The main clauses of the Aden agreement were clear-cut. However, in the ensuing practice of the Democratic Alliance, there was too much stress on the general idea, while insufficient attention was devoted to the specific points outlined in the clauses, especially regarding the dialogue with Fatah's Central Committee. The dialogue with the Central Committee resulted in the Aden-Algiers agreement which was below the level of the Aden document of the Democratic Alliance. It did not specify anything about the consequences of Arafat's visit to Cairo; the point that Arafat was no longer a common denominator was omitted. Its specifications regarding relations with Jordan and Egypt were vague.

The Aden-Algiers agreement stressed Palestinian national dialogue, including the Central Committee, the Democratic Alliance and National Alliance, to arrive at comprehensive national unity in order to be able to convene the PNC. Under much pressure, a date was set for the PNC: September 15th, 1984. It was also agreed that uniting the Palestinian arena was a precondition for holding the PNC on that date. The date itself was tentative. The problem was not that of setting a date. The document touched on all political and organizational matters related to unity of the Palestinian arena. The date, September 15th, was simply to be the inevitable result of the dialogue efforts.

Three months passed without any development leading to unity between the three partners to the dialogue. As September 15th approached, the Joint Leadership faced a crisis. The DFLP understood the date set as a fixed one, despite the fact that no headway had been made towards comprehensive national unity. They made the date itself a primary point, although the clauses pertaining to the Palestinian revolution's relations with Jordan and Egypt, and a number of political and organizational matters, had not been put into practice. On the contrary, there were repeated breaches of the terms of the ►

agreement, specifically by Arafat. In the light of this, the PFLP sent a special memorandum to the Fatah Central Committee, calling on them to abide by the agreement they had signed. However, the Central Committee did not abide by the agreement concerning relations with Jordan and Egypt. On the organizational level, they contributed to the split in the Palestinian Writers and Journalists Union, and didn't respect the agreement in terms of PLO offices abroad or financial matters; the National Fund withheld the sums to be paid to the military forces.

Not once did the Central Committee issue a statement condemning the breaches of Arafat. They only insisted on convening the PNC on September 15th. Since nothing was achieved in terms of overall unity, the natural step would have been to continue the efforts to achieve this, then hold the PNC. The date was not sacred, but the right-wing, by insisting on this date, was striving to use the Democratic Alliance as a cover for continuing its political course and consecrating the split in the Palestinian arena.

Problems arose anew in the Joint Leadership and the Democratic Alliance. Instead of abiding by the Aden agreement, the DFLP abided only by the Aden-Algiers agreement, regarding it as the platform of the Joint Leadership and Democratic Alliance. In the light of this, the PFLP began to feel the danger of being drawn towards the right-wing, because of the stands taken by the DFLP.

The PFLP called another meeting in Aden between the Democratic Alliance and the three Arab communist parties. Almost all those present agreed that convening the PNC at that particular time would mean negating the Democratic Alliance's Aden agreement. The PFLP, PCP and PLF stressed the importance of strengthening the Democratic Alliance and continuing efforts to unify the Palestinian arena. The DFLP was adamant about holding the PNC on September 15th. The meeting resulted in agreement that the PNC should be postponed and stressed the importance of adhering to the Aden agreement. In short, the DFLP was more dedicated to alliance with the bourgeoisie than to the Democratic Alliance's platform. Despite this, the PFLP continued to consider the Joint Leadership and Democratic Alliance as the basis for its Palestinian alliances and the point of departure for solving the PLO's crisis, adhering to the Aden document.

The suspension of the Joint Leadership

When the right-wing decided to convene the PNC in Amman in November 1984, strong differences arose in the Joint Leadership and Democratic Alliance. The DFLP considered this PNC to be legitimate, while the PFLP considered it and everything built on it to be illegitimate. As a result, the DFLP unilaterally announced the freezing of the Joint Leadership on November 20th.

The DFLP's decision was coupled with a virtual propaganda war on the PFLP. We were falsely accused of revoking our commitment to the Aden-Algiers agreement and held responsible for destroying the chance to block the Central Committee's unilateral convocation of the PNC. By comparison, the DFLP's comments were mild concerning the right's breaches of the Aden-Algiers agreement and its decision to convene the PNC in Amman before the achievement of comprehensive Palestinian unity.

The PFLP was forced to clarify that we had never swerved from our commitment to the Aden-Algiers agreement. However, such commitment never meant abandoning the struggle against the dominating rightist leadership and its destructive

policies, in order to restore the PLO's unity and relations with Syria. We pointed out the alternatives we had presented for having the PNC postponed until overall unity could be achieved, such as immediately convening the PLO Central Council. Events showed that the rightist leadership was not at all interested in such alternatives, for it blocked the needed quorum for an Executive Committee meeting which the DFLP was ready to attend in return for postponing the PNC. The reality was that the right-wing had made a political decision to hold a PNC with whoever would attend, in order to provide a show of support for its chosen policy. In this context, the right wanted the Democratic Alliance to provide a cover for its efforts.

Frankly, the PFLP was both surprised and disappointed by the DFLP's suspension of the Joint Leadership. The DFLP thus disregarded the strategic perspective of this experiment in favor of a tactical reaction to immediate events and differences. It was surprising that the DFLP did so without consultations, despite a prior agreement on a meeting to evaluate the overall experience of the Joint Leadership. In so doing, the DFLP not only delayed a strategic task of the Palestinian left. It also delivered a gift to the right-wing just as the Amman PNC was convened, by opening conflict among the forces opposed to the right-wing policy.

The PFLP continued trying to preserve the Democratic Alliance and calling for the unity of the PLO despite the PNC session. However, the differences had become very serious. This situation continued until the signing of the Amman accord.

The PFLP considered the Amman accord a serious turning point with dangerous implications - a point at which the Palestinian right had irrevocably determined its final direction. All organizations in the Democratic Alliance agreed on the necessity of struggling to annul the accord, but there was hesitation or refusal on the part of some about initiating an organizational framework to this purpose. Nor was there consensus on the necessity of removing the right-wing from the leadership as a prerequisite for restoring the PLO's unity and national line. The PFLP called for the broadest possible Palestinian front to confront the deviationist leadership, but the DFLP was of a different opinion. This difference was serious enough to spell the end of the Democratic Alliance as a coalition of four organizations. As a result, the PFLP worked for the formation of the PNSF, including the PLF and the organizations of the National Alliance.

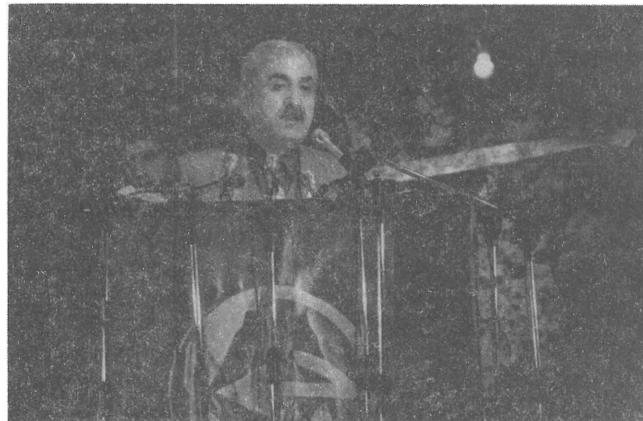
Prospects

The PFLP remains committed to the unity of the revolutionary democratic forces as a step towards comprehensive left unity and the formation of a united Palestinian communist party. Until this level of unity is attained, serious obstacles will continue to exist and we are required to continue to struggle to overcome these. These obstacles resulted in the collapse of the Joint Leadership after less than one and a half years. This goal will, however, remain as the basis of our work to upgrade unity between Palestinian left forces. In future unity initiatives, the PFLP considers all the other revolutionary democratic organizations as possible partners (DFLP, PLF, PSF) as well as the PCP and all other progressive Palestinian organizations and forces. Currently, in the occupied territories, we are engaged in concrete cooperative work on the mass level with both the DFLP and PCP. This cooperation may give forms and ideas for overcoming the obstacles to left unity. We also hope that the struggle against the right-wing deviation in the PLO will generate new opportunities for left unity which is sorely needed for the continuation and final victory of our revolution.

PFLP's 18th Anniversary Celebrations

The celebration of the PFLP's 18th anniversary was far more than a central rally. For example, in the camps surrounding Damascus, it meant two weeks of events open to the public: a handicrafts exhibition organized by the Women's Bureau; three nights of music and folkdancing; an art exhibition including graphics, posters and children's drawings; a march to commemorate the martyrs; receptions and seminars. There was an exhibition of Palestinian art in the Soviet Cultural Center in Damascus, and an evening to honor the comrades who were liberated from the Zionist jails. In addition, celebrations were held in other camps in Syria and Lebanon, and among Palestinian communities in other countries.

The central rally was held in Yarmouk camp on December 13th. Speakers included PNC President Khalid Fahoum; Said Salem of the Central Committee of the Yemeni Socialist Party; Ahmad Durgham, member of the Regional Leadership of the Arab Socialist Baath Party (Syria); and George Hawi, General Secretary of the Lebanese Communist Party. George Habash, General Secretary of the PFLP, delivered the main speech which is printed below.



Mass Rally Comrade Habash Speaks

Comrade George Habash opened his address by greeting every family that has given a son or daughter for Palestine. He greeted the steadfast prisoners in the Zionist jails and all the Palestinian masses in the occupied homeland, the masses in the camps of Beirut and all of Lebanon, and the Palestinian people everywhere. He also saluted the Lebanese National Resistance Front and the Lebanese masses, the masses of Egypt and Suleiman Khater, hero of the Sinai. He saluted the Arab nationalist regimes, the national liberation movements in Asia, Africa and Latin America, and the Soviet Union, the faithful friend of the Palestinian people, and all the forces of peace, progress and socialism. He then continued, as follows:

Comrades, 1985 has been the most difficult year for our contemporary revolution. I say this after carefully reviewing the revolution's experience

from 1965 until 1985. You might ask why: Is it more difficult than 1970-71, or more difficult than 1982? Yes, this year was more difficult than all these years. In previous years, our revolution consolidated and successfully confronted the Zionist and imperialist attacks. This year, though, there was a collapse within the PLO and the Palestinian revolution. The deviating, dominating, rightist leadership of the PLO signed the February 11th accord in Amman. What is the meaning of this accord? Literally, it means adopting not only the US solution for the Palestinian cause, but the Zionist one as well. You may wonder how this can be...

Before the founding of the current revolution, Zionism and imperialism worked on the basis of completely erasing the Palestinian cause. Then, armed struggle started and our people gave tens of thousands of martyrs. Our people struggled steadfastly for almost

twenty years. Resolutions were adopted in the UN by the whole world, except for 'Israel' and the US, calling for solving the Palestinian cause on the basis of establishing a Palestinian state. Of course, the US and 'Israel' did not recognize these resolutions, but they could not go on saying that there was no such thing as the Palestinian cause. Instead they began saying that there is a Palestinian question that needs to be solved via the 'Jordanian option'. At least, that's how Reagan and Peres refer to it. They mean that the Palestinian cause is to be solved by granting self-rule in the framework of the Jordanian state. Now looking at the Amman accord, it means literally to adopt this Zionist and US version of solving the Palestinian cause.

If any of you are thinking that this agreement is like any other agreement, and that the Palestinian revolution has passed through several phases and signed many agreements over the past ►

twenty years, then you are wrong. The Amman accord means replacing the program of Palestinian consensus, the program for return, self-determination and an independent state, with a program for confederation with Jordan.

