

Palestine Lives

Interviews with Leaders of the Resistance

- Khalid al-Hassan, *Fateh* • Abu Iyad, *Fateh*
- George Habash, *PFLP* • Nayef Hawatmeh, *PDFLP*
- Sami al-Attari, *Sa'iqa*
- A. W. Sa'id, *Arab Liberation Front*

With an Introduction by Clovis Maksoud

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PALESTINE RESEARCH CENTER
AND KUWAITI TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

1973

In Memoriam

The night of April tenth, Israel attacked Lebanon, and its 'state' sponsored terrorists dressed as 'hippies' and landing in Beirut as 'tourists', utilizing the forged passports of Britain, France and Belgium, entered the homes of three distinguished Palestine resistance leaders, Yusuf al Najjar, Kamal Nasir, Kamal Adwan. They have fallen in order that Palestine Lives.

This book, planned and written months before their martyrdom, becomes, by the impact of the book's title, a tribute to their memory and to their major contribution to the national unity that has been achieved.

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INTRODUCTION

THE FOLLOWING interviews with leaders and spokesmen of the five principal organizations of the Palestinian resistance constitute a major political and historical document pertaining to contemporary aspects of the Middle Eastern crisis. The Palestinian resistance emerged as a potent revolutionary force after the Arab defeat in the June War of 1967. Prior to that the Palestinian character of resistance among Palestinians was not as obvious, assertive and clear as it became after the Six Day War. All-Arab nationalist and radical parties and movements constituted the vehicle for Palestinian commitment to the liberation of their homeland. Besides the accepted assumption that the liberation of Palestine was an overall Arab concern and function, Arab unity and a measure of socio-economic transformation were deemed necessary to bring about the ultimate dismantlement of the Zionist entity and structure in Palestine. This explains why most of the Palestinian militants joined pan-Arab parties - i.e. Ba'ath and Arab Nationalist - and why the mainstream of Palestinian opinion synchronized with the policies and responded to the call of the late President Gamal Abdul-Nasser (inasmuch as he represented and symbolized the urges and aspirations of the Arab masses). At no time was there evidence of Palestinian parochial trends, nor was there a serious or significant challenge to a Palestinian gravitation towards Arab national and revolutionary centers. Palestinian militant and resistance activities were never conceived of as being outside of, or independent from, an Arab national involvement, framework or organization. Palestinian militants and revolutionaries were sure that the attainment of power by their ideological or political counterparts in any Arab state brought them much closer to their goal of liberation. In other words, the Palestinian people blended instantly and readily into the revolutionary mainstream of Arab political life.

The trauma which the Arabs experienced in the wake of the Six Day War affected the Palestinians in a special way. This was to be expected, particularly as the thoroughness of their political and ideological assimilation in Arab parties and movements has never been questioned, or its validity doubted. True, there were rumblings about 'trusteeship' exercised by Arab governments or authorities. After the Arab Summit in March 1964 had recognized an 'entity' for the Palestinians, and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was formed to be the

organ of their struggle and the representative of their aspirations, many felt that such official sponsorship tended to divest the Palestinian struggle of its revolutionary content while conceding its right to revolutionary rhetoric. The constraints that Arab governments imposed upon the PLO and especially on the activities of the nascent PLA (Palestine Liberation Army), corroborated this impression and tended to justify more pronounced autonomy in Palestinian militant action. Early Fateh activities aroused in Palestinian circles several debates about whether action should be a projection of an Arab coordinated plan or a deliberate attempt to achieve more speedily an Arab confrontation with Israel.

Although this debate remained marginal it continued to be relevant in the period between 1965–1967. Official cognizance of a Palestinian ‘entity’ corresponded to a policy of growing accommodation among diverse Arab regimes. The freeze on ideological confrontation between the conservative and progressive Arab regimes generated fears as to whether the PLO was intended to coopt Palestinian revolutionary struggle under the guise of channelling and institutionalizing it. However, the doubts and fears needed no urgent reassurance or answers as long as a measure of discipline within an all-Arab national context remained a preponderant Palestinian consensus.

The military defeat of the Arab states in June 1967 constituted a turning point in Palestinian, as well as in Arab attitudes and thinking. The Palestinians manifested a remarkable resilience and an abiding commitment to the liberation of their homeland. The defeat which was inflicted by Israel on the Arab States—Jordan, Egypt, and Syria—revolutionized the Palestinian masses. The anticipated process of demoralization was halted and reversed by the historic battle of Karameh on March 21, 1968 and a new phase of Palestinian history was introduced. The battle of Karameh not only galvanized the Palestinian masses but it propelled the organized Palestinian resistance into the forefront of Arab popular leadership. This in turn preempted the logical and expected political consequences of Arab acquiescence to the UN Security Council Resolution 242, adopted November 22, 1967.

It was not surprising that disillusionment with Arab regimes and leaderships led the Palestinian militants to recoil from earlier all-Arab involvements. A growth of Palestinian consciousness, which at times bordered on insularity, was discerned. Even considered as a justifiable psychological reaction, it was decidedly to the detriment of any future and consequential action. Caught in the whirlwind engendered by the conflict of psychological reactions and rational imperatives, the principal organization of the resistance—namely Fateh—surfaced from amongst the debris of Arab defeat and the all-pervading atmosphere of dejection. Juxtaposed with the diplomatic and political equations that restricted Arab movement in the region of conflict with Israel and on the world level, the insistent and heroic defiance by the Palestinian resistance renders the title ‘Palestine Lives’ throb with validity.

The subsequent interviews with the resistance leaders will, in our view, be better understood if they are taken against the background of the overall Arab situation. With Egypt and Jordan accepting the UN Security Council Resolution 242, inevitable political and logistic restrictions were put on the free movement of the resistance. Despite fundamental differences in the motives that led these two most involved Arab states to accept the formula of a "peaceful settlement", the identity of the diplomatic posture between them led to frequent embarrassments between Egypt and the resistance and to repeated confrontations between the resistance and the Jordanian authorities. This was inevitable inasmuch as the mainstream of Palestinian opinion remained attached to Nasser's leadership while this same mainstream had no confidence in the objectives of the Hashemite dynasty. It is true that after the Six Day War President Nasser's charismatic leadership suffered immensely, yet the Arab masses, unwilling to follow him, never ceased to support him. In Jordan, however, the Palestinians constituted an integral and vital part of the body politic and the revolutionary development within the Palestinian constituency was treated by the authorities as a threat to the state, while the Palestinians—as well as the Arabs in general—considered it as an inevitable historical process and a national necessity of utmost importance. While the impact of the military defeat was still pronounced, the Arab governments in general, and the Jordanian government in particular, had no moral or political standing nor the capacity to arrest the spread of this revolutionary development. All Arab regimes were on the defensive and stood indicted before their people.

At this point the Palestinian resistance, immersed in the euphoria of its sudden and widespread popularity, did not seize the opportunity to transform Jordan into what the resistance has yearned for ever since—the Hanoi of the Palestinian Revolution. It could not do so for the obvious reason that it lacked the necessary political, administrative and military machinery for such transformation. However, the absence of capability was not the sole reason for such restraint. It was feared throughout the period that lasted from 1967 until September 1970 that even if the opportunity were presented, the Palestinian resistance could not concern itself with the managerial responsibilities that would accrue to it upon a takeover of the Jordanian state. Although this issue remained a bone of contention among various Palestinian organizations—as is manifest in the subsequent interviews—any practical assessment of the forces on the Jordanian scene would have rendered judgement difficult and hazardous.

And so a paradoxical situation in Jordan evolved. While the resistance was gradually acquiring more military equipment and organizational prowess and clarifying its political line, the Arab regimes, especially in Jordan, were overcoming the initial embarrassment and isolation that followed defeat and becoming more assertive and emboldened. Having been spared the punishment incumbent upon defeat, Arab regimes, and again the Jordanian in particular, were able to regain much of their lost political thrust. The simultaneous process of the state regaining its impetus and the resistance achieving an increasing solid power base

led to a bipolarization of forces that culminated in what came to be known as the black September of 1970. The tragic events of September 1970 led to the Cairo Summit Conference and the subsequent Cairo and Amman agreements.

It is not the intention of this book to record the history of Jordan in the period after the war or of the Arab-Israeli conflict, but to give an insight into the thinking and methodology of the resistance as it responds and reacts to events and developments. This in turn will enable us to come to grips with 'the mind' of the most effective new force that has emerged on the Arab scene in the last fifteen years and undoubtedly since 1967. If, however, we focus more directly on Jordan, it is because it was the most important vital and relevant base for Palestinian activities and operations. But Jordan cannot be discussed in isolation (as was emphasized earlier) from the Arab context and situation. Hence it is inevitable that repeated references to the broader context will be made in order to render many aspects of the interviews that more easily understood and appreciated.

...