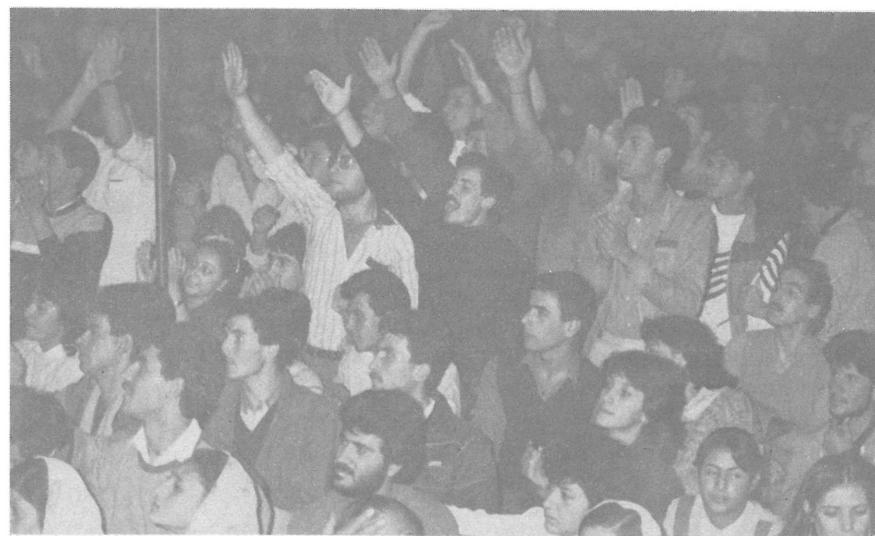
The Amman accord means relinquishing the big gain made when the PLO received official Arab and international recognition as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and their cause. Moreover, the Amman accord, in the minds of those who planned it, aims at being the second link in the chain of Camp David. It would become the second link after the heroic Lebanese people, together with Syria, abolished the May 17th agreement. By so doing, they negated the possibility that this agreement would be the second link in the application and Arabization of the Camp David accords.

1985-the most difficult year

I will be honest with you, with my comrades in the PFLP and the other factions of the Palestinian revolution, about the reality of the events which our revolution is now experiencing. The Amman accord means the collapse of the leadership that headed the struggle for the past twenty years, but this leadership still controls the path of the revolution and the PLO. That is why this year has been the most difficult ever. I wanted to say this clearly so that all democratic and nationalist forces, and all honest Palestinians, would prepare themselves to accept the responsibility that rests on their shoulders.

Still, there is no need to be frightened or worried, because the class forces that have borne the current revolution on their shoulders and given all the sacrifices, will always remain mobilized around the national aims. They will continue giving when there is a new class leadership that devotes itself to the masses. This leadership will continue the revolution despite all difficulties and obstacles.

In the course of the Palestinian national struggle, we have been through other critical stages - in 1948, 1967, 1982. Stages of this kind have special qualities. Since I have lived through this long experience, from 1948 until now, I have become aware of these qualities. When we face such difficult times, the masses may be hit by a case of temporary apathy. In the meantime, these difficulties also affect the vanguards, but in a positive way. The vanguards start drawing up plans for a new course for



the revolution, so that it continues and victory will be achieved.

It is important to realize that this process of salvaging the course of the revolution is not quick and easy. It is a matter of qualitative accumulation whereby the revolution becomes bigger and stronger and therefore able to continue.

Comrades, we all know that there are sectors of our masses and nationalist forces who still hope that things haven't reached this level. They think that those who chose this miserable road will change their minds upon perceiving the size of the concessions demanded of them, and the arrogance of the enemy with every concession they give. However, the experience of the past months has given a clear answer concerning this matter.

Will the right-wing return?

Let me explain this point: There is a group of people saying that the rightist leadership has given these concessions thinking to succeed in becoming a partner in the settlement; once this leadership finds that it is still not accepted, it will return to the national line in time to save the PLO. The last few months have given us the answer to this specific point. Murphy refused to meet with the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. The very same day, Yasir Arafat made a speech to the effect that the US had cheated him, for they had promised to meet with the delegation. Moreover, after Murphy's refusal to meet with the joint delegation, the PLO headquarters in Tunis were bombed; England refused to meet the joint delegation in London. Most people thought this would be enough to make the deviating, rightist leadership change its course, but did

this happen?

We will not discuss things on the basis of wishes and speculations, because there are plenty of these. Rather, the events themselves give the answer. At least three major events dealt hard blows to this leadership. What was their response? Did they return to the national ranks? No, their answer was the Cairo declaration in the presence of Husni Mubarak. The statement in Cairo, which is tied with the chains of Camp David, cannot be judged simply by reading the text. The statement told us that this leadership will answer Israeli and imperialist arrogance with more concessions.

We are a scientific organization that is not swayed by occasional comments or nice words. We work according to facts and reality. Yesterday, for example, Mr. Milhem (member of the PLO Executive Committee) said that the PLO will not recognize 242 even if we return to Jaffa. Every so often, Arafat declares that we will use armed struggle. Our duty is to protect our masses from such confusion. The course of events proved that, until now, this leadership answers the attacks of Zionism and imperialism with more concessions.

Thus, I would like to declare that when these concessions reach to the point of recognizing 'Israel' and direct negotiations with it, we will in no way permit the deviating right to continue saying they represent the PLO and the aims of the Palestinian people. At that point, we will feel that it is our right and duty to announce to the world that the national and democratic Palestinian forces who adhere to the national program, are the ones that represent the PLO.

We feel that the forces of progress, liberation and socialism in the world will

stand with us and understand our position. These forces will agree to our position because their support is not committed to a particular faction or to Arafat; it is to the Palestinian people, cause and national independent state.

While relying on this analysis and expectation concerning coming events, our eyes will remain open to any contrary developments. I say this because some people until now still think that the rightist leadership will return to the national line. I would like to caution them against the balloons of confusion that are floated to distract attention from the rightist leadership's continuing deviation.

When the Amman PNC was held in November 1984, some said that we must be patient. They said that this PNC was only a question of where to convene it; that it had no political implications; and that there was no need to complicate things. They said the PNC will be held in Amman, and after that no more concessions will be given. Many delegations were sent to the socialist countries to explain that convening the PNC in Amman should not be considered more than a question of finding a site.

In May, some raised the slogan of national unity because of the tragic camp war. Everywhere we went we would hear that national unity was our main weapon for confronting whoever seeks to finish the Palestinian cause and armed struggle. But what about the Amman accord? Is it possible to unite with such a political program? We asked if they would cancel the Amman accord. Their answer was that it was already dead, but what happened afterwards? We all saw the relentless efforts to convene an Arab summit for the sole purpose of getting official Arab support for the Amman accord.

The latest example was the communique after the illegitimate PLO Cent-

ral Council met in Baghdad, calling for national unity. It said we must agree; the PLO is almost lost; we must all be responsible and stand together in order to save it. According to the communique, a committee was formed to pursue this task. Yet this same council that adopted the resolution to form this committee, adopted another resolution affirming the Amman accord and the Cairo statement. I worry about our masses' being exposed to this intentional and dangerous campaign of confusion. In the light of these campaigns, I say that return to the national position is only through declared and real cancellation of the Amman accord by those who signed it. Such cancellation is the criterion for judging the entire course pursued by the rightist leadership after the departure from Beirut.

The people's interests take priority

This is the right of all conscious, self-respecting people and nationalist organizations. The PLO was almost destroyed as a result of this rightist trend. Some are saying, «Don't set impossible conditions» or «Don't expect to get Arafat to admit that he was wrong.» Yet Arafat is not more important than the Palestinian people. *Abdel Nasser* criticized himself more than once. The interests of the Palestinian people take priority over everything. We have seen the individualistic way Arafat conducted the affairs of the PLO. This is why I emphasize that he is the one to be held responsible, first and foremost. Any self-respecting, revolutionary, nationalist force has the right to pass judgement on this trend and its destructive effects on the PLO. They have the right to demand the reconstruction of the legislative and executive bodies of the PLO, as a measure to protect the national cause.

Comrades, we do not see a possi-

bility that the rightist leadership will return to the nationalist position. I hope that this is clear. What we want is to provide a framework for all nationalist and democratic forces - both Palestinian and Arab - to confront the deviationist trend.

Another aim is to reassure friendly forces and our allies, especially in Democratic Yemen, Moscow and all the socialist countries, whose opinion we value very highly, that our past and present position on unity is a sincere one. Then they will concretely see that it is the rightist leadership that is splitting the Palestinian arena.

The Amman accord has dangerous effects on our struggle in the occupied territories. Jordan's puppets were revived, as were the village leagues. The enemy began the process of implementing 'autonomy' by appointing *Thafer al Masri* instead of *Bassam Shakaa*, the popular, elected mayor of Nablus. This is the start of implementing joint Israeli-Jordanian administration. The official Jordanian delegation which visited 'Israel', in addition to the secret ones, are other examples of how Jordan and 'Israel' are dividing the administrative role. All of this has begun to emerge as a result of the miserable political choice made by the rightist leadership, and the Amman accord.

Who throws the stones?

Yet there is another side to the picture. Our people's response is the escalation of armed resistance, as well as political and mass struggle opposed to the Amman accord and the capitulationist trend. The Zionists' declaration of the iron fist policy attests that they feel the reaction of our people to the deviationist trend. Thus, when I mention that this painful situation, suffered by our masses, must not cause fear or worry, I say this after having given my words much thought. After a time, we will witness a rectification of the revolution's situation.

I want to ask you this: Who has fought the battles? Who has thrown the molotov cocktails and the stones? Answer me that. Was it *Freij*? or *Shawwa*? or *Siniora*? or *Thafer al Masri*? If it was them throwing the bombs and stabbing the Zionist enemy, then we would have good reason to fear that our revolution is on the verge of collapse. You know, however, who the real fighters are - our toiling, revolutionary classes; they will continue the revolution.

In passing, I would like to mention that we will continue the revolution

Honoring the martyrs in Shatila





despite all. If national unity is achieved later on, the rightist figures will be allowed to occupy only the modest position they deserve in the revolutionary process.

The toiling revolutionary classes will continue the struggle against the enemy and all imperialist and Zionist plans, both politically and militarily. At the same time, we will strive for the unity of the nationalist and democratic forces. As PFLP, we raise the slogan: «Unity of all patriots who support the Palestinian National Charter and the national program.» In addition we will implement unity in the field with all sincerity, raising the slogan: «All the toiling Palestinians, regardless of their organizational affiliation, against the occupation and its plans.» We do not say that there is a state of collapse, and invite all to cry over it. We say that, true, there is this condition, but we point to the alternative for continuing our revolution.

Aims in Lebanon

Brothers and sisters, in this difficult year, our masses in Sabra, Shatila and Bourj al Barajneh have been exposed to serious attempts to wrench away their guns. It is our duty to extract lessons from this painful experience, in order to prevent recurrence of fighting among those in the same trench. We, the Palestinians, along with the Lebanese nationalist forces and masses, should start by realizing that the aims of the PNSF, and all the Palestinian forces opposed to deviation, differ totally from Arafat's aims. We in the PFLP and PNSF do not wish to control the decision of the Lebanese nationalist forces, as Arafat did before 1982. We do not wish to exploit the Lebanese arena and mass struggle to better a bargaining position

at the negotiations table. The presence of the PNSF in Lebanon is for entirely different purposes. I do not wish to be content with saying that we will confront all misconduct; this goes without saying. On the political level, our aims differ.

What does PNSF want from Lebanon? It is our right to fulfill the duty of protecting our Palestinian masses and camps. No leadership can ignore this duty, especially after the trials of 1982-85. Our people have the right to clearly specified civil, political and social rights which would be realized if a national democratic government came into being in Lebanon. Until that time, the PNSF has the right to ensure the masses' security.