The concessions inherent in the Arab acquiescence to the UN Security Council Resolution 242 were dictated by the new correlation of forces in the region that obtained after the June 1967 war. Arab consent to the 'legitimacy' of Israel has always been the principal objective of Zionist diplomacy. This was to be achieved by inflicting on the Arabs a series of crushing military defeats in order to impress them with how futile it was to pursue a policy of confrontation, let alone the objective of liberation. Readiness to accept the legal-political implications of the Security Council Resolution was obstructed in part by Israel's persistent refusal to accept the geographical consequences of the Resolution. It appears in retrospect that the United Nations considered that the Arabs' acquiescence to Israel's right to exist and the concomitant cessation of the state of belligerency as sufficient inducements to render the Zionist state amenable to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories. Here, as often in the past, the world body betrayed an ignorance of the dynamics of expansion inherent in Zionist ideology and the related appetite of Israel for more territorial conquest.

The Arab states, more specifically Egypt and Jordan, justified their readiness to accept 'political settlement' as a price to be paid in order to enable the world body, and the Big Powers especially, to intervene so as to avoid a situation whereby military defeat degenerates into national humiliation. Israel consistently stuck to its intransigence and its maximal demands. By resorting to prevarication and giving ambiguous answers to precise questions, Israel sought to gain time. The time was utilized for the creation of 'new facts' and intensifying its efforts to accomplish a substantial 'ingathering' of more Jews to fill new settlements in the occupied territories and Jerusalem. At no time did the behavior pattern of Israel give any indication of wavering in the course of Zionist expansion or from its ultimate purpose of building not only an exclusive Jewish state but a

state for world Jewry. Thus, it can hardly be denied that Israel never had any intention of allowing a 'political settlement' to be achieved except on its own terms.

What added to the frustration of the Palestinians and acted constantly to fuel their suspicions was the continued trust—in their acts if not verbally—that the Arab states put into the diplomatic efforts and initiatives of whomsoever offered their 'good offices.' To succumb to the logic of diplomatic undertakings would have been tolerable, if not necessarily desirable, if such undertakings were accompanied by an Arab will to utilize the credible sanctions at their disposal. For a while the war of attrition on the Suez front was inflicting enough losses on Israel to make its continued occupation of Sinai costly. However, the political implications of this war of attrition lay in the continued dynamic involvement of Egypt in *active* confrontation. Furthermore, it provided for the fedayeen activities in the Jordan sector—across the river—the added advantage of forcing the Israelis to fight simultaneously on two Arab fronts—a situation which they had always attempted to avoid. Furthermore, the war of attrition on the Suez Canal generated a general atmosphere of battle that rendered more forthcoming the response of Jordan's authorities to the requirements of the resistance, although they were grudgingly and intermittently given.

When Egypt accepted the Rogers Plan and the ceasefire was restored on the Suez front, concrete but definitely adverse results occurred. They were instantly detrimental and harmful to the resistance. To begin with, the battle atmosphere on an Arab scale was diffused. The more suspicious feared that as the war of attrition was getting too costly for Israel it began to diminish the chances of the diplomatic solution. Acceptance of the Rogers Plan proved to be a very gullible attitude and, as subsequent events proved, devoid of historical perception. Yet President Nasser maintained the confidence of the Arab masses, and although scepticism grew concerning his policies, it never reached the level of questioning his motives or objectives. Yet the Palestinian resistance found itself in a serious dilemma. With Nasser's acceptance of the Rogers Plan and what that entailed in terms of a cease-fire, the resistance found itself more vulnerable and its bargaining position weakened. What the Palestinians were facing at this crucial period was a rift with President Nasser which the resistance—and particularly Fateh—sought diligently to avoid. The Palestinian leadership was aware that its popularity and support within Jordan and on the Arab plane could not be depended upon in a political confrontation with Nasser. It was true that the resistance came to the forefront of struggles, but the Arab masses remained, broadly speaking, a *shared constituency* between the resistance and Nasser's leadership.

Until the Rogers Plan was accepted by the late Egyptian President, the inevitable differences between Egypt and the resistance were subordinated to the common national policies they adopted and to a common awareness of their mutual interests. Both President Nasser, as well as Fateh, were under pressure from within by their respective associates, and despite the strains that characterized much of their relationship, it never reached the crisis stage. President Nasser

sought always to impress upon the resistance that their opposing attitudes and policies concerning the 'peaceful settlement' as spelled out in the UN Security Council Resolution need not lead to behavioral differences or remove the available opportunities for coordination and the projection of a common front. The Palestine resistance, on the other hand, was of the opinion that this joint front with Egypt—and with President Nasser particularly—was an invaluable lever for their present and future effectiveness in Jordan, as well as in Lebanon and Syria. So much so, that it was willing to forgo the calls—especially from the Popular Front and the Democratic Popular Front—for more consistency in its revolutionary political rhetoric.

With the advent of the Rogers Plan, the more openly leftist organizations within the resistance were accelerating the pace of their opposition to the restrained policy towards Egypt, and Fateh was taken unaware by the sudden alteration in Egypt's orientation. Only a few weeks prior to the acceptance of the Rogers Plan, during his last visit to Moscow, President Nasser secured a Soviet commitment to share in the defense of Egypt in depth. Why, it was asked, was it necessary to give a favorable response to Rogers' initiative? In the attempt to find the answers, the political climate was charged and within Palestinian circles heated assertions took the place of profound analysis. The resistance, which was still on the crest of its euphoria, suddenly found itself threatened and politically besieged. In the attempt to break through what seemed to be—and later proved to be—a siege that the resistance consistently sought to preempt, the political rift with Nasser became open. A measure of Nasser's disenchantment was his closure of the radio station of Fateh in Cairo. During many encounters with the then Minister of Information, Mohammed Haikal, the firmness of the Egyptian state on this issue—i.e. the request to reopen the radio station in order to soften the blow—was manifest. Haikal characteristically sought to soften the blow by trying to lay blame on the growing impatience in Egypt with open criticism of Nasser's policies by resistance circles. He tried to convey the impression that Nasser was most reluctant to give the order.

In later discussions with the resistance leadership, it appeared that Nasser was angered and deeply hurt by the popular demonstrations in Amman and Beirut that made him—for the first time—a target of adverse slogans. Nasser's concern for his historical status made him conscious of harsh judgement when attacks on him came from the same popular constituency he had so assiduously nurtured.

As the differences between Nasser and the resistance widened, the confusion in the shared popular constituency spread and its effectiveness became minimized. Stripped of its purposiveness it could no longer act as the protective shield where it was most needed. The damage—political and logistical—was obvious in Jordan. The Nasserite sector of the popular mass base was neutralized and the resistance was facing the Hashemite state apparatus largely on its own. It must be remembered that while the coalescence between Egypt—and what it represented on the Arab scene—and the resistance was real and credible, it served only to

enhance the popular base of the Palestinian resistance. In addition it also deterred the Jordanian authorities, as well as other inimical forces in the region, from resorting to drastic and coercive measures against the resistance. Now, with the Nasserite shield partly removed and neutralized, the Jordanian authorities were waiting for any opportunity or any slight provocation to strike massively at the resistance as a whole. For many anxious weeks, after the acceptance of the Rogers Plan in the summer of 1970, the luxury of hairsplitting debates or the ease with which inter-organizational indiscipline was allowed could no longer be afforded.

It must be stated at this juncture that President Nasser never meant to render his acceptance of the Rogers Plan a sort of 'green light' for the Jordanian authorities to strike at the Palestinian resistance. Yet despite this conviction on my part, his acceptance lacked a serious appreciation of the political consequences it would entail. I, personally, am convinced that Nasser's acceptance of the Rogers Plan was motivated by the notion of putting US policy on the spot and cornering it with its own logic. But if Nasser considered his positive response to the Rogers initiative to be a means of bolstering his diplomatic efforts so as to complete his armed arsenal, he depended too much on the confidence of the masses in his leadership. Nasser, in my view, could not admit that his acceptance of the Rogers Plan was construed as a real step towards the 'settlement' that the Palestinians most feared. As long as the Egyptian acquiescence to the UN Security Council Resolution was not within the realm of realization, the Palestinian resistance—and more specifically Fateh—was instrumental in synchronizing the apparent divergences in the respective positions of Egypt and the PLO.

A further point on this subject must be discussed. While the repeated confrontations with the Jordanian authorities were taking place it was obvious that the organizational disunity among the Palestinian ranks made comprehensive analysis difficult and joint action very difficult to undertake. As stated earlier, Fateh remained the preponderant Palestinian mass organization and as such it shouldered the brunt of the day to day managerial tasks of Palestinian life, in addition to its revolutionary responsibilities in terms of political organization and guerrilla operations. Simultaneously, however, some of the Arab establishments, having regained their political breath and being no longer fearful of a challenge to their authority, addressed themselves to the Palestinian resistance. While no decision could be taken without at least al-Fateh, two governments—Syria and Iraq—sought to achieve a direct organizational involvement with the Palestinian constituency. Their similar point of departure was that both these countries were governed by the Ba'ath Socialist Party, which at no time forwent the Arab right to organize on an all-Arab national basis. The last two interviews (by the spokesmen of Al-Sa'iqa ['Lightening'] and the Arab Liberation Front) emphasize an identical ideological premise "that the Palestinian, as an Arab citizen, has a right to struggle ideologically on the Arab arena" (p. 135). The spokesman of the Arab Liberation Front (also an offshoot of the Ba'ath) states in the same vein:

“... for the only power capable of defeating great conspiracies is the unity of the Arab masses.” (p. 151.) So long as this emphasis on the need for organic links to be restored with the Arab situation was the logical prerequisite of Ba’ath-based movements, the claimants for this line could not touch a sufficiently responsive chord among the Palestinians. The reason for this insufficient response was that the Ba’ath Parties in both Syria and Iraq were at bitter odds with each other, and that, despite their ideological claims, they were rightly or wrongly included among those who were responsible for the overall Arab defeat. What added to the Palestinian reluctance to accept their claim to ideological or political leadership was that the two regimes were claiming the same program, releasing the same slogans and speaking the same language, but behaving as competitors without a valid explanation. Syria’s closer proximity to the countries of Palestinian presence gave the Ba’ath in Syria more facilities to establish its branch among the Palestinians. Yet the close party link with the Syrian authorities defied the new spirit of wholesome autonomy which the resistance cherished. The same attitude applied to the Arab Liberation Front (although to a lesser extent). This did not preclude the fact that many Ba’athists among the Palestinians found themselves more at home with these organizations and sought to reconstruct the national affiliation of the Palestinians, so as to render the resistance an integral part of an Arab revolutionary party. This approach constituted the theoretical basis for both As-Sa’iqa and the Arab Liberation Front.

However, the mainstream of the Palestinian movement did not fully accept the nature of their organic ties with both the Syrian and Iraqi regimes. To begin with, the Ba’ath legitimacy between Syria and Iraq could not be clearly established. Since the two Ba’athist regimes were accepted as progressive regimes, the need to press for the independence and credentials of the Sa’iqa and the Arab Liberation Front was not pursued. Furthermore, Syria and Iraq were among the Arab states that were, relatively speaking, the most committed to the objectives of the resistance.

The presence of such organizations, closely and indeed directly associated—if not organically linked—with Arab governing parties—stifled the freedom of movement which the resistance initially enjoyed and sought to maintain. Although the Sa’iqa and Arab Liberation Front were accepted as definitely serious and relevant organizations, the plurality that ensued augured a proliferation of resistance groups that rendered discipline and unified action almost impossible to achieve. Despite the fact that Fateh remained, during this period (pre-September 1970) and after, the principal and major resistance organization, the proliferating condition of the resistance weakened the quality of its political as well as its military performance. Several Arab governments encouraged this multiplicity of organizations and aided them as a source of intelligence gathering within the resistance. Needless to say, there was such proliferation and the confusion that followed rendered action paralyzed when it was most necessary, and produced internecine debates when decision-making was in its most crucial stage.

If these miniscule factions emerged amid the absence of unity within the resistance, there were, on the other hand, two organizations with substantial ideological stamina and credence to enable them to play a corrective and educational role. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Democratic Front—the latter a leftist split from the former—sought to project their organizations as the left wing of the resistance. In the interviews with both George Habash and Nayef Hawatmeh, emphasis on the class nature of the Palestinian resistance is an uppermost concern. Mention of these Fronts is made here in order to underline the distinct qualitative differences among the various organizations that mushroomed in the late 1968–1969 period. That only the five principal organizations survived the bloodbath that the Hashemite authorities conducted in September 1970 and the others fizzled out is another proof of the parasitical role of the latter as the conscious or unconscious instrument of paralysis within the young resistance movement.

The proliferation of resistance organizations is mentioned at this stage in order to show the pressures and counter pressures under which the mainstream of the Palestinian resistance—Fateh—was functioning. These pressures within the resistance were partly self-generated, and while the resistance was at its peak it believed that it could afford the inconveniences of factionalism. Yet when the ceasefire replaced the war of attrition, this multiplicity exposed further the inherent weaknesses of the resistance. The reason for the political dependence of the resistance on the continued war of attrition was also due to the fact that other sanctions available to the Arabs were not in operation.

The aim of Arab unity, for example, was practically abandoned, and in spite of the mutual accommodation of Arab regimes that arose after the June War, this did not translate itself into sustained efforts in the field of coordination. And while President Nasser, before June 1967, could appeal above “the heads of the Arab governments” and thus achieve a measure of popular unity, this became nearly impossible after that date. All organizations of Arab unity or coordination suffered the additional handicap that Egypt’s regime was no longer able to be the open leverage for revolutionary impetus. This in itself imposed on the Palestinian resistance the additional responsibility of sustaining its role as the focus of overall Arab popular commitment. Although this task was facilitated by the fact that the Palestine cause was—and remains—the principal concern of the Arab popular and revolutionary movements, the resistance could not be expected to organize and plan on this all-Arab level. The limitations on the capacity of the resistance to organize on an all-Arab scale and the need to restructure the all-Arab revolutionary responsibility remained a major dilemma for future resistance activities. Only in November 1972 when the Front for Arab Participation with the Palestine Revolution was founded could a step in adjusting the limitations of the resistance to its Arab needs be made.

In addition, other available Arab sanctions against Israel and the US-Israeli axis in the area did not seem to be forthcoming. The oil resources in many Arab

states, which were deemed at many stages to be an instrument of persuading US power to desist from the pursuit of its biased support to Israel, were not mobilized for any of the legitimate national purposes. Instead, the US was seen increasing its military, economic and diplomatic support to Israel without any fears of Arab retaliation. On the contrary, the period that followed the Rogers Plan witnessed a noticeable improvement in the bi-lateral relations of many Arab states with the US. The energy crisis that was rendering the US more reliant on Arab oil than before did not induce the oil-producing Arab states to make their sanctions operative. In many ways some of these states were seeking joint means with the US to forestall growing popular demands and pressures in this direction. Amidst the relative diffusion of credible Arab sanctions, it became incumbent upon the Palestinian resistance to pursue its immediate and long range aims without the necessary objective conditions for these aims. The question arose as to whether in these adverse circumstances the resistance should not lie low until an improvement in the overall Arab context were achieved. The resistance, especially in Jordan, was faced in 1969–70 with three options: a) to have a headlong confrontation with the Hashemite regime that would lead to its overthrow; or b) to maintain the policy of coexisting with the Jordanian regime in the hope of being able to maintain a valid access to the occupied territories, or c) to alternate between the two courses of confrontation and coexistence in order to ensure the relative advantages of both courses.

In the intensive search for a clear orientation and a definite choice of one of these available options much of the literature of the Palestinian resistance is to be found. The polemical aspects of the following interviews show clearly that the debates centered mostly on the attempt of various resistance organizations to establish the validity of their analysis of options. After September 1970 and until July 1971—when to all intents and purposes the fighting force of the resistance was either quelled or expelled—all the principal organizations insisted that their analysis was valid and thus bestowed upon them the right to claim leadership, as in the case of the leftist critics of Fateh, or that Fateh's estimation of the equation of forces within Jordan—particularly after the ceasefire and the Rogers Plan—was precise and that there was no room for theoretical or rhetorical overbidding. It will be noticed that the polemical aspects of the interviews keep referring to the issue of option analysis, and this remains the predominant theme of the six interviews in the book.

It is necessary to emphasize that the debate among the resistance organizations took the form of inter-organizational polemics more than a Palestinian analysis of the overall Arab situation that conditioned, to a large measure, the actions, reactions and thoughts of the Palestinian resistance. This limitation necessitates our awareness, otherwise the subsequent national unity program that was adopted at the Eleventh National Congress of January 1973 (see appendix) will not be sufficiently understood. However, the value of the interviews lies not so much in their polemical features as in the insight they provide into the ideological,

political and militant formation of the resistance leadership.

Before endeavouring to shed some light on the formation of leadership thinking within the resistance as it manifests itself in the interviews that follow, it is imperative to underline the extent of the Arab situational impact on general Palestinian behavior and thinking and the degree of inter-relationship between this over-all Arab situation and the particularities of Palestinian reflexes. To do so it is necessary to reiterate that the Palestinian resistance has heightened its revolutionary commitment while the Arab regimes have invariably sought to safeguard whatever they can in the face of Israeli aggressiveness and expansion. In other words, the defeat of June 1967 was read by the Palestinian constituency as a stimulus for deepening the Arab revolutionary condition, while most of the Arab regimes sought continuity by abandoning or diluting whatever they possessed of a revolutionary commitment. This ideological—and in a way temperamental—divergence continued to widen as the Arab states gave no sign of real awareness of the substantive objectives of Israel and of Zionism. While Israel gave absolutely no indication of abandoning its hardened and intransigent positions, the Arab states gave no credible sign of rendering confrontation with Israel a top priority. It was becoming more and more clear that Israel would not settle except on its own terms. The time gap that ensued was utilized by Israel to create 'new facts' and 'ingather' more Jews. The Zionist-Israeli blackmail campaign against the Soviet Union, as on the issues of Soviet Jewish immigration, was a demonstration of their unaltered objective of achieving in the occupied territories a new 'Jewish' demographic explosion. In brief, the behavior pattern of Israel showed clearly that Israel was the instrument of the Zionist pursuit of building ultimately a Jewish state for all the Jews.