Another issue has to do with our right to fight the enemy from Lebanese soil. There are those who tell us: «Fight from within occupied Palestine. You will find all the masses there ready to support you.» I appeal to those people to understand the special and complex nature of our cause. Such a call means asking us to fight heroically for a few years without any political perspective. It would mean an end to the resistance.

Some of you remember well our experience in the Gaza Strip. Some of you actually lived that experience. You remember the Zionists' acknowledging that the fedayeen controlled the Strip by night, while they could only control it during the day. Gradually, however, after the clearance of large areas of orchards and a plan, supervised by Sharon personally, whereby new roads were paved, the enemy was able to affect our struggle.

We give first priority to our struggle in the occupied territories. However, we do not consider that sufficient. We will not leave our masses in the occupied

homeland to despair. The presence of the Palestinian resistance outside has always constituted a moral and material support to our people in the occupied territories.

If these are our goals, then there should be no contradiction between the Lebanese nationalist program and the Palestinian national program. Therefore, we hope that the agreement concluded in Damascus, after the camp war, remains the basis for relations between the Palestinian revolution and the Lebanese nationalist forces. Any development should be dealt with through dialogue. I am sure that we will always reach a positive solution if we adhere to the primary conflict with the Zionist and imperialist enemy.

We and Amal still have the Zionist enemy to fight - this battle is not over. We want a solution to the problem which has arisen between the Palestinian resistance and Amal, because any confrontation of the imperialist assault should be based on consolidation of the Palestinian-Lebanese-Syrian alliance. The situation clearly calls for the slogan: «All guns against the Zionist enemy in the South and the security zone.»

For a national front in Jordan

Brothers and sisters, in the light of this difficult situation, we must be aware of the role of the Jordanian regime. The cancelling of the Amman accord requires serious struggle in the Jordanian arena, and the formation of a national front. The slogan for this process is: «Close all doors to US solutions.» The Jordanian regime has four alternatives open to it now: (1) direct negotiations with 'Israel'; (2) the Amman accord with the rightist leadership; (3) Camp David - Hussein is still hesitant, but does not reject it; and (4) keeping the door ajar to Syria.

If Hussein receives US guarantees concerning the settlement process in March, the pace towards negotiations will quicken. This shows the urgent need for mass struggle in the Jordanian arena, aimed at closing the doors to the imperialist and Zionist plans, and at the same time strengthening cooperation with Syria and the other nationalist regimes, and with the socialist community.

Brothers and sisters, all of you are aware of the connection between the Palestinian and Arab national struggle. Without this connection, the national liberation struggle has no horizon. This leads us to the subject of the Palesti-

nian-Syrian-Lebanese alliance, the role of the Arab nationalist regimes and the necessity of their harboring the Palestinian revolution, and the subject of the revolutionary struggle in general. Time does not allow me to cover all these topics. However, I wish to indicate that the PFLP realizes the necessity of the connection between Palestinian struggle and Arab national struggle in the years to come. On this level, I would like to make a few points:

1. The current task facing us is rectifying relations between the Palestinian resistance and the Lebanese nationalist forces. It is impossible to imagine that relations between us and them should continue as they are. We, as the PFLP and PNSF, must plan for continuous and intense meetings so as to restore unity. Unity between the PNSF, Syria and the Lebanese nationalist forces is imperative for any serious confrontation of the imperialist attack.

2. In the light of the deterioration of the official Arab situation, and the Camp David phase, Syria constitutes the steadfast fortress in the face of the Zionist enemy, in the eyes of all forces of progress, liberation and socialism in the world. We, as PFLP, emphasize the importance of our alliance with Syria on the basis of (a) confronting all aspects of Camp David; (b) preserving Palestinian armed resistance in Lebanon and keeping Lebanon open for struggle against the Zionist enemy; and (c) restoring the PLO to the national line according to the program of the PNSF. We will always hold Syria in high esteem for its historical stand in the Arab-Zionist conflict, in the light of the humiliating deterioration of the Arab situation.

3. We hold Syria, Democratic Yemen, Libya and Algeria especially responsible for shouldering their part in confronting the imperialist aggression which targets all of them without exception. At the moment imperialism is concentrating on Libya. We, as PFLP, and the nationalist Palestinian masses declare our complete solidarity with Libya in confronting the imperialist aggression which is based on the Camp David agreement of Egypt. It is impossible to conceive that the situation among the Arab nationalist countries remains as it is. The reactionary regimes coordinate better among themselves than do the countries of the Steadfastness Front. The nationalist regimes are facing an Arab summit. Do they want to attend? If so, what plans do they want to propose?

and implement? Until recently, the PLO was their partner; now it is part of the reactionary camp. What do they want to do about that? Of course, that is firstly a Palestinian responsibility, but what is their opinion? What do they propose to do to help restore the PLO to the national line?

4. The general attitude prevailing is that the Arab nation is going through a period of deterioration, and we can do nothing about it. It is true that the general phenomenon is one of deterioration, but we should not underestimate what has happened in Egypt in the past few months, or in Sudan, or in Lebanon. We should see the dawn which is rising over the Arab nation. We denounce the Palestinian right's talk about another Yalta in the region, implying that the Soviet Union views the people's cause in the same way as imperialism. Palestinian national struggle must always be placed in the correct international framework. This requires continuous struggle to strengthen the solidarity between the Palestinian revolution and the Soviet Union and socialist community.

Current tasks

The basic tasks that the PFLP will struggle to achieve in the coming year are the following:

1. continued struggle against US solutions and for overcoming the PLO's crisis;
2. struggle to abort the highly dangerous Israeli-Jordanian plans;
3. escalating armed struggle;
4. safeguarding the PNSF - When people talk about confronting the deviationist trend, their demand is that we unite. The PNSF consists of six fac-

tions who sincerely want to overcome any problems and safeguard the PNSF, so that united it will confront the deviationist trend. Front work is always difficult and we still do not have a deep understanding of its basic principles. Our understanding can only be deepened through experience.

5. rallying all nationalist and democratic forces in the Palestinian arena;
6. achieving unity in the field; to protect Palestinian armed struggle in Lebanon and our people in the occupied homeland, we must unite all patriots from all organizations with the same political stand;
7. preserving armed Palestinian presence in Lebanon;
8. struggling to form a Jordanian national front in Jordan;
9. strengthening the Palestinian-Syrian-Lebanese nationalist alliance;
10. amassing the efforts of the Arab nationalist countries to nurture the Palestinian revolution, and to confront the imperialist assault in the region;
11. strengthening relations with the factions of the Arab liberation movement, especially in Egypt and Sudan;
12. strengthening principled relations with the Soviet Union and socialist countries, and liberation movements around the world.

Comrades, in these bitter and difficult times which the PLO and the Palestinian revolution are experiencing, I hope that you, and all the revolutionary and democratic Palestinian forces, will be up to the challenge of these new tasks. This is the responsibility which has been cast upon your shoulders by the developments in the Palestinian and Arab arena.

Attacking the Security Zone

A PFLP military spokesman announced the following operations carried out by the PFLP fighters in December, against the Israeli and Lahd troops in the so-called security zone in South Lebanon:

On the night of December 3rd, the commando group of the martyr, Mohammad Kanan, working behind enemy lines, launched an attack on a Zionist military post at Kafra. The post was equipped with a 500 mounted machine gun (capable of hitting a wide range of the surrounding area). The attack destroyed the post, and the soldier manning the gun was seen dead; 2 other enemy soldiers were wounded. The

clash lasted about 20 minutes and our unit returned safely to base.

On December 11th, our commandos attacked a joint Israeli-Lahd patrol with B7 rockets and machine guns at the Sabrin-Kafra intersection. Two of the enemy soldiers were killed.

On December 11th, our militants attacked a post of Lahd's army at Tallat Kafra, with 107 mm rockets, scoring a direct hit.

On December 14th, our militants attacked a jointly manned checkpoint near Swaira village in the western Bekaa Valley, with 107 mm rockets, scoring a direct hit.

Anniversary Greetings

We hereby express our appreciation to all those who sent greetings to the PFLP on the occasion of the 18th anniversary of its foundation.

Palestinian

PNC member Bahjat Abu Gharbiya
Democratic Palestine Committees - USA
Palestinian Women's Committees - USA
Vanguards of the Popular Liberation War - Al Saiqa
Palestinian Liberation Front
Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine
Palestine National Liberation Movement - Fatah
Palestinian Communist Party - Provisional Leadership

Arab

Union of Iraqi Democrats - Central Leadership Committee
Michel Kamel, Egyptian Communist Party
Communist Party of Somalia
National Democratic Front - North Yemen
Somali People's Vanguard Party - Central Committee
Arab Clubs - USA
Arab Socialist Baath Party - Lebanon
Syrian Social Nationalist Party
Arab Socialist Action Party in the Arabian Peninsula
Socialist Party - Iraq
Communist Party of Saudi Arabia
Naji Alloush, Arab People's Liberation Movement
Jordanian Communist Party
National Liberation Front - Bahrain
Iraqi Democratic Union
Iraqi Communist Party
Syrian Communist Party
Popular Front - Bahrain
Yemeni People's Unity Party - North Yemen
Egyptian Nationalists Union Abroad
Jordanian Revolutionary Movement
People's Front for the Liberation of Oman

International

Abed al Jalil Barshour, Ambassador of

the Afghanistan Democratic Republic, in Syria

Emmaus Bjorka Association - Sweden
OSPAAL - Cuba

Japanese Red Army - Japan
Kurdish People's Democratic Party
Kurdish Socialist Party - Iraq
Left Unity - Middle East Office - Turkey
Communist Youth League of Denmark
Kurdish Socialist Party - Middle East Office - Turkey
Korean-Palestinian Friendship and Solidarity Committee
Kurdish Workers Party

Liberation Flag in Kurdistan - Turkey
Vanguard Workers Party of Kurdistan
Communist Labor Party - Turkey
Bulgarian Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee
Chinese Friendship Committee with the Peoples of Foreign Countries
Czechoslovakian Afro-Asian-Latin American Solidarity Committee
Communist Party of Turkey - Unity
Eritrean People's Liberation Front
People's Liberation Front of Turkey
Kurdish Socialist Party in Turkey
United Socialist Party - West Berlin
National Front for the Liberation of Kurdistan
Sympathizers of *Democratic Palestine*

«Cubs» and «Flowers» youth groups

in Switzerland

Palestinian Communist Party

«The PFLP has passed through a long, difficult, upward path in this critical stage of the Palestinian people's struggle. It has made great sacrifices, struggling with our people to liberate the homeland, return, exercise self-determination and establish an independent state. Generations of heroic militants have graduated among the ranks of your front. They are raised on sacrifice, loyalty to the national cause and opening up to the most progressive ideas of our epoch - the ideas of victorious Marxism-Leninism. With this militant heritage, the PFLP has played an important role in consolidating Palestinian national unity in the framework of the PLO, enriching its anti-imperialist, anti-Zionist nature, and strengthening its alliances with the Arab liberation forces and the forces of the world revolutionary process, first and foremost, the glorious Soviet Communist Party...»

Popular Struggle Front

«Since its formation, the PFLP has been considered the vanguard Palestinian force with faith in the people and the revolution. The PFLP has faced difficult



circumstances, but has always remained as glorious as our people. The Front has exposed all the conspiracies. It is a vital organization, giving to Palestine and the people militant brightness. It is a candle in the night of Palestine which is full of martyrs and prisoners..."

PFLP-General Command

«On the occasion of the 18th anniversary of the PFLP, we send the warmest militant greetings from all our cadres and our Central Committee. We highly appreciate your role in our national struggle. We pledge to continue to uphold our inalienable national rights..."

Yemeni Socialist Party

«Your celebration means relentless determination to continue on the PFLP's militant, revolutionary path which leads to fulfilling the legitimate, inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. Eighteen years of struggle have proven the correctness of your line in the struggle against imperialism and Zionism and their plans to eradicate the Palestinian identity and just cause. Experience proved the PFLP's concern for uniting Palestinian nationalists within the PLO on an anti-imperialist, anti-Zionist basis. It also proved the PFLP's concern for exposing the capitulationist line that

abandoned the Palestinian national rights..."

Walid Jumblatt Progressive Socialist Party

«In a time of decisive challenge for our Arab cause, I congratulate you on the PFLP's 18th anniversary. This anniversary increases our determination to continue the joint confrontation and support the Palestinians' just cause..."

Lebanese Communist Party

«The Central Committee of the LCP takes this opportunity to reaffirm the prominent role of the PFLP in the Palestinian people's national struggle, for achieving their rights to return, self-determination and an independent state. We reaffirm the PFLP's contribution to the Arab national and progressive struggle, in the framework of the Arab national liberation movement, against imperialism, Zionism and reaction, and for total national liberation, social progress and national unity..."

Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee

«We are confident that the imperialist-Zionist policy of oppressing and terrorizing the Palestinians in the occupied land, will not be able to break

the will of the Palestinian militants or force them to abandon the main aim of their struggle for self-determination and establishing an independent state. We are fully confident that the unity of the forces of the Palestinian resistance movement, and coordination with all the Arab forces hostile to imperialism, will bring victory to the just cause of the Palestinian people..."

Communist Party of Cuba Central Committee

«On the occasion of the 18th anniversary of the PFLP, our party sends warmest salutes and cordial greetings. We highly appreciate your struggle. We reaffirm that there can be no solution to the Middle East problem without recognition of the Palestinian people's rights, including their right to return and establish an independent state..."

Communist Party of France

«On the occasion of the 18th anniversary of the PFLP, the Communist Party of France conveys its salutes. We take this occasion to reaffirm our party's solidarity with the PLO, the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. French communists are working to develop the solidarity with the Palestinian people...»

Joint Communiqué



A delegation from the Communist Party Marxist-Leninist (KPMLr) from Sweden, headed by its chairman, Frank Baude, and Politbureau member, Teddy Frank, in charge of the party's international relations, has visited the PFLP in Damascus, Syria for one week. The delegation was invited by the PFLP in connection with the 18th anniversary of the Front.

The friendship between the two parties has been confirmed and further strengthened through a series of comradely and creative discussions on different levels with leading bodies of the PFLP. The discussions and meetings have confirmed the joint analysis of the two parties regarding the Palestinian struggle and revolution, especially the struggle against the Camp David accords, the Amman agreement and the Cairo declaration; and regarding the effort of the PFLP to unite all patriotic Palestinian forces who are against the Amman agreement as a step to reunite

the PLO, which is the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, on an anti-imperialist and anti-surrenderist basis. The discussions also confirmed the joint position regarding the international struggle against imperialism and against the Reagan Administration's «Star Wars» policy. The two parties fully agree on the necessity of strengthening this struggle and supporting all democratic forces fighting for peace and social justice.

In accordance with this, the visit has strengthened the relations and laid a firm ground for increasing the solidarity and work in the spirit of proletarian internationalism.

Damascus, Dec. 13th, 1985

Taysir Kuba
Head of International Relations
Department - PFLP

Frank Baude
Chairman of the KPMLr

Occupied Palestine

Appointment in Nablus

On November 26th, the Israeli occupation authorities appointed the pro-Jordanian businessman, Thafer al Masri, as mayor of Nablus, the largest city in the occupied West Bank. The members of the Nablus Chamber of Commerce, which Masri heads, were appointed as the new municipal council. This ended the form, but not the content, whereby Nablus has been run by an Israeli army officer, installed after the military government fired the popularly elected mayor, Bassam Shakaa. The Israeli colonel, who heads the 'civil' administration in the West Bank, connected the appointments with Prime Minister Peres' promise to «improve the quality of life» or «improved autonomy» for the residents of the occupied territories. Such jargon noticeably corresponds to the phrases used by US officials when trying to cloak their drive for hegemony in the mantle of 'peace'. However, the gist of this matter is not providing public services, as Israeli and Jordanian officials, as well as Masri himself, have claimed.

It is a dangerous precedent when a Palestinian steps into public office for the sake of beautifying the occupation. It is even more dangerous in the light of the increasing, though undeclared, coordination between the Zionist and Jordanian regimes, which has also been evidenced by the three visits of a delegation from the Jordanian Agriculture Ministry to the occupied West Bank. Such coordination aims to develop an alternative leadership willing in the future to 'represent' the Palestinians in Israeli-Jordanian negotiations.

No one would have dared to take this step were it not for the prevailing disarray in the Palestinian arena, caused by the PLO leadership's deviating and divisive policies. In fact, Masri applied for the job on Jordanian urging. He assumed office amid popular rejection, for the masses adhere to their elected mayor, Shakaa, and to the nationalist position of the West Bank municipalities generally. Moreover, 33 members of the PNC publicly declared their denunciation in a communique in early December.

However, efforts to mobilize an all-out campaign to block the appointments were hampered by the position of the PLO leadership. Instead of determining to confront this joint Israeli-Jordanian move, they opted to promote their own candidate, Basel Kanaan. Not only did they lose the appointment race, they also once again compromised the position of the PLO. The winners were the Israeli occupation and the Jordanian regime who also plan to divide the spoils (the West Bank) in the 'peace' process sponsored by the US. Masri's status as a successful businessman points to the class aspect of the US settlement plan, aiming to coopt the Palestinian and Arab bourgeoisie to reconcile with Zionism.

Cross-border iron fist

The masses and progressive forces are experiencing this 'peace' process in the form of increased repression. Recently, the Israeli iron fist was complemented from across the border by the Jordanian regime's extensive search and arrest operation. In late November, over fifty nationalists were rounded up by the Jordanian intelligence service. These included leaders and cadres of Palestinian and Jordanian parties, and the activists in mass organizations. Clearly, the aim is to clear the way for the regime's enacting its policy of entering a unilateral settlement with 'Israel'. (See

statement from the Committee for Democratic Freedoms in Jordan in the following pages.)

In Palestine, the iron fist has been raised over the heads of our people since the establishment of the Zionist state. The intensity of its application depends on political necessity. In the recent period, dating back to last summer, we have witnessed a more violent implementation of this policy to counter the mass struggle and the escalation of anti-occupation military operations. During the recent period, the iron fist has been brought down on all parts of Palestine. In the past four months, sentences have been passed on 500 Palestinian citizens; over 1000 were arrested, 102 under the administrative detention law, and 23 were deported.

Threatened deportations

Deportation is now pending for four Palestinian citizens who were arrested October 27th, by a military order based on the British Emergency Regulations of 1945. The four are: Dr. Azmi Shuaibi, dentist and member of Al Bira municipal council; Ali Abu Hilal from Abu Dis village near Jerusalem, member of the Executive Committee of the Federation of Trade Unions; Hassan Abdel Jawad, journalist from Duheisheh refugee camp; and Zaki Statieh of Jabalia refugee camp in the Gaza Strip, who was liberated from the Zionist jails in the prisoner exchange this spring.

All are charged with nebulous offenses such as «inciting» against the occupation, a euphemism for defending Palestinian national rights. However, the evidence against them is kept secret, complicating their appeals to have the



deportation orders rescinded. In addition to Palestinian and progressive Israeli lawyers appealing their cases, several prominent European and US lawyers have protested. Some have visited Jerusalem to investigate the facts. Their comments are revealing. As stated to *Al Fajr*, the Swiss lawyer Pierre Toffel clearly denounced the whole conception of deportation: «Even in the Nuremberg court, deportation was considered a war crime.» A Greek lawyer compared the process against the four to the Greek junta's handling of arrests and trial, in terms of the difficulties encountered by lawyers, the press and others seeking to know the facts and promote justice.

Mass protests have been organized against the deportations, especially in the detainees' hometowns. In one of these, 40 women marched in Al Bira in

early November. Their demonstration was forcibly disrupted by the occupation troops and 30 of them were arrested. The arrest of women is becoming more frequent under the reactivated iron fist policy. In another recent incident, 16 women were arrested in Gaza, and sentenced in a single court session, receiving sentences of three to nine months imprisonment and fines ranging from 300,000 to 750,000 shekels (\$240-600).

Economic iron fist

The iron fist is constantly being reinforced with other more 'subtle' measures aimed at undermining the Palestinians economically in their own homeland. For example, this year, the olive crop was banned from export, and other crops were destroyed. Exorbitant taxes were imposed on merchants and far-

mers. Herds of sheep and other animals were confiscated and their owners fined. In the Gaza Strip, fishermen were forcibly prevented from catching fish.

Moreover, Palestinians under occupation continue to pay the price of 'solutions' proposed for the Israeli economic crisis. Prices have been raised on a wide range of basic consumer goods. Taxes are being raised. Inflation decreases the real value of wages. Rising unemployment hits the Palestinian Arab worker first, especially those from the occupied territories. It is estimated that 20% of the Palestinian Arabs in the 1948 occupied territories are unemployed. In the West Bank and Gaza Strip, 35% are unemployed. The Arab municipalities in the Galilee are still facing bankruptcy, due to lack of state funding.

No to Normalizing Occupation

Below are the comments of three prominent progressive nationalist Palestinians in the occupied territories, concerning the appointments in Nablus, and Israeli-Jordanian cooperation.



Bassam Shakaa
elected mayor of Nablus

Over the eighteen years of occupation, the Israeli authorities have gradually replaced the Jordanian laws by the British Mandate's Emergency Laws and by military decrees issued by the successive military governments, regardless of international law. Nevertheless, the Israeli authorities kept some pro-Jordanian elements in some public fields

such as health and education, after making sure that they would carry out Israeli policies, implementing the laws of the military and 'civil' administration. For instance, the education department and curriculum is subject to control by the Israeli education officer who supervises the discipline of these elements in carrying out Israeli policy. In short, since 1967, the occupation authorities have planned and worked for implementing 'civil' administration. They carried on with these policies which became especially aggressive in 1976, when the municipal council elections took place, resulting in a popular referendum which showed our people's rejection of 'civil' administration.

The appointment of non-elected figures to head the municipal councils, and the fact that the appointees accepted and were encouraged to do so by some chambers of commerce, is a submission and a retreat from the nationalist line. It reinforces the occupation policy and strikes against the nationalist forces and program. Those who accepted these appointments, or encouraged such acceptance, are puppets used by some to offer free services to the occupation, ignoring the interests

of their people and cities. Meanwhile, the friends of our people are taking a supportive stand of the councils that have refused to submit to the occupation policies.

Those who are serving the occupation and its plans, especially this plan of appointments, should realize that they will not be able to diverge from the policies planned for them by the occupation authorities. They should also realize that what goes on with their help is an Israeli game aiming to convert the struggle to an inter-Palestinian one, instead of a Palestinian-Israeli struggle.

In the city of Nablus, for instance, attempts were made to divert attention from the Israeli plan to gain full control of the municipal council's water and electricity project. The appointment of an Arab council is intended to divert attention from the real aims. As of now, they have cancelled the Bir al Faraa project and are supplying part of the city's water needs from the Israeli Mekerot Company. They are disconnecting the electricity lines of the northern and eastern parts of Nablus from the council's electricity project and connecting them to the Israeli district electric company. This forced the workers and engineers of the

Nablus electricity project to go on strike and to refuse to submit any plans for the project, as the occupation demanded of them in order to take over the whole project.