What made the frustration of the Palestinians immensely acute and kept fuelling their growing suspicions was the unwavering trust that the Arab states concerned placed in these diplomatic efforts and initiatives and their unbelievable refusal to utilize available sanctions in the service of the limited and tactical national objectives. Yet in spite of the immobilism that prevailed and which became increasingly uncondusive to revolutionary action, the Palestinian resistance was deeply worried about the political consequences of the Arab regimes' diplomatic perceptions. The Palestinians, having been the initial target of Zionist colonization and its subsequent victims, were keen to communicate to their Arab compatriots that Israel's prevarication and its diplomatic intransigence were not, as the Arab regimes thought them to be, an attempt to increase Israel's bargaining power but an exact tactical projection of Zionism's strategic objectives. The Palestinians' bitter experience with Zionist colonization and with its concomitant structures and institutions led them to the conclusion that it is absolutely impossible to have at any stage a form of coexistence or mutual accommodation with Israel. It was the irreconcilability between any form of Arab existence and the possibility of coexistence with Israel that the Palestinian resistance undertook to convey. This conviction was not due, it must be ascertained, to a mechanical reflex of

Palestinians having been forcibly evicted from the homeland only, but equally to their direct experience with Zionist aggressive egocentricity.

Every day that passed proved the validity of the worst of Palestinian suspicions. Israel was to the Zionists the material expression of the permanent polarity between the Jew and the rest of mankind. To this end Israel deemed itself to remain in a state of formation. Until Israel becomes coterminous with the Zionist notion of the 'Jewish People', Israel must behave, act and think on the assumption that it is not answerable to any international body, consensus or institution or to any sector of world opinion. This estimate of the Israel-Zionist equation was the conditioning factor of Palestinian and Arab popular opinion. The resistance, needless to emphasize, considered any hesitation to accept this conclusion as sufficient evidence of a diluted commitment to the cause of liberation, or at worst a sign that the commitment was being abandoned. For this reason in particular the Palestinian resistance has been anxious from the outset to make clear that it does not intend to waver on the issue of total liberation of Palestine. Although this objective appeared, given the Arab and international circumstances, to be very difficult to achieve, it remained for the resistance not only its objective on the strategic plane but the yardstick by which it measured its temporary tactical and its constant alliances.

This objective of liberation meant that the resistance chose to limit deliberately its strategic options. It stood firm against proposals of settlement varying from a truncated "Palestine" state, to the return of the status quo ante (of June 1967), and the latest option being King Hussein's plan whereby again a truncated Palestine would be an autonomous region within a 'United Arab Kingdom'. The option of liberation led the resistance to be in continuous confrontation with all attempts at the so-called 'peaceful settlement' and this, in addition to the hardened and intransigent Israeli position, tended to justify the revolutionary course that the target of liberation exacted. This uncompromising commitment to the course of liberation communicated to the Arab regimes the message that the Palestinians will not be easily—if at all—manageable in case the 'peaceful settlement' envisaged by the Security Council Resolution 242 is achieved.

This rupture with the Arab regimes was not necessarily total. The measure of the break necessary constituted one of the major roadblocks in the path of 'national unity' among the resistance organizations. This became clearer in Jordan and hence the individualistic and undisciplined initiatives and acts that certain resistance groups made. What is necessary to underline here is that the degree of rupture with the Arab establishments—especially with that of Jordan—was the principal cause of friction among the resistance organizations as the following interviews will amply reveal. That the resistance felt politically and ideologically alienated from the prevailing atmosphere of the Arab regimes is amply evident. The differences that obtained were to be found in the timing of the rupture and the assessment of the available revolutionary potential with the requirements of what ought to be done. In this respect Fateh was most conscious, as was

referred to earlier, of the limitations imposed on the resistance movement. That is why Fateh, while ascertaining liberation as its principal task, endeavoured to spell out the alternative it sought to provide in the place of the Zionist structure of Israel. Fateh proposed the building of a democratic secular state in Palestine in lieu of the present Zionist state. This proposal was not, as the Zionists sought to emphasize, a gimmick to win support in the international field, but a cardinal belief in the ideology of Fateh and subsequently of the overall resistance movement.

Fateh believed that it was not sufficient to know what the liberation movement rejected, but it was necessary to define what it wanted. If the dismantlement of Israel was the objective, a simultaneous definition of what is to replace the Zionist structure was crucial. In this respect Fateh's alternative to Israel appeared very plausible. To begin with the option before the Jews—all the Jews of Israel—to remain in Palestine after liberation was not only the humanist democratic answer to Jewish exclusiveness that the ghetto-garrison Zionist state advocated and practiced, but it closed the options to the overbidders from among the Arabs. Besides, the principal Palestinian guerrilla organization was able and even eager to give, as early as 1968, a definite and precise answer to the question, "What after liberation?" If the democratic secular Palestine constituted the strategic objective of liberation, Fateh then had to address itself to the immediate and pressing tasks of mobilizing and organizing for liberation. What this meant was that Fateh had to sustain two dialogues at the same time, a fighting and an armed dialogue with the Zionist state and its institutions on the one hand, and an intellectual and political dialogue with the constituency—world Jewry—which Israel endeavours to attract and claims to speak on behalf of, on the other hand. But for reasons mentioned earlier and which are to be found in the overall Arab situation, and those within the framework of the Palestine resistance itself, the modest achievements expected earlier were halted and remained unfulfilled. The ensuing frustration and the dimension of the tragic events of September 1970 brought to the forefront the urgent need to revise a great deal of the earlier strategies, and rebuild the theoretical basis for the national unity among the five principal organizations of the resistance.

If the overall Arab situation was not conducive to sustained resistance activities, the international framework in which the Middle East crisis was dealt with added to the mounting difficulties which the Palestinians had to confront. We have seen, to begin with, how the UN Security Council Resolution 242 and the various diplomatic efforts that followed it divested the Arab situation of a great deal of its revolutionary potential. Furthermore, this deteriorating revolutionary condition tended to increase the alienation of the Palestinian resistance from the exigencies of present Arab realities. Contradictions among so-called progressive and conservative Arab states became minimal when the exigencies of the Palestinian resistance required unequivocal support from the progressive states. This situation tended to constitute a major obstacle to the Palestinian resistance's

efforts to disrupt the international consensus that anchored at the UN Resolution 242. The Palestinian resistance and the various guerrilla activities drew, it is true, much attention. In a way, the emergence of an organized resistance took the world by surprise in the same way as it galvanized the Arab masses. Emergence of a Palestinian resistance meant that the Palestinians rejected the notion of being treated as 'refugees' as required by Resolution 242. The resistance made it very clear that it would do its utmost to prevent the resolution from being implemented and has subsequently sought to discredit those who wanted it applied. This entailed a measure of direct confrontation with a world system yearning for instant coexistence. Perhaps the rejection of the new world system brought the resistance close to the Chinese posture on world affairs. China, which until 1971 was outside established international legitimacy, did support all the challengers of the new world system. In addition, the experiment of the Chinese revolution provided many relevant clues in theory and practice to all revolutionaries in the Third World. In this field China gave material and training facilities to the nascent Palestine resistance and initiated moral and diplomatic support for its objectives. Thus, while the Palestinian resistance endeavoured to initiate new alliances on the international plane it was aware that the international consensus did not mean uniform positions of all the 'Big Powers' on the Middle East issue. What followed was that the resistance correctly assessed the opposing roles of the two 'big' or 'super' powers; despite their respective commitment to the consensus that emerged on November 22, 1967. The resistance correctly estimated that the Soviet Union was determined to enable Arab power to redress the military imbalance caused by the June 1967 defeat and hence force Israel at some stage to withdraw from all the occupied Arab territories. On the other hand, the Palestinian resistance concluded that the US kept revising drastically its commitment to the UN Resolution 242 in order to accommodate Israeli military, political and diplomatic requirements. What was projected by the US as a commitment to the survival of Israel was in fact a commitment to the objectives of Israel. In other words, what was expected from the US was for it to act as a restraining influence on Israel; instead the US became a leverage for Israel's continued intransigence and its defiance of the international consensus.