With all this, especially the appointments, Israel is aiming at formal Arabization of the council's administration and departments, while maintaining the political Judaization already established: When the occupation authorities were negotiating with the Chamber of Commerce in Nablus, they demanded that the secretariat and department heads be in the hands of appointed Israelis. This shows that all the concessions that have been made are not enough. Certain Palestinian forces, Jordan and the Arab League should realize this. What is going on now will harm the national cause and the steadfastness of our people. In addition, it will facilitate the effort to 'normalize' the occupation politically and give it a national cover. What is happening in Nablus is the start of what is going to happen in other areas. Talk is already circulating about its application in the councils of Ramallah, Al Bira and Al Khalil (Hebron).

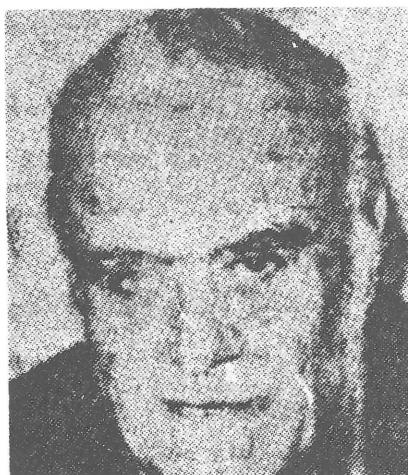
The matter of normalization cannot be separated from the moves of the US consul who announced many times that the US administration is concerned to give a wider, active role to the councils. From the US point of view, this means activating the Palestinian section of the Camp David accords. News coming from Amman indicates that the US consul there is moving in the same direction.

There are other matters which are creating a danger for our national cause and affecting the steadfastness of our people in the occupied homeland. This concerns the aid offered by several funds to strengthen steadfastness. The Arab fund, for instance, sent a delegation to study the possibilities for help and who is to receive this. But what happened? This aid was channeled as permitted by the occupation, where it can be of no use to the citizens. It was channeled to administrative bodies that collaborate with the occupation.

For example, a major part of this aid is given to the public hospital. Meanwhile, the citizen is obliged to pay a percentage of his income for health insurance in accordance with the orders of the occupation authorities, and to pay hospital expenses at the rate of 40 Jordanian dinars (almost \$120) per night. Plus he has to buy medicine from outside the hospital. This example shows that the aid given to the hospitals does

not contribute to strengthening the steadfastness of the citizens. It shows that this aid is used to meet immediate, temporary requirements without contributing to the achievement of a complete health plan.

Going back to our position on the mayor's appointment, I reject this, as do the different nationalist forces, because it is a conspiracy. We must reject it because it is a political matter. Unified, collective efforts should be made to foil it on the basis of the political reality inside and outside, in order to insure the preservation of the Palestinian national program.



*Dr. Haidar Abdel Shafi,
head of the Palestinian
Red Crescent Society
in Gaza*

The Jordanian-Israeli move, raising the matter of appointing the municipal councils, and the moves of the US consul, are all linked with the wasteful policy that started with the Amman accord. Jordanian-Israeli coordination on different levels is an old matter, as is the appointment of pro-Jordanian elements to some administrative posts.

Let us take the case of the Jerusalem Electric Company and the attempts made to share its concession, or the Jordanian delegations, including the recent agricultural delegation. This gives us an idea of what Israel offers Jordan under the US-sponsored settlement. It gives an idea of the ceiling for the distribution of roles under Israeli domination. These are all indications of the Israeli concept of the settlement, and the results of the Palestinian right-wing's policy which started with the Amman accord.

In the course of the attempts made by these different parties to create

Palestinian support for the US-sponsored settlement, there are also the US consul's meetings in Jerusalem with Palestinian personalities. In our view, no talks with the US or its representatives will offer our people anything, because the US position is that of clear hostility... Such meetings will only consecrate the US's insistence that we should meet all their conditions.

Raising the matter of appointments is an attempt to draw the attention of the people away from the attempts being made to take over all the municipal councils' independent projects. These attempts started with the appointment of Israeli administrators before any Arab committees were appointed to administrate. These appointments are being promoted under the banner of «Arab mayors» and «providing services to the citizens», but the aim is political, i.e., to install elements who follow the Jordanian trend in accordance with the Amman accord and its results. The Chamber of Commerce, and the formation of mixed committees to take over the municipal councils, are two currents channeling into the plan which has been rejected by our people.

It seems that Arafat and the Palestinian rightist trend felt that they will come out of the settlement empty-handed, so they promoted the emergence of some figures to secure a role in the appointment policy. The talk about the appointments in Nablus indicates that the occupation authorities want to make it a precedent for similar steps in the other cities.

On the other hand, there is the firm, conscious stand of the people opposing this step and its goals, while adhering to the national program and cause, and demanding the return of the elected council without preconditions.

*Bashir Barghouti,
editor-in-chief of
«Al Talia», Jerusalem*

The appointment conspiracy in the municipal councils, the expulsion policy and the joint Israeli-Jordanian moves, are three links in the same political chain. We do not think that appointing the council is merely an innocent matter concerning public services. It is a political matter aiming to break a link in the Palestinian steadfastness. The forces who have agreed on this policy should know that the appointment matter is linked to the 'autonomy' conspiracy. The links between the appointments and the Palestinian section of the Camp David

accords, i.e., 'autonomy', are seen in the moves of the previous US consul and the new one, Morris Draper, former aid of Murphy, and their emphasis on the



municipal councils and the appointments, and their meetings with the concerned Palestinian figures. This is a serious attempt by the US administration to create the elements for 'civil' administration. There is also the Israeli talk about implementing self-administration unilaterally. The appointments in Nablus, in addition to all this, are part of an ongoing attempt to create compliant teams in all the councils.

It is not important to talk about who will run the councils, the chamber of commerce or the mixed committees, as

there are no fundamental differences between them. The idea of forming mixed committees is put forward as a pressure. As for those willing to cooperate with both the Jordanians and the Israelis, they were always present. The open bridges helped establish such elements in the councils and other institutions. There is also an attempt being made now to revive the Village Leagues which expressed support to the king with Israeli blessings. Several Jordanian delegations visited the West Bank with permission from the Israeli authorities who have always worked to strengthen

pro-Jordanian elements. There were several cases of Israeli officials appointing such elements to very important posts.

As a matter of fact, I cannot see the move of these joint elements as a qualitative change, inspite of their increasing prominence. Such a tendency has always been present, especially after the Amman accord. The policy of administrative detention, expulsion and the iron fist are in line with the Israeli occupation's attempts to weaken the nationalist forces by the detention of union leaders and other nationalists. ●



Military Operations

In line with the continuous escalation of our people's struggle against the Zionist enemy, a PFLP military spokesman announced the following operations carried out according to orders, by our revolutionaries in the occupied homeland.

On November 25th, the military governor's headquarters in Deir al Balah, in the occupied Gaza Strip, was attacked with automatic rifles. There were several casualties among the Zionist soldiers and officers.

On November 30th, a Zionist settler was stabbed and critically injured in Qalqilia market in the occupied West Bank.

On December 4th, a hand grenade was thrown at a Zionist military vehicle at Afora near Al Khalil (Hebron), wounding and killing all the soldiers in it.

On December 5th, timed explosives were set off against a building in front of the Israeli Interior Ministry in Haifa. Several Zionist soldiers were wounded. On the same day, our revolutionaries engaged a Zionist soldier in hand-to-hand combat in Yazour village near Jaffa. The soldier was killed.

On December 7th, the military governor's headquarters in Gaza was attacked by rockets and machineguns. A large number of Zionists were killed or wounded.

On December 8th, the commando unit of the martyr, Muthafer, staged an attack on a gathering of Zionist settlers in Sholmet, north of Haifa. Israeli radio acknowledged that two Israelis were killed and four wounded. While the commandos returned safely to base, the Zionist forces surrounded the area and arrested a large number of Palestinian citizens.

On December 9th, revolutionaries ignited an explosion in the Israeli barracks near Nablus, causing it to go up in flames. Eight Israeli soldiers were killed and seven injured. This operation was carried out by the PFLP commando unit of the martyr, Samir al Debbi.

No to Appointments

Twenty-seven nationalist leaders and associations in occupied Palestine signed the following memorandum and sent copies to the UN, the Arab League and the PNC's legitimate president Khaled Fahoum.

The signing of the Amman agreement between the Jordanian regime and the PLO leadership on February 11th, was an advanced step on the part of the PLO leadership towards being fully involved in the US-Zionist-reactionary solution. In this agreement, the PLO leadership relinquished the PLO's sole representation of the Palestinian people, and their basic national rights which have been recognized by the world community and the UN.

After this agreement was signed, the so-called iron fist policy was tightened against our people in the occupied homeland. Under the so-called law of administrative detention, the military authorities have arrested scores of our people. Some of them have been deported. The authorities have stepped up their repressive measures by putting several cities and towns under curfew, and demolishing scores of homes. The Zionist authorities have practiced the most degrading and horrible humiliation against civilians in the streets. This is an attempt to break the will of the people and force them, through a combination of terror, oppression and psychological warfare, to submit to what is being planned for them in the conspiratory Arab capitals, and to accept the deviating PLO leadership which has not stopped offering concessions at the expense of our national rights.

The Israeli air raid against the PLO leadership's headquarters in Tunis, the highjacking of the Italian ship and the US piracy against the Egyptian plane, were used as pretexts for cancelling the proposed meeting between the British foreign minister and the Palestinian representatives in the joint delegation. All this was used to pressure the deviating leadership of the PLO to make more concessions, recognizing resolutions 242 and 338, and renouncing armed struggle. This pressure took the form of blackmail, that if the PLO leadership does not give in to these demands, it will

be excluded completely from the settlement negotiations. These negotiations intend to liquidate the Palestinian cause through some deviators and conspirators who are not representative of our people, and who will give in to all the demands of the enemy camp.

Hussein's speech at the UN, and his interviews and press releases, blend with the US settlement plan and the Peres initiative at the UN. Hussein's speech is not far removed from the US-Israeli view of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the means for dealing with it. The plans of Hussein and Peres are but a new link towards achieving the US-Zionist project that aims at tightening the grip of US imperialism in the region, ignoring all principles of peace and justice. US imperialism ignores world opinion and tries to exclude the Soviet Union, the friend and ally of the Palestinian people and the Arab nation.

In the light of the above, we would like to stress the following:

First: We refuse the Amman agreement and all its deviating consequences, trends and means. This agreement ignores the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and an independent state; it ignores the PLO's right to represent the Palestinian people, and the 16th PNC's resolutions.

Second: We emphasize Palestinian national unity on the basis of confronting all liquidationist plans, and that the PLO is the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

Third: We refuse all attempts at pressure and political blackmail practiced against our people by the parties to the US-Israeli-reactionary conspiracy. We refuse the pressure represented in the Peres initiative that ignores all Palestinian national rights which have been stressed in UN resolutions, first and foremost our right to self-determination and an independent state.

Fourth: We stress the necessity of a Syrian-Palestinian-Lebanese nationalist alliance. We consider this alliance one of the main nationalist tasks to be achieved at this stage. This is especially true considering the exposure of attempts to ignite the Lebanese arena, to be used as a pressure against the Arab confrontation camp. These

attempts aim to foil the struggle of the triangle of steadfastness against the imperialist plan, especially after the cancellation of the May 17th accord, and after assurances have been given concerning the Palestinian people's right to existence, security and struggle in Lebanon, through their revolutionary nationalist vanguard which represents the vanguard of the Arab national liberation movement in its central cause.

Fifth: We condemn and refuse all the suspicious moves in the occupied land, including the moves that aim at imposing non-nationalist solutions to the question of municipalities, reducing this patriotic issue to a question of providing daily services. These moves deliberately ignore the necessity of adhering to the national position of the municipalities that have refused all the liquidationist projects of the occupation: 'autonomy', 'civil' administration and the latest suspicious moves of the lobby of 28. The lobby of 28 is a Palestinian-Jordanian lobby established to support the liquidationist Amman agreement. It calls for the arrangement of internal matters, i.e., universities, institutions, schools and trade unions, in a way that would complement the anticipated results of the capitulationist program.

Sixth: We refuse and condemn the iron fist policy practiced against our people and citizens everywhere, especially in the Israeli prisons. We call on the Arab and international public to expose these oppressive, racist actions and stop them immediately. We call on our people, all Arab states and national and progressive forces, and all our international friends and allies, first and foremost the Soviet Union and the socialist community, to join us in confronting this US-Zionist-reactionary attack that aims at keeping the Arab region under US influence. We must confront this in order to foil the criminal project for liquidating the Palestinian cause and attacking the nationalist and progressive forces in the Lebanese arena.

We are confident that our heroic Palestinian people, together with the nationalist and progressive forces, and all the forces of progress and goodness in the world, are capable of defeating this hegemonic invasion. Our people,

with struggle and sacrifices, are able to confront the conditions imposed. Then, our people will be able to impose the implementation of the resolutions about their legitimate national rights to self-determination and an independent state, as stated in the UN resolutions and the resolutions of the 16th PNC. We have unlimited faith that history is watching our people's striving for liberation, independence and peace. We are confident of the struggling people's ability and will to achieve their legitimate national rights, because victory is their destiny.

Signatories

1. Bassam Shakaa, elected mayor of Nablus
2. Adel Ghanem, Secretary General of

the General Federation of Trade Unions
3. Fared Abu Warda
4. Abdulla Abul 'Ata
5. Yousef Farhat, elected member of Ramallah municipal council
6. Dr. Haider Abdel Shafi, head of the PRCS in the Gaza Strip
7. Higher Committee for Volunteer Work
8. Union of Palestinian Working Women's Committees
10. Progressive Front for Trade Union Action
11. Waheed Hamdallah, elected mayor of Anabta
12. Mamoun Al Sayed, former editor-in-chief of *Al Fajr*
13. Khaldoun Abdel Haq, elected member of Nablus municipal council
14. Khaled Nasser Dein, lawyer
15. Issam Rabia, elected member of Bir

Zeit municipal council
16. Mustafa al Hamad, elected member of Bir Zeit municipal council
17. Nafeth Midhat Wahedi, president of the Mount of Olives Institution
18. Abdel Hadi Abu Khosa, president of the Central Blood Bank Society
19. Khalil Kheir, deputy mayor of Beit Sahour
20. Ahmed Musa, elected member of El Bira municipal council
21. Dr. Ahmed Hamza al Natshe
22. Dr. Nichola Awad, elected member of Ramallah municipal council
23. Abdelrahman Natshe
24. Abdel Fattah Jabaren, lawyer
25. Abdel Qader Abu Samra, school principle
26. Younis al Jarew, lawyer
27. Khalid Aweda

Yellow Journalism

To Silence the Palestinian Press

Palestinian journalism in the occupied homeland is currently being subjected to rapid attempts by the Jordanian regime and the Zionist authorities, to control it and silence its nationalist voices. Sources in the occupied territories point out that the Jordanian regime's puppets have presented a request to the Zionist authorities to establish a daily newspaper that would express their opinion.

Othman Hallaq, one of the pro-Jordanians, said: «We have received encouraging signs from the Israelis and they promised us a permit... Not a single newspaper in the West Bank supports the moderate line or Jordan... We want a newspaper that would defend the principle of land for peace.» Hallaq mentioned that the newspaper would be established as a corporation, and that he had requested investment from Jordan.

Rafael Levi, Israeli Interior Ministry official, in charge of issuing newspaper permits, said that he is considering the request positively and a final decision is expected in two weeks.

In the meantime, the occupation authorities confiscated the November 29th (Palestine Day) issues of four Jerusalem newspapers: *Al Quds*, *Al Fajr*, *Al Shaab*, *Al Mithaq*. The

authorities claimed this move was to make sure that the editors would abide by censorship regulations. It is known that the occupation authorities impose strict censorship on Palestinian newspapers. They have previously closed a number of newspapers and magazines, and arrested and deported a number of journalists.

The request for opening this newspaper coincides with the Jordanian regime's attempts to bolster its position in the West Bank, in order to create a situation enabling unilateral negotiations with the Zionist enemy. It corresponds to the Zionists' arrest and deportation campaign and the widespread arrests carried out by the regime in Jordan. It comes right after the appointment of Thafer al Masri as mayor of Nablus.

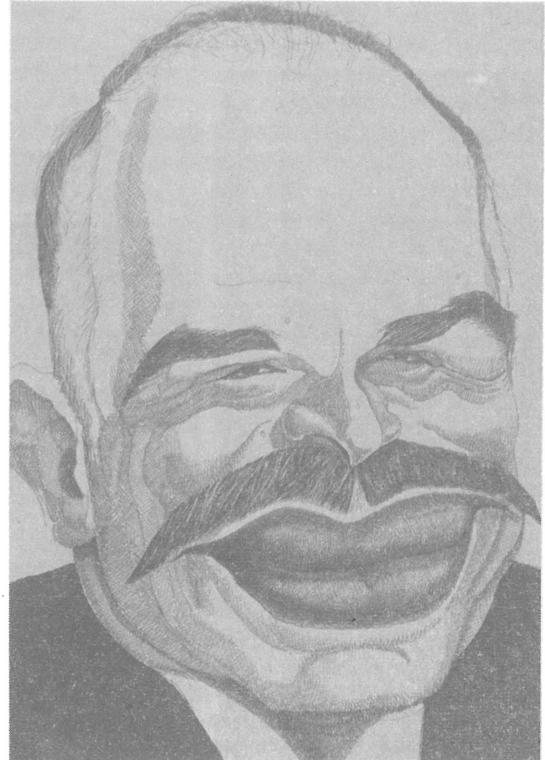
This Jordanian move to create an organ of yellow journalism is actually an attempt to silence the Palestinian nationalist press in the occupied land. In the last decades, this press has played an important role in mobilizing the Palestinian masses against the enemy's projects of Judaization, Camp David and 'autonomy'. The undeclared Jordanian-Israeli coordination in attacking the Palestinian press is an attempt to prevent the nationalist newspapers from exposing the conspiracy being engineered in Amman and Tel Aviv. In



Mastheads of censored Palestinian dailies «Al Mithaq» and «Al Talia»

addition, it aims to provide a forum for confusing public opinion. The attempt to replace Palestinian nationalist journalism with yellow journalism is part of the Jordanian regime's efforts to fully control the position of the PLO and the Palestinians under occupation, in order to push forward the liquidationist solution.

The Jordanian-Israeli Option



On the first of November, the Israeli press reported that Prime Minister Peres had a plan for settlement based on joint Israeli-Jordanian-'Palestinian' administration of the West Bank (including Jerusalem) and the Gaza Strip. Reportedly, this plan was drawn up after a series of meetings with King Hussein and other Jordanian officials over the past months. (Some Israeli newspapers have reported meetings between Peres and Hussein in Europe and in 'Israel'.)

This indicates that Jordan's entering a unilateral settlement with 'Israel' is more probable than before.

Whether or not these reports are accurate in all details, there is clear evidence of an Israeli-Jordanian understanding. This was seen in the respective speeches of King Hussein and Peres at the UN. The 'peace' plan proposed by Peres was positively received by King Hussein, as a step in the right direction. Another important indication is what is going on in the occupied territories. The appointment of Thafer al Masri as mayor of Nablus is the prelude

to appointments in other municipalities, to create a local Palestinian 'leadership' willing to cooperate with both Jordan and the occupation.

Text of the secret accord

As reported by the Israeli newspaper *Al Hamishmar*, these are the terms of the secret agreement between Jordan and Peres, which Tehiya party leaders claimed to have knowledge of:

Security and police

1. Israel will be responsible for security in the occupied territories; Jordan will be responsible for policing.
2. Jordan's police will work in the Arab villages and cities; Israeli police will work in the Israeli settlements.
3. Water resources will be subject to joint administration with each of the two states having the right of veto.
4. Guarding and supervising the two bridges over the Jordan River is the responsibility of Israel and Jordan on the West Bank side, and the responsibility of Jordan on the Jordanian side.

Elections and settlement freeze

1. Arab citizens in the West Bank will have the right to vote for the Jordanian parliament. Israeli citizens will vote for the Knesset.
2. No new settlements will be founded in the occupied territories and there will be no expansion of existing settlements.
3. There is an agreement on convening an international conference with the participation of the USSR. Israel's precondition is the renewal of relations with the USSR.
4. Jordan wants the PLO and Syria to participate in an international conference. Israel agreed to Syria, but not the PLO.

Jerusalem - An open question

1. Jerusalem's status will remain open. Israel agrees to Jordanian presence in Jebel al Beit (site of Al Aqsa mosque) and permits raising the Jordanian flag there.
2. State land in the West Bank will be under joint administration, each side reserving the right to veto.
3. A transitional period will continue for five years according to Israeli demands,

but Jordan wants to limit this to three years.

Jordan-Israeli condominium dominium

In order to clarify other aspects of this deal, we will quote what was published by another Israeli newspaper *Yediot Aharonot*: «The first thing this plan called for is to abrogate the military government in the occupied territories. Civil affairs would then be supervised by a joint Jordanian-Palestinian council, the structure and powers of which will be negotiated between the two parties... The settlers would be considered explicitly as Israeli citizens; their security would be the responsibility of the Israeli army... It is natural that Israeli military presence in the West Bank will be decreased. A joint Jordanian-Israeli police force would be established within the framework of the joint council. Palestinian mayors would replace Israeli military governors. Jordanian military forces will be prohibited entrance to the West Bank. The borders will be opened and joint industrial projects will gradually be established. The detailed plan emphasized that this partial solution constitutes a stage towards an overall solution...»

From 'autonomy' to joint rule

After the signing of the Camp David accords and the execution of the first section, the US administration, 'Israel' and the Egyptian regime were confronted with Palestinian rejection. This hindered execution of the second section of the accords regarding 'autonomy' in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. However, the US and 'Israel' have now deemed it suitable to reassert 'autonomy' in a new form, encouraged by the two following factors: (1) the formation of the Israeli government of national unity; and (2) the crisis of the PLO, and the rightist leadership's readiness to deal with the US proposals, especially after the signing of the Amman accord.

This renewed attempt is moreover nurtured by the Jordanian regime's willingness to participate. This provided Peres with the opportunity to promote the 'Jordanian option', modifying the 'autonomy' plan so that the Jordanian regime would have more influence in its execution.

The right's dilemma

While 'Israel' rules out the PLO altogether, the US insists that it can only

be a negotiating partner if it makes all concessions in advance: recognizing 'Israel', resolutions 242 and 338, and totally abandoning armed struggle everywhere. In this light, it is possible to perceive the dilemma which exists between the Jordanian regime and Arafat's leadership. The regime insists on Arafat's positive response to the US-Israeli conditions. The PLO leadership, however, insists on obtaining US guarantees for Palestinian self-determination before conceding to these proposals. The continuation of this hesitation threatens the settlement process, which has induced King Hussein to seek alternatives to the PLO. Thus, we notice changes in Jordan's stand on the Amman accord. Hussein in his UN speech expressed readiness to enter into direct negotiations with 'Israel' without preconditions.