It is, hence, clear that while the Palestinian resistance found itself differing with the resultant Soviet positions it understood and appreciated its motivations. Thus, while the chances of the UN Security Council Resolution being implemented diminished, co-operation and understanding between the resistance and the Soviet Union grew. In the meantime, the resistance veered gradually but convincingly towards the Vietnamese position concerning its attitude on the Soviet-Chinese contradiction. Like the Vietnamese, the Palestinians were aware that in order to render their confrontation with the American imperial position and power in the Middle East credible, alliance with both the Soviet and the Chinese powers was required. The Palestinian revolution must become the meeting place of all anti-imperialist forces and not be drawn into the marginal and unfortunate con-

traditions amongst them. The resistance was equally conscious of the vital importance of world opinion in its revolutionary struggle to reopen the Palestine question. Fateh initiated its program of information and was followed later by other resistance organizations, especially the Popular and the Democratic Fronts, and was keen to have its views and activities known to as wide a circle as possible. Aware that its communications system would be in a headlong collision with entrenched Zionist fallacies and at best with an eagerness to stabilize the world order, Fateh, and later other organizations of the resistance, mounted an information campaign that broke through the layers of bias and hit a responsive chord among the newly radicalized youth of the West. The young of the world were questioning accepted assumptions and growing sceptical of Israeli medievalist ideology and its theocratic notions of statehood. Resurgence of Palestinian consciousness and its formulation of a 'democratic secular' society attracted many articulate and perceptive intellectuals to help its propagation. It is a great tribute to these resistance efforts in the field of communication that Bertrand Russell's last testimony was a vindication for the resistance's historical optimism.

Inside the United Nations, condemnation of Israel for its aggressive attacks on refugee camps in Lebanon and Syria was so frequent that the growing moral isolation of the Zionists was getting clearer and clearer. Various human rights commissions, international bodies, were categorical and unanimous in their strictures on Israeli practices in occupied Arab territories. The world body, in turn, was becoming aware not only of the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, but, perhaps more important, the United Nations General Assembly voted in favor of legitimizing the right of the Palestinians to *struggle* by all means for these rights.¹ The adversities which the Palestinian resistance was experiencing on the home-ground did not diminish, but on the contrary, enhanced recognition of its rights on the international level. The paradox of this situation, added to the Palestinian disillusionment and bitterness with the Arab scene, conversely steeled the resistance's determination to pursue its objective of liberation.

The improved international response to the objectives of the Palestine cause did not distract the attention of the resistance from the basic reality that their struggle on the homefront is the decisive factor. The capacity of the resistance to change world opinion would at best render the international situation more amenable to the long and complex struggle that has to be waged against the Zionist state. The world must come to grips with the consequences of the great injustice that the Palestinians have suffered in order to avoid becoming a force in favor of stabilizing it. The credibility of the Palestinian situation and of the objectives of resistance becomes established, however, only when the Arab situation becomes resistance oriented, and thus capable of shouldering the ensuing responsibilities. This explains why, for a long time, debate within Palestinian circles

¹ UN General Assembly Resolution, adopted December 6, 1971.

focused on determining priorities of whether to change the Arab national context or to combat directly the Israeli state and institutions. Needless to say, at no moment were these priorities mutually exclusive, but how to determine the emphasis on one course or another was always a principal preoccupation. Inevitably, a pursuit of both priorities was undertaken which led to clearer political and ideological decisiveness on the one hand, and a relative weakening for the time being of operational performance on the other.

...

The following six interviews were published by *Shu'um Falistinyya* ('Palestine Affairs') during the early part of 1972. Inasmuch as Fateh constitutes the principal resistance organization, it was deemed advisable that two of its leaders would be interviewed so that Fateh's views on a variety of topics would be included. It is important to note that the first contribution is by a leader of Fateh who, after the resistance decided to consider the Palestine Liberation Organization as the framework for its actions and activities, became the head of the Political Department of the PLO until January 1973. In this capacity he was responsible for representing the resistance at many inter-Arab and other Islamic and non-aligned conferences. This enabled him to be in touch with the details of Arab realities and dispositions. This closeness to the intricacies of the Arab situation rendered him more convinced that Fateh's theory concerning its Palestinian identity and its aloofness from inter-Arab conflicts was not only valid, but necessary, to elicit a continuous, though optimal, Arab support for the resistance. The policy that Fateh adopted concerning 'non-interference' in the internal affairs of the Arab states warranted a measure of insulating the resistance from clear ideological coloration. This thesis found much currency in many Palestinian circles, who, eager to sustain a resistance movement, were weary of having to accept the compulsions of an ideological color or entity. Besides, the Fateh purists argued—and Khalid al-Hassan was and remains one of their most eloquent spokesmen—the phase of national liberation does not require at all a hurried commitment to a particular social philosophy which will alienate important sectors of the people, as well as render several Arab regimes suspect of the politics of the resistance. Al-Hassan concludes that "A Palestinian society does not exist on its own land; thus it follows that the slogan for the present stage should call a moratorium on the social struggle as far as the Palestinian organizations are concerned." The insulation of Fateh from definite ideological orientation has the additional advantage of maintaining the loyalty and support of the broad masses and the 'independent' Palestinian elements. Al-Hassan says in this respect: "The Palestinian masses were prepared to contribute a great deal to the resistance which had given them dignity after years of humiliation. But the chaotic multiplicity of organizations, the lack of one leadership, one organization, one force, created insurmountable barriers for the Palestinians to unite." This purist Fateh position is severely critical of the steps towards unity taken subsequently by Fateh's leadership, insofar as it

tended to blur the image of the resistance and nearly put Fateh at parity with smaller organizations. This appeal to return to a Fateh fundamentalism recedes each time the overall Arab situation shows signs of further deterioration. "At the moment", Khalid al-Hassan in exasperation cries out, the resistance is "...neither Palestinian nor Arab, neither a social struggle nor a national liberation struggle, neither patronized (by Arab states) nor free, neither dependent nor independent." Suffice it to say here that what al-Hassan has sought to project as contradictory categories are in fact complementary to each other, because to be Palestinian is to be Arab and because modern and authentic national liberation struggles invariably expedite their objectives by the growing social awareness within the revolutionary ranks.

The purist attitude within Fateh was inevitable. It was considered the 'party' of the Palestinian people. As such it could not afford 'immature' ideological pronouncements lest this might lead to a situation whereby Fateh was no longer an all-Palestinian movement. Insistence on the need for clear ideological commitments was, in the purist Fateh view, dictated by the objective realities of the stage of struggle. This did not imply that ideological formulation had no place in the movement; what was meant was that the official consensus of Fateh should remain deliberately amorphous in order to maintain its representative character. This did not preclude that the urge for more precise ideological orientation was not evident. On the contrary, as in many national liberation movements in the Third World, a large number of Fateh's movement pressed for the gradual transformation to more definite and determinable political and ideological positions. Aware that the adverse Arab political situation would be incapable of shouldering the responsibilities of confrontation with Israel and the US-Israeli axis, the 'ideological' elements within Fateh considered the role of the Palestinian resistance as a detonator of the revolutionary potential in the Arab nation. Facing the 'purist' arguments, these elements maintained that the Palestinian resistance could not be totally 'neutral' on the ideological plane, as this would divest the resistance of its vanguard role and deny it the implements that would enable it to plan for a long-range revolutionary period.

Debate within Fateh reflected, in large measure, the debate that was taking place among all sectors of Palestinian—and committed Arab—opinion. The drastic changes that took place after the June 1967 war presented the Arabs, and the Palestinians in particular, with many difficult and complex challenges. It was not expected, nor perhaps would it have been desirable, that there would be uniform or identical responses. Fateh constituted a broad framework that enabled the variety and multiplicity of responses and options to be regulated, and if possible disciplined, within an organized commitment to armed resistance and total national liberation. This, in part, explains why, despite the fervor of the debate and the visibility of ideological and political controversies, no serious sectarian or factional splits or divisions took place. This constant organizational unity of Fateh, amidst continuous ideological debate, was largely due to a feeling

at times bordering on messianism, that Fateh was entrusted by this phase of history with national liberation and that its unity was the primary, if not the sole, guarantee to render the objective of liberation historically possible.

This prevailing Fateh conviction explains the statement of Abu Iyad in the second interview of this book, where he asserts that : "Any problem within Fateh reflects, one way or another, on the entire resistance movement." Abu Iyad—usually referred to as the second man of Fateh—represents this propensity within the movement for clearer political and ideological positions. His position in the top echelons of the leadership restricted his utterances, but did not prevent him from encouraging debate and more pronounced progressive stands. This was due to his conviction that "Fateh's lack of a clear political line and of any stand on fundamental issues must have [a paralyzing] effect on the other organizations and the overall movement". Furthermore, Abu Iyad has been continuously eager to steer Fateh from becoming prisoner of excessive pragmatism. Describing this dilemma he says: "At present, when we are deciding on any given issue we tend to ask: does this decision please such and such a state or not? I believe that this is the beginning of tragedy for any revolution anywhere, when its decisions become a function of its relationships." In his interview, Abu Iyad, who played an important role in the Jordanian context up till July 1971, explains elaborately the precarious relations that existed, not only between the resistance and the authorities, but the intricacies of Fateh's relations with other resistance organizations. Abu Iyad, synopsisizing a complex experience, states that if the resistance were to remain "undecided", it could never "regain its strength in Jordan". Then he says, "While in Amman, I tried everything to retain part of our presence in Jordan, but I felt that the regime (Jordan's) had already committed itself on ideological grounds, against the resistance. So the regime made the ideological mistake [anti-resistance ideology] of allowing the resistance to reenter." Attention must be drawn to the insightful remark made by Abu Iyad when he says that "the biggest mistake before September 1970 the Fateh leadership made was due to the fact that it had no complete experience of the 1957 events in Jordan. Had we lived as ordinary citizens then and been inside the prisons and suffered we would take a different attitude to the (Hashemite) regime." In this respect Abu Iyad realized the limitations of Fateh's historical experience and was anxious to open Fateh to the experience of interacting with various currents that emerged on the Palestinian and Arab scene. He engaged the other ideological organizations of resistance in a continuous dialogue; he was foremost in advocating national unity among these organizations; he sought throughout to persuade the other resistance organizations to avoid the pitfall of treating advanced ideological positions as an excuse to plan a replacement for Fateh. If for no other reason, he argued the time was not ripe to push the Palestinian people into a position which they could not comprehend.