On the other hand, it is difficult for Hussein to go all the way without a suitable Palestinian-Arab cover. Now, with the Arafat leadership providing him with a PLO cover, King Hussein is simultaneously trying to create an alternative Palestinian leadership which will be primarily loyal to himself rather than to Arafat.

Reliable sources in Amman have reported that Hussein asked Arafat to continue with the Amman accord on condition that Jordan alone acts; if the situation arises again requiring a joint delegation, then moderate Palestinians such as Freij and Siniora should represent the Palestinian side.

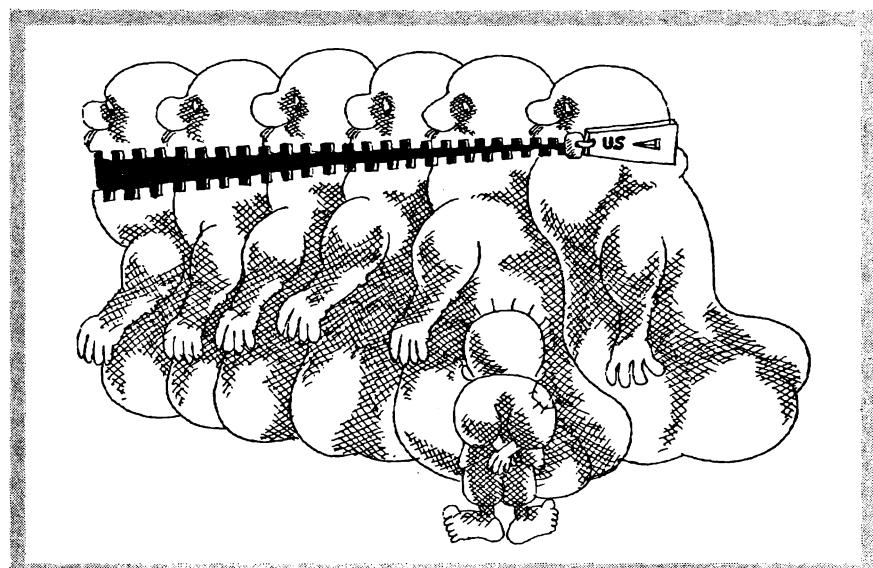
Lion's share to 'Israel'

Looking closely at the terms of the secret Peres-Hussein agreement, we

see that it is an attempt to combine the second section of Camp David with the 'Jordanian option' which in essence corresponds to the Labour party's program. The source of this combination goes back to the fact that the Israeli national unity government will not commit itself to the 'autonomy' plan as it was specified in Camp David. The Labour party rejects 'autonomy', seeing a danger that it will grow into a Palestinian state. Likud, for its part, rejects the 'Jordanian option' because it would entail partial withdrawal from Palestinian land occupied in 1967. Peres' plan for joint administration thus hits two birds with one stone. It represents a compromise between Likud and Labor. At the same time, it extricates 'Israel' from the political stalemate by throwing the ball into Jordan's court.

What makes this dangerous is that Jordan is taking concrete steps towards unilateral negotiations with 'Israel' on this basis, in the meantime keeping other doors open (renewed relations with Syria), in case things don't turn out as planned.

What is most noticeable is that this plan gives the lion's share to 'Israel' which must neither relinquish control over territory or resources, nor its idea of a united Jerusalem. The only Israeli concession is agreement in principle to an international conference, if its relations with the Soviet Union are restored. This was made in full knowledge that it is unattainable, for the Soviet Union has declared that the reasons for its breaking relations with 'Israel' still exist. Peres is also hedging his bets, for the agreement is only tentative. If Jordan backs out, 'Israel' could implement its own interpretation of 'autonomy' unilaterally. ●



300 Political Prisoners in Jordan

The General Secretariat of the Committee for the Defense of Democratic Freedoms in Jordan, issued the following statement:

Dr. Suleiman Suwais, a member of our general secretariat since its establishment in 1979, was arrested November 24th by the Jordanian authorities. He has a doctorate in social sciences from the Sorbonne in Paris, and works as a social researcher, journalist and writer. Dr. Suwais is a member of the General Union of Palestinian Writers and Journalists. He also works in Amnesty International, and other international as well as Arab organizations. We call for immediate intervention to secure the release of Dr. Suwais and all political prisoners, and to put an end to the broad campaign of repression against unions, student, cultural and youth organizations in Jordan.

According to recent information, a number of political detainees have been transferred from the Irbid district prison to Al Zarqa military prison (Ahmad al Makhel and Mohammad Abu Marar). Many others are still at the General Intelligence Headquarters in Amman (Ali Amer, Bassam Haddadin, Majid al Muraidi, Mazin al Asaad...). We cannot establish contact and we are concerned about their health and about their being subjected to torture.

We ask the International Red Cross to send representatives to meet the detainees, investigate their condition and publicize the results.

The total number of political prisoners and detainees in Jordan has increased remarkably to reach 300 at the end of November 1985, i.e., there has been a 40% increase in the number since April 1985.

Below is a list of the citizens detained in the recent campaign:

PNC member Ali Amer

GUPWJ members Bassam Haddadin, Samih Khalid Salameh, Majid al Muraidi and Suleiman Suwais

Member of the Jordanian Writers Association Mazin al Asaad

Member of the Administrative Council of

Palestinian Teachers Union; PNC member Mohammad Abu Marar

Pharmacist Mohammad Suleiman Saleh

Engineer Mohammad Nour al Beitar

Student movement activists: Amer Karadsheh, Jamal Armouti, Emad

Hourani, Ibrahim Nassir, Izzet al Helbouni, Akrem Salameh, Ouda al Ja'afra, Ayman Saleem al Ahmad, Jamal Shurbajee, Hussam Abu Ishtaih, Hazem al Ashheb

Trade unionists: Osamah Hamzeh, Adel Jadallah, Ibrahim Matar.

Prisoners' memorandum

92 political prisoners in Al Mahatta Central Prison in Amman addressed a memorandum to the spokesman of the Committee for the Defense of Democratic Freedoms and to members of the Jordanian parliament. They demanded:

A. Intervention to stop the ongoing detention campaign, and investigation of the unconstitutional repressive practices of the security institutions;

B. Intervention to stop house raids at night, physical and psychological torture, and retaliatory measures against the relatives of the detainees by dismissing them from work or prohibiting them from travel;

C. Release of administrative detainees who have been held for 25-60 months without trial (Yousef al Zaghari, Suphi al Tellawi, Abed Rahim Awad, Yousef Jalal, Atiah Jweed, Khaled Bwati, Adnan Ajag, Ahmad al Khatib);

D. The cancellation of the capital punishment sentence against citizen Brak al Hadeed who has been under arrest for 94 months;

E. Inclusion of political prisoners in the general amnesty declared in June 1985;

F. End to the policy of sending political prisoners to different Jordanian prisons. Regathering them in one special prison, provided with health care facilities and the necessary humane conditions.

In the memorandum, the political prisoners put forward the case of Ibrahim Rihawi, who was tried 15 years ago, and was twice included in general amnesty, only to be rearrested without trial. They also cited the case of twenty

other political prisoners who were declared innocent by the emergency court on grounds of lack of substantial evidence. The military intelligence service detained them again, in spite of the court findings, thus violating the court decree.

Also included among the prisoners' demands was the cancellation of the extraordinary laws and emergency regulations and special courts. They also called for the implementation of the constitution and putting into practice democratic freedoms, first and foremost the freedom to form political parties and organizations, and the release of all political prisoners and detainees. ●

Prisoners' Call



Sixty-six political prisoners in Mahatta Central Prison (Amman) issued the following appeal to international human rights organizations, in solidarity with the hunger strikes in occupied Palestine.

We of the Jordanian national movement and the Palestinian revolution in Mahatta, declare our solidarity with our comrades' strike in the prisons of the occupied territories. We affirm the legitimacy and justice of their demands for a halt to the campaigns of collective extermination and oppression to which they are subjected in the jails of the occupation. We condemn these inhuman measures and appeal to all international organizations to intervene immediately to put a stop to the deportations, exterminations and forced emigration practiced against our Palestinian Arab masses in the occupied territories. We call for support to the political detainees strike, so that they can achieve their demands. ●

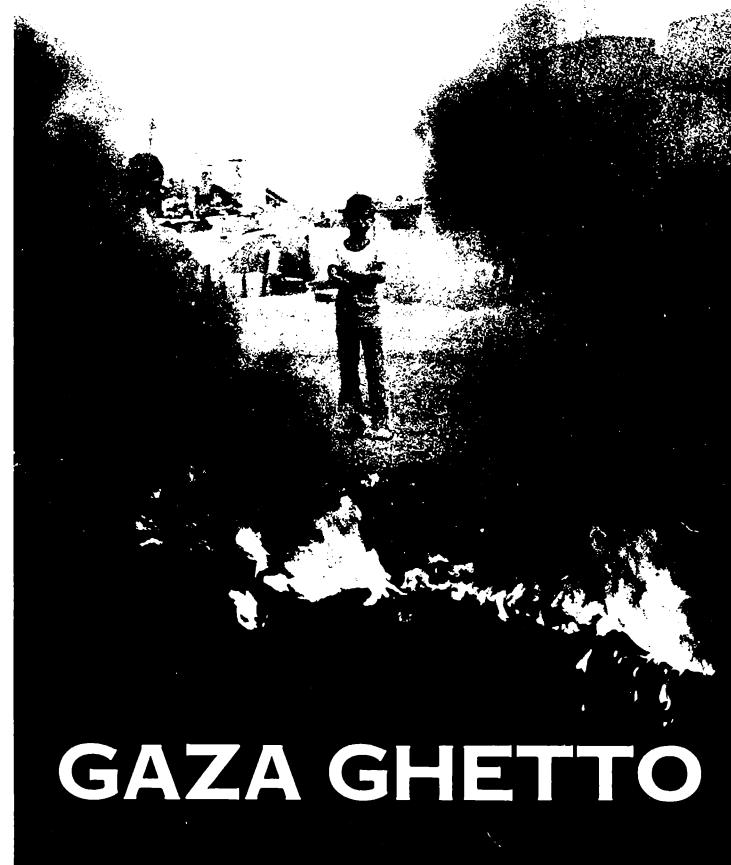
Portrait of a Palestinian Family 1948-84
A documentary film by PeÅ Holmquist, Joan Mandell, Pierre Björklund

In 1948, the 20 year old Palestinian Abu el Adel fled together with his family, as Israeli troops advanced on their home village, Dimra. Their flight led them to the Jabalia refugee camp in Gaza, occupied by Israel since 1967. Today, Abu el Adel passes the ruins of Dimra every morning on his way to Tel Aviv's «slave market», an illegal labor market where Israeli companies hire Palestinian day laborers. On the land of what was once Abu el Adel's neighboring village, the current Israeli Minister of Trade and Industry, General Ariel Sharon, is now the proud owner of a flourishing farm. In the film he also explains why he blew up large sections of Jabalia camp in the early 1970s. For Abu el Adel, his daughter Itidhal, her husband Mustafa, their oldest daughter Ra'ida and their six other children, life in Jabalia camp is characterized by total insecurity - the destruction of houses, curfews and killings at demonstrations. We follow them both in joy - the birth of Mukhless - and in sorrow - the grandmother's funeral.

In the film we also meet General Ben Eliezer, responsible for Israel's occupation policy; Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin from the Mapai (Labor) Party; and Reuven Rosenblatt, director of Israeli settlements in Gaza. Saved from the Auschwitz concentration camp in 1945 by Folke Bernadotte, Rosenblatt is now in charge of evicting Palestinian refugees who live too close to Jewish settlements. We also meet Israeli soldiers in uniform who express their doubts about the occupation.

The film was shot during a two-year period under extremely difficult conditions; the work of the film team more resembled agent activity than journalism.

GAZA GHETTO is an 82 minute, 16 mm, color, optical sound film, English version, subtitles; it is also available in



GAZA GHETTO

video. For information on obtaining the film contact:

PeÅ Holmquist
Norensbergsg. 86
S-702 15 Örebro, Sweden
tel: 019/10 26 19
telex: 73306 Sroerbr S

Filming Under Occupation

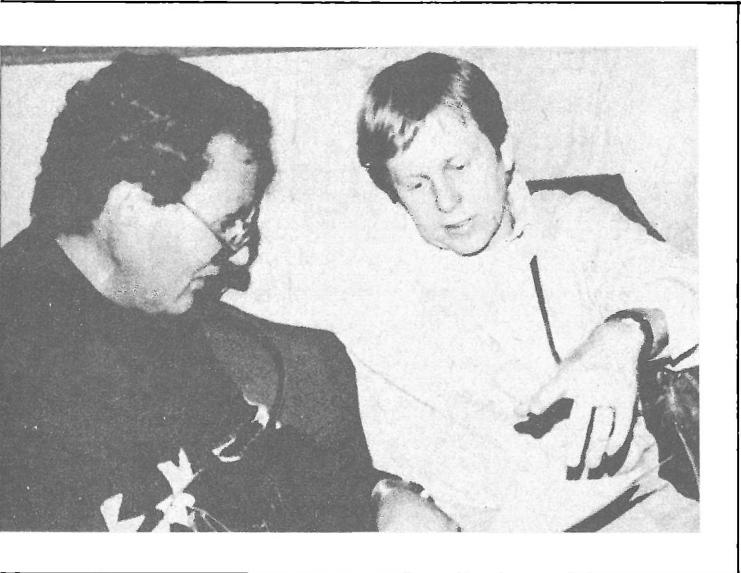
This year's Damascus International Film Festival included several films about Palestine. Among them was «GAZA GHETTO» which follows the daily life and experience of a Palestinian family in Jabalia camp in the occupied Gaza Strip. This film succeeds in portraying with equal vividness the two opposing aspects of this reality: We see the brutality of the occupation, but also the dignity and strength of the Palestinians, their love of their land and their persistence in carrying on their lives and traditions despite this. When «GAZA GHETTO» was being shown in the film festival, we had the chance to interview one of the film makers, PeÅ Holmquist.

What was your aim in making this film?

I want to describe what is life under occupation for a normal family, because in Europe and the United States, there hasn't been what you could call a war for a long time. Although the European states and the US are making war in other places, the people there haven't had a war on their own territory for a long time. I want to show what it is to live under occu-

pation when you can't control anything and you don't know what will happen the next day. That's the role of the film.

The film is interspersed with statements by Israeli officials. How did you see their explanations for the crimes committed against the Palestinians, and how will these be heard in the West?



Of course, you can see very clearly that they are wrong. If Israelis, or any other political or military officials are doing the wrong thing, they have to be criticized. You have to show it, and that's what I hope we have done in our film.

The reason why we have these short commentaries by people like Sharon and Ben Eliezer is that I wanted to reflect the state of nerves in Gaza - that you never know what will happen. That's also why there is no commentary - no one telling you what will happen or what did happen. It just happens like that. You have Sharon in 30 seconds saying something, then you have some other words, and then you go back to the curfew. So I wanted that the film itself gave this constant feeling of occupation. This is how the Palestinians have been living, first as refugees from 1948, and then under Israeli occupation from 1967.

Concerning the echo in the West, of course, it's changing in Sweden and the other Scandinavian countries. The film has been shown in TV in all the Scandinavian countries. I think that after the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, things have been changing in Europe for the Palestinian cause. In the US, there is still a long battle to take, because the people just don't know what is happening; they are not informed.

How do you use documents and history as elements in your film?

Our film is quite a personal one. We make one family's story and the Israelis they meet along the way. We do not intend to say that this is the total film on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. What we are trying to show is one family's story. In that, I tried to select the documents and archive material that would show this family's life best. It all has to be reflected from their life and history. When the grandfather is telling the story of 1948, what happened to him, then I have to find pictures and archive material that fit in this story. Sometimes we managed and sometimes we didn't.

Can you tell about the difficulties of filming in occupied Palestine?

Of course, it's difficult, but the Israelis cannot behave towards European or American journalists as they behave towards the Palestinians. After all, they are getting money from the US and a lot of support from Europe. That's why they can't forbid us from filming. Of course, they can, but if you act cleverly, you will find a way to be quicker than them.

So I understand that not all the pictures you show were allowed?

Of course not.

How do you see the masses in front of the camera? Does it show the truth?

We were just trying to film the people as they were. It wasn't necessary to add anything to what was actually happening. You have to stay cool and film what's happening. It's not for me to lean back and say, «This is awful,» because then it won't be a film. That's the hard thing about being a film maker.

You gave a big place to children in your film, and a comparison between the life of the Palestinian Arab and the Jewish children. What does the child Suhail, who was killed, represent in your film?

He is a child who is not allowed to be a child. When he is shot, he is killed as though he was a soldier, not a child. That's the thing with Palestinian children; they're not allowed to be children. When they are talking about Israel and occupation, they speak like grown-ups. There's no time to be children. I think that's cruel, but I don't think the Palestinians can do anything about it. It's the only way the Palestinians can live.

When we saw the film, one of my friends joked that the woman who washed the newborn baby, did so in a very hard way. How do you see this?

It is interesting to see the reaction here, because I think that's the only reaction to the film that was the same here and in Sweden - that people felt pity for the child. When I showed it for other Palestinians, they didn't notice anything; they were maybe laughing a little. I heard someone else surprised that this woman, as a Muslim, did this because it's like a Christian baptism. For my own reaction, I was surprised that it took such a long time, because she was doing it in the most efficient way.

I think it is important in a political film like this to also show something of the life that they try to keep as normal. They have been doing this in Gaza long ago, and they still keep this. It is important to show that they want to keep the Palestinian traditions. In a situation like Gaza today, it is also political to keep these traditions.

Do you see the birth of the new baby as a continuation of Suhail?

I don't know really. You could see it that way, but I saw it more as a protest against what Sharon and Rabin are saying, that they don't want the Palestinians to rule their own life. I saw it as a protest against their slogans of «No talks with the PLO, No Palestinian state, No right to self-determination...»

In the kibbutz, the religious man dances carrying a gun and a baby. What does this represent?

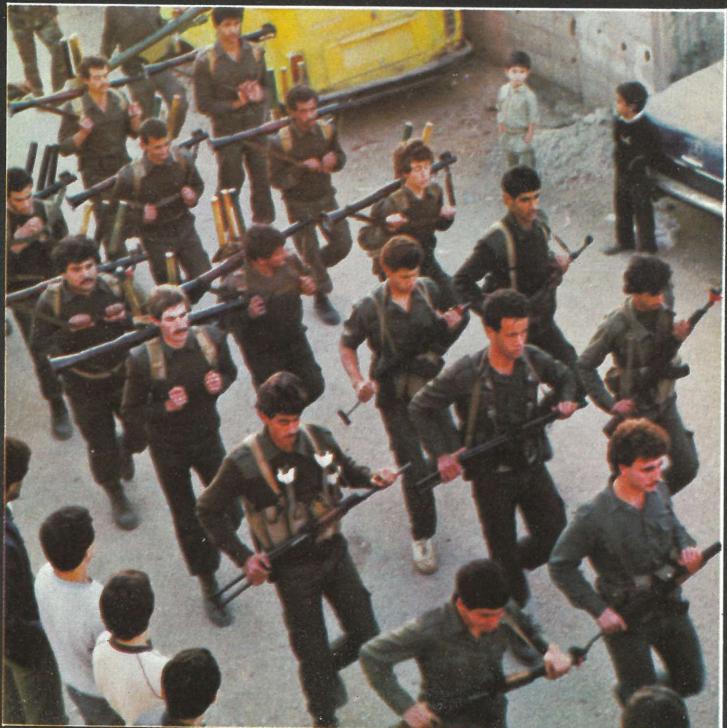
That's what they do. From their view, it's not hard to understand why they have a gun. They have taken Palestinian land in the West Bank and Gaza, so they have to carry guns. Of course, to me it's absurd, because you bring up the children like occupiers from birth. Of course I react against this, as a human being.

Out of the Ruins of a Camp

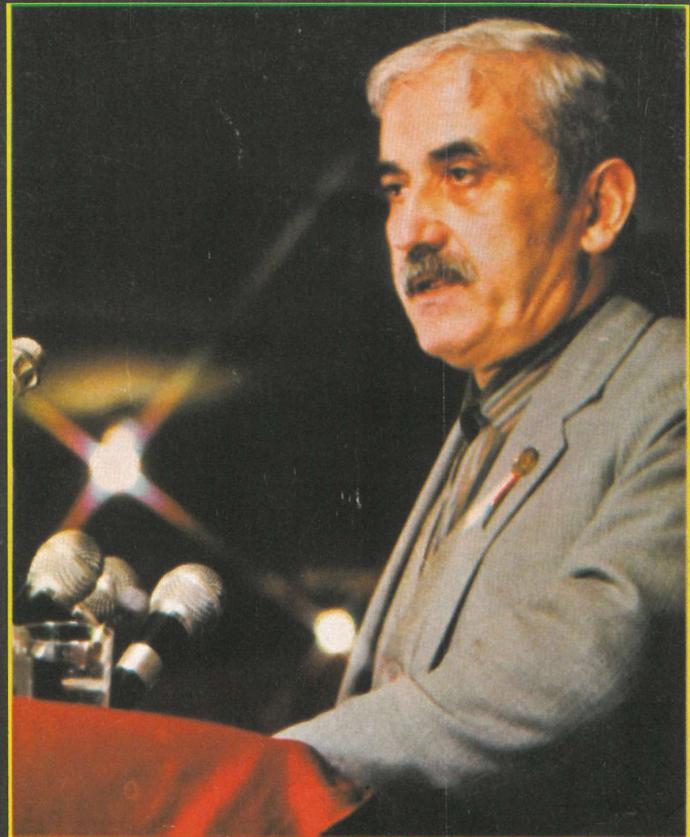
*In the aftermath of my torture
in the ruins of my body
from the horizons of distance
A floating rose on my red river
through a needle's eye
I could see it clearly
I could sense the force
the force of mourning and oppression
The rose grew larger and larger
It became bigger than my body
It caressed my skin
and its passion penetrated to my depths...
A martyr screams in his grave
his bones flash with happiness and anguish
and the moon shines away in shame
for it witnessed the crime
In a moment of silence that followed
a new life emerged and on the river it walked
passing by corpses and ruins...*

*The new life started saying:
My soul I will spread
My flesh I will sacrifice
My moisture will quench the thirst.
And suddenly many roses began sprouting
with a rifle on one leaf
September 17th on two other leaves
August 13th on another leaf
April 14th on another
All the roses marched in the darkness
And towards Palestine they headed.*

-from a friend of the Palestinian revolution in the US



- September 17, 1970 - Black September when the Jordanian regime attacked the resistance and massacred thousands of Palestinians
- September 17, 1982 - The Sabra-Shatila massacre by the Lebanese fascist forces with Israeli support
- August 13, 1976 - The fall of Tel al Zaatar camp and the massacre of Palestinian civilians by the Lebanese fascist forces
- April 14, 1948 - Zionist terror gangs massacred the residents of Deir Yassin village in Palestine



PFLP's 18th Anniversary Celebrations