However, Abu Iyad's advocacy of national unity among Palestinian organizations ran counter to a strong mood within Fateh. He argued within Fateh that

sheer popular, military, institutional and political superiority must not lead to any form of organizational or intellectual self-centeredness. The political, ideological and struggling experiences of the Arab Nationalist Movement (from which both the Popular and the Democratic Fronts emerged) and of the Ba'ath Party (from which sprang Sa'iqa and the Liberation Front) are a heritage worthy of study, and their current thinking must not be excluded from Fateh's decision-making process. True, the failure of all-Arab national parties and movements in June 1967 rendered their credibility subject to review, if not always scepticism, but their experiences could not be excluded from resistance planning. Besides, Abu Iyad and the ideologists in Fateh argued, the fermentation and radical questioning that took place within these all-Arab movements cannot be ignored. Hence, the Fateh ideologists made a deliberate thrust to bring about a process of cross-fertilization with the four other organizations on all levels. Needless to say, the urge for national unity among the resistance organizations faced many obstacles from within Fateh, and also from among the smaller resistance organizations themselves. Advanced ideological positions were deemed to be sufficient testimony to validate their claim to leadership. In a way, many in both the Popular and Democratic Fronts overestimated their power of attraction and underrated Fateh's popular status and capacity for intellectual resilience. This led to the inevitable delays and prevarications that postponed the achievement of national unity until the April 1972 session of the Palestinian National Congress.

When pressure was brought to bear on the resistance by the Jordanians—and in a lower key in Lebanon—many forms of coordinating organs developed. However, the looseness of the various “central committees” and “unified armed struggle commands”, that were witnessed in Jordan were far below the standard of withstanding the onslaughts of the Jordanian authorities. What constituted a most detrimental situation was that separate strategic and behavioral concepts among individual resistance organizations especially prior to September 1970, could draw the entirety of the resistance to whoever separately initiated action. The period 1969–70 in Jordan witnessed many such situations and it is estimated that the cumulative effect of such individual actions provided an opportunity long awaited by the US-Israeli sponsored regime of Jordan to strike. With the massacre that the Hashemite regime conducted against the Palestinians, Abu Iyad's conclusion that the “Jordan regime is a natural extension of Israel”, becomes completely valid. That the US President came to the brink of a world war to save, in September 1970, the tottering Hashemite regime, is but clear evidence of how deep and organic are the ties of this regime with the US-Israeli axis in the Middle East.

The period that followed the September 1970 tragedy until these interviews were made (early part of 1972) was a testing period on many levels. Any lingering hopes about Jordan's answerability to collective Arab pressures were practically abandoned by the most pragmatic among Fateh. The consistent circumvention of the Cairo and Amman Agreements by Jordan were an exact replica of Israel's

circumvention of UN resolutions accepted under momentary pressures. By July, 1971, when all resistance patience was exasperated and the remaining resistance presence was struck at in Jerash and Ajloun, the priority to confront the Hashemite regime was irrevocably established. Despite efforts at mediation that took place in this period between Jordan and the resistance at the behest of Egypt and Saudi Arabia, the thesis of the Popular and the Democratic Fronts concerning this mediation was validated, although the timing of the criticism outside the framework of unity weakened the resistance's bargaining position. Abu Iyad, who, within Fateh, was not for the mediation efforts, was however insistent that as long as the resistance acquiesced to it, the fact that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was the framework of the "public dealings", made public dissent by the two Fronts unnecessary. To Abu Iyad, however, this meant that the resistance should, irrespective of the immediate problems of dealing with the regimes, go into a period of self-examination and introspection. "The young no longer ask themselves whether Fateh or the Front represents the foundation (of the resistance); they are concerned now whether the action in which they take part is properly conceived."

Let it be noted that this remark by Abu Iyad perceives of the revolutionary scepticism as a healthy sign and as auguring continued vitality and participation. If I have endeavoured to give some detailed introductory observations on Fateh, it is not only because it constitutes the present mainstream of the resistance, but because the brunt of the operational aspects of the Palestinian resistance—whether military, political, or administrative—fell on Fateh. This prevented it, unlike the other organizations whose leaders are interviewed in this book, from evolving a coherent, theoretically interrelated program. Hence, this explains in part the stylistic discrepancy. While the two Fateh spokesmen (Khalid al-Hassan and Abu Iyad) were conveying in a way instant responses, based on day-to-day experiences, George Habash and Nayef Hawatmeh—especially the latter—were explaining events in Jordan—and in general—in a manner to prove their original theoretical formulations. Whether one agrees with these formulations or not, the analysis that follows is a matter of primary importance. What is essential is that many of their intellectual premonitions—and their earlier political suspicions concerning the Jordanian situation were validated by subsequent events. However, Fateh was confronted after 1967 with the overwhelming task of salvaging the Palestine cause from oblivion. The task was so pressing and overpowering that Fateh was immersed, perhaps unwittingly, in a pragmatic approach. In a way, Habash's reflections after the Jordan events prepare the ground for more direct effort by the Popular Front towards the national unity long sought after. Like Hawatmeh, Habash emphasizes the class nature of the struggle and presses for the need for a "coherent revolutionary vision" and to avoid "scattered military operations". Dr. Habash's short interview shows that the resistance failed to appreciate clearly the nature of the Jordanian regime and observes that it behaved as if it were "a substitute for the Jordanian National Movement". Both

Habash, and more elaborately Hawatmeh, emphasize this lacuna in the resistance policies in Jordan. Both are critical of the "patronizing" aspect of Fateh towards the Jordanian national movement and agree that the relative Palestinian "parochialism" of Fateh made it fail to appreciate the vital importance of such an authentic Jordanian movement. Both these contributions, as well as the last two by Sami al-Attari (Sa'iqa) and A. Sa'id of the Arab Liberation Front, are in large measure critical reactions to Fateh's handling of the resistance in general and in Jordan in particular.

Hawatmeh's critique is the most thorough. The Democratic Front, eager to vindicate its political pressure to confront the regime, has become very eager to prove the validity of its vision. Aware that the vigor of its political line never meant military indiscipline on its part—i.e. hijacking of planes—it is nevertheless insistent on justifying its pre-September 1970 position. While the Popular Front moved slowly from behavior totally independent of the overall resistance strategy at that time to a situation of maximal coordination with Fateh, the Democratic Front maintained throughout an organizational and behavioral alliance, but complete political ideological independence and, as many would insist, political indiscipline. Hawatmeh insists that "if the resistance had taken the initiative in its confrontation with the regime, the tables would have been turned and the national catastrophe would never have happened". This controversy, kept alive by the presentation, sophisticated, but not always inclusive of all the objective conditions then prevailing, never became recriminatory.

On the contrary, the following interviews show clearly how the ensuing political program adopted by the resistance in April 1972 was the result of interaction between much of the theoretical analysis discerned in the interviews and the receptivity shown by Fateh.

As this is being written, the level of national unity that has been accomplished among the various resistance organizations shows that the following interviews are of utmost importance in the understanding of the resistance, and such understanding can be further nurtured. They provide, moreover, an insight into the torment that the resistance passed and is still passing through. They show the ease with which the resistance leadership was and is willing to undertake self-criticism and accept criticism. That no conformity is imposed testifies to the workings of the democratic relationships that govern its organizational institutions. The constant quest for revolutionary consistency might not be matched with available revolutionary possibilities. But the quest is not only a sign of life but a condition for life. This book is not a book in the real sense. It is in a way more important—although less academic. It is a projection—raw maybe—of honest and spontaneous reflections by a leadership of a movement facing the most difficult odds in modern history. Given the adversities, obstacles, ruthlessness, misunderstandings, containment, brutalities, and general Arab malaise, it is doing quite well.

KHALID AL-HASSAN

FATEH

— *I would like us to discuss the responsibilities presently faced by the Palestinian resistance movement. But to get to the heart of the matter, we should hear your opinion of the movement's past progress and whether or not it moved in the right direction. Did it deviate from the prescribed path? In the light of your answers, it will become clear whether or not we should undertake specific reforms in approaching our duties. For example: has the multiplicity of organizations represented a natural phenomenon? Were the schemes for national unity positive at every stage? Were our relations with the Palestinian, Jordanian and Arab masses consciously considered and planned? Did our relationship with the Arab regimes help or hinder the revolution?*

— In 1965 Palestinians were forbidden to participate in any political activities related to their cause, the natural consequence being the creation of many clandestine organizations. Some of these later joined forces and merged into one organization with Fateh. In an attempt to create a 'supporting Arab Front' there was, between 1965 and 1967, an effort to unite organized Arab forces (ruling and non-ruling parties and unions). Such attempts were thwarted by the realities of the Arab situation, since the Palestinian armed struggle, which began in 1965, was contrary to Arab proposals for solving the Palestinian problem.

After 1967 the multiplicity of groups appeared in two forms. Some of them were created directly by the Arab governments through their ruling parties or official apparatus. Others were initiated by non-ruling parties wanting to enter the Palestinian arena. All these organizations were Palestinian in name only, for in reality they were extensions of the Arab parties they represented, desiring to exist within the Palestinian revolution and maintaining their governmental and partisan problems and contradictions. Thus in this case, contrary to the pre 1967 situation, the multiplicity of organizations was unnatural. Rather than create their own partisan organizations, these parties would have benefited the revolution more by participating in it as individuals. They could have enriched the consciousness of the struggle and rallied to it the support of the Arab masses, thus widening its base. But unfortunately these organizations were caught between two levels; that of working for their principles on the Arab level, and that of working on the Palestinian level under their partisan names.

This leads us to the second [part of the] question regarding the plans for national unity. The majority of these organizations represent pan-Arab action, and their analysis is oriented toward Arab society which they hope to transform by an Arab social revolution, of which the liberation of Palestine would be a part. Consequently their attitude toward the Palestinian problem is determined by its position within the context of the Arab social revolution. On the other hand the Palestinian organizations are not yet at a social revolutionary stage; their priority is national liberation (toward which they will mobilize the Arab masses in a popular national struggle). Thus it can be seen that each stage requires different daily practices. Each should work harmoniously according to its principles, coming to realize through their complementary action the Arab depth of the Palestinian revolution.

However, rather than fulfilling a particular plan which would push the degree of cooperation between these organizations toward a complete merger or toward the formation of a Palestinian front, the plans for unity on the Palestine question were compromising forms, designed to avert a rupture in the interrelationships of the organizations which were due to differences in the political programs and practices in the narrow Palestinian field.

In my opinion, each party based its acceptance or rejection of the plans for compromise on the interests of its own organization, and not on those of the revolution. Each organization regarded itself as superior, and expected other organizations to fall in with its political program, in spite of the ubiquitous slogan of working for the Palestinian cause.

We can now come to the third point which deals with our relationship with the Palestinian masses. In fact our relationship was both conscious and planned; however, it did not lead to strong dynamic cohesion, because the presence of many organizations, with their diverse and contradictory theories and practices, did not place before the masses a united revolution and leadership. On the contrary the masses were confronted by many leaderships, organizations, theories, and practices, and the disunity within the infrastructure divided them. (The Palestinian masses were prepared to contribute a great deal to the resistance, which had given them dignity and identity after twenty years of humiliation. But the chaotic relations existing between the organizations, the multiplicity of, and contradictions between, their political programs and daily practices, the lack of one Palestinian leadership, one Palestinian organization and one Palestinian force, all created an insurmountable barrier to such contributions. The Palestinian people were farther ahead of the Palestinian organizations in their desire and ability to give and support, than the organizations were able to absorb. This is also true of the Jordanian masses, and is equally important, because Jordan comprises the first natural base for any Palestinian movement seeking direct confrontation with the enemy in the occupied territories. The Jordanian people had a tremendous desire to play their part in the Palestinian revolution, but again multiplicity and contradictions created the opportunity for counterrevolutionary

forces (as represented by the Jordanian authorities) to incite the Jordanian people against the Palestinian revolution, and they succeeded in alienating the people from the resistance. And yet, had the resistance movement not been divided and full of contradictions, it would have been able, with the support of the masses, to overcome the conspiracies of the [Jordanian] government.

— *Like any other people, the Palestinians follow various ideological trends. Surely it is natural that these trends be expressed through different organizational forms, especially at such a stage as national liberation?*

— This question has been raised before and contains a kind of fallacy. No one is suggesting that the ideas of people can or should be eradicated. The Palestinians, whether considered as refugees dispersed throughout the Arab world or as constituting part of the Arab nation, are inevitably influenced by its intellectual convictions and ideological beliefs, which range from narrow regionalism to complete internationalism. But this is not the problem; the variety of these beliefs and their various ideological expressions are natural phenomena. The problem lies in a misunderstanding of the present stage of the struggle. Each stage has its own goal which is a step toward the next stage, and toward which the various organizations should unite.

Thus for example, when parts of China were occupied by Japan in the thirties, its first stage was to rid itself of the occupation. It devoted all its energies toward fulfilling that goal, despite the contradictory ideologies present in Chinese society at the time. The second stage was the struggle against American monopoly and exploitation, as represented by Chiang Kai-shek. Similarly, Vietnam looks upon the liberation of the south from neo-colonialism as its basic goal, and uniting the divers organizations under the slogan of national liberation, it formed its program around it. It also suspended the special activities of existing organizations, whether Buddhist, Christian or communist.

The Palestinian struggle too is at a national liberation stage, although its own characteristics distinguish it, to a large degree, from the national liberation stages of China, Vietnam, and other nations. Because we live dispersed, we do not have a society in the usual sense of the word, nor a nation, nor any of the institutions necessary for the formation of one. The West Bank, where the majority of people are Palestinian in origin, is considered part of Jordan; even the Gaza Strip, which is part of Palestine, was governed by an Egyptian administration; a huge number of Palestinians are scattered among the oil-producing Gulf states, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq. A people in such a situation have no social problems of their own, for their social problems are integrated into those of the society in which they are living. Their real problems begin when the possibility of victory is at hand. Other Arab societies do not face the same problem, because they are societies in the full meaning of the word. They possess all the elements which go to make up a nation. Now they need to develop in order to be able to

fulfill the demands of the Palestinian liberation struggle; they must become capable of sharing the responsibilities of the struggle. However, it is important to differentiate between Palestinian action expressed through the Palestinian organizations scattered throughout the Arab states, and Arab action which aims at developing Arab society so that it can carry the responsibilities of a fierce struggle, such as that required for liberating Palestine.

A Palestinian society does not exist on its own land; thus it follows that the slogan for the present stage should call for a moratorium on the social struggle as far as the Palestinian organizations are concerned. In fact, those participating in such a struggle are either Arab in origin or Palestinian extensions of political parties. For example, the Arab Liberation Front represents the Palestinian wing of the Iraqi Ba'ath Party; al-Sa'iqa represents the Palestinian wing of the Syrian Ba'ath Party; the Popular Front was originally the "Youth of Revenge", which was the Palestinian wing of the Arab Nationalist Movement. The mistake that occurred was in not differentiating between the Arab activities of these parties and the requirements of the Palestinian struggle in its national liberation stage. The problem was finding the means by which these various ideologies and programs could relate to one another, in order to serve the present stage.

— *You are not, then, against the extension of these Arab parties into the Palestinian field. Rather, you're against their organizational plans which are tied to the strategy of their respective parties or states, and which are not dependent on the strategy of national liberation?*

— This is true. The Palestinian people cannot liberate themselves alone. There can be no Palestinian revolution without there being an awareness of its close affinity with the Arab world in general, with the Arab masses being mobilized to the cause. Partisan forces can assist this mobilization by organizing the masses. Ultimately, the Arab struggle and the Palestinian struggle will meet in a popular revolutionary movement, leading to the liberation of Palestine.

— *In this light, don't you think that those who believe in revolutionizing the area around Palestine in order to reach the actual stage for liberation come very close to those who begin with an Arab starting point and end with Palestine?*

— I do not object to this conclusion at all. There is no hope in any Palestinian action unless we reach the stage of revolutionizing the Arab masses so that they can participate in the liberation struggle. My main objection is to those Arab organizations that work in the Palestinian arena and abandon their primary task of revolutionizing the Arab masses. These Arab organizations placed the revolution under the guardianship of the Arab regimes and parties and consequently the revolution lost its ability to act independently, or to think and express itself freely. Why? Because in essence the Palestinian movement represents a revolution

against the Arab condition as symbolized by the Arab regimes. At this point Arab political views are based on the concept of the economic development of Arab society. But the economic structure is built on consumption and does not provide the needs of the liberation struggle. In a consumer economy, the citizen becomes preoccupied with protecting his personal property and his outlook on the Palestinian problem becomes negative and non-militant.

That is why the Arab regimes lean toward a peaceful settlement of the Palestinian problem and avoid confrontation with the enemy. Conversely, by adopting armed struggle, the Palestinian revolution represents a rebellion against this Arab reality. It is evident that there is a contradiction between the Palestinian revolution and the existing status quo in the Arab world. The first represents the trend for armed struggle while the latter rejects this trend. Another contradiction may be a result of the general conditions current in the Arab world which are the outcome of a long period of cultural stagnation. These opposing trends operate in the Palestinian arena and restrict the freedom of the resistance, which is supposed to move according to the dictates of political and armed struggle. Moreover, the Palestinian struggle is a struggle for the whole Arab nation; it stems from a policy of national security, which places Damascus, Haifa, Jerusalem, Amman, Cairo, and Baghdad on the same level. Such a policy contradicts that of local security adopted by the Arab regimes. This official Arab policy led some regimes to restrict fedayeen activities by placing them under the supervision of the state. It is true that freedom of Palestinian action may contradict a nation's sovereignty if the latter stems from considerations of local security. The basis of the Palestinian revolution is truly national; it does not differentiate between Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Palestine or Egypt.

All these considerations are reflected in the Palestinian field, and they explain why the Arab governments change their positions according to whatever problems are currently confronting the area and the Palestinian revolution.

— *Let's discuss now the revolution's relations with the Palestinian masses. We mean to discuss two points in particular. The first concerns the new type of education being offered by the resistance movement to its people. The second point deals with whether the revolution has sufficiently reformed its organizational structures so as to bring about the mobilization of the masses and to fulfil the requirements of each stage of the struggle.*

— To answer the second question first of all, the absence of one leadership carrying out a single program was the basic problem obstructing the development of dynamic organizational forms appropriate to the needs of the Palestinian struggle. In fact, much time and effort were devoted to prevent a rupture in the relations between the various Palestinian organizations, and to maintain coexistence in the hope of finally reaching agreement on a unified leadership. That's why there was an awareness of the necessity to organize the Palestinian people. In addition to the militia, there were Palestinian unions (labor, student, teachers', women's

etcetera), but they made certain errors as a result of differentiating between Palestinian and Jordanian. The regime benefited from these errors and mobilized the East Jordan people against the Palestinians under the pretext that the Palestinian unions differentiated between Palestinians and Jordanians. But in reality, these were national unions with political and militant goals aimed at protecting the Palestinian revolution. Despite these mistakes, the campaign was quite successful outside Jordan, and it was intended that it should be developed; but the rapid movement of events in Jordan and the Arab area prevented this. The militia experience succeeded because the nature of the struggle in Jordan gave it impetus, and this was evident in the February crisis and the September uprising when Amman stood steadfast and produced many models of heroism.

As far as popular political education is concerned, I understand it to mean a unified educational program with one goal. This would have been possible had there been a unified leadership capable of guiding the people to their desired goal. But regrettably, every organization had its own educational program which differed from that of the others. We confused the Palestinian people and divided them, instead of giving them ideological unity such as had existed up till the end of 1968. Though that earlier form of politicization did not have the appropriate depth, it was at least a unified educational program that developed side by side with the progress of events and with the requirements of the political circumstances. After 1968, divers political educational programs proliferated, and the national dimensions of the problem were presented to the masses in more than one form. The stage for national liberation assumed more than one meaning, creating multiple educational premises. Even if we positively evaluate each educational program, the Palestinian people still find themselves facing contradictory views. As a consequence of these errors, mistrust became prevalent among the people, particularly when the organizations began distrusting one another.

— *You mentioned the misunderstanding with the Jordanian masses, and the establishment of the Palestinian unions, and how the regime used them to encourage the regionalist sentiment in Jordan. There is another related topic that is more important, and which is the Jordanian national movement. After the June [1967] defeat, the resistance movement became the basic political force in Jordan, thus hindering the development of a Jordanian national movement. Don't you think that it is now necessary for the Palestinian movement to take the initiative in effecting the plans of the Jordanian national movement, putting some effort into its development so that it might play its natural role?*

— First of all, when the Palestinian revolution began playing a significant popular role in Jordan, the Jordanian national liberation movement, in the partisan sense of the word, had already been defeated by the regime. Secondly, no national movement can come into being unless it stems organically from the objective conditions surrounding it, and develops through daily struggle. A national movement is not created by a decision, a statement of sponsorship, or an announce-

cement of intention, as seems to have been the case in the Arab world for the past twenty years. It has been proven that the export of revolution is a very dubious policy. Any national movement that is the product of this method is stillborn because it lacks the organic growth and militant practices required for a national movement. It will lack the will to struggle and defy, and it will be devoid of ideological clarity concerning the needs of the society in which it is to function.

Accordingly, I can say that any suggestion that the resistance movement eliminated the Jordanian national movement is false. There was no national movement, in the scientific sense of the word, for the revolution to eliminate. The resistance movement was growing in an ambience of vacuum and it aimed at fulfilling the necessary requirements of the liberation struggle. The Palestinian revolution was not originally the product of a social revolution of the Jordanian people; it was a Palestinian revolution with ramifications throughout the Arab world. It was not its intention to create a special Jordanian national movement, and it cannot do so, for any national movement must evolve organically.

Had this national movement been present from the beginning, it would have been the duty of the Palestinian revolution to cooperate with it in a complementary fashion, as it cooperates with all the national and partisan forces in the Arab countries. The revolution attempted to establish relations with certain figures of the Jordanian national movement, according to its analysis of what they could offer. Such figures cannot assume an effective role at the state level or among the masses, for their effectiveness is limited to what they can do as individuals. Consequently, cooperating with these national figures was ineffective, since they do not represent a national movement as much as they represent national pivots here and there.

— *It is true that the [Jordanian] national movement was fragmented and unable to stand on its own feet. The Palestinian revolution emerged in a vacuum, and thus was able to assert itself in Jordan. However, the resistance movement did not struggle to solve many of the people's immediate problems, which resulted in a gap on the Jordanian scene between the movement and the masses, who were preoccupied with their day-to-day problems. What is your comment?*

— First we must understand that the Palestinian revolution is not limited to Jordan. It is, or should be, present in a basic and effective way in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon. If we truly believe that the revolution has a Palestinian form and an Arab depth, it should be present in other Arab countries on the same efficient level, though in a less direct way with regard to the confrontation with the enemy. The realization of its Arab depth is an essential prerequisite for the commencement of the Palestinian struggle.

Secondly, we must define the aims of the Palestinian revolution. Its aim is the liberation of Palestine, and consequently the present stage of the revolution is national liberation and not a social struggle. As I mentioned earlier, the nature of

the struggle for each of the two revolutions is different; the organizational means are different and the slogans are different. According to the laws of national liberation throughout history, we should not abide by the laws of social revolution. When a national liberation movement confronts an occupying force, it is not directly concerned with the nature of the enemy's regime so much as with expelling it. When we understand this point, we recognize that the Palestinian revolution cannot struggle on two fronts at the same time. It has a national battle to fight without interference from other Arab parties wanting to carry out their own social struggle.

The revolution is ready to confront any regime threatening it. But the social structure of those regimes is not its concern, and taking a partisan stance with regard to them would bind the revolution within a narrow ideological framework. It would then be transformed from a national movement of armed struggle into an ideological movement tied to similar ideological movements. This would mean abandoning all the principles on which it was based, and it would become a new Arab party. In this light, I do not think that the Palestinian revolution should work to change the nature of the society in Jordan or elsewhere. This is the duty of the national movements in each Arab country. Any confrontation that the Palestinian movement has with the Arab regimes should only result from a conflict between the aims of the resistance movement and the regimes. In this way the revolution will preserve the clarity of its struggle. From this analysis it can be understood why we called for the formation of a national government in Jordan, instead of for the transformation of the society into socialism or indeed capitalism.

— *We move now to discuss the relationship of the [resistance] movement with the Arab regimes. Did this serve the revolution or obstruct it? My other concern is the relationship between the resistance and the Arab masses. Were the masses developed to such a level that they would become a protective force for the revolution?*

— The fact is that the Palestinian resistance unintentionally fell under the patronage of the Arab regimes, as these regimes penetrated the revolution through the extensions of their various parties. It was thus inevitable that the leadership should be influenced to fulfill their wishes. To be more explicit, whenever any Palestinian leadership committee (e.g., [the PLO] Central Committee) held a meeting, the various Arab governments were apprised of any decisions taken within the shortest possible time allowed by the means of communication, with the result that any state implicated in a decision would move to obstruct or annul it.

Had there not been so extreme a penetration of the resistance movement, its decisions would not have been broadcast to all and sundry, and its relations with the Arab regimes would have been stricter and more effective. Indeed, dynamic relations at the national level with the states supporting us are essential, but the

distribution of total knowledge of the internal affairs of the resistance movement is unnecessary and inadvisable, and the regimes concerned should not use their governmental and partisan extensions to elicit such knowledge.

The relationship of the resistance movement with the Arab masses was of two kinds: their relationship with the parties (Palestinian extensions of other Arab parties), and their relationship with non-partisan, non-governmental Palestinian organizations. Had the situation been correct, the Arab masses would have cooperated with the resistance through the parties, but obstruction by their governments prevented direct interaction with the Palestinian resistance, and such interaction as there was, was supervised by them.

— *Based on the above discussion, what are the premises which you think necessary for the sound development of the Palestinian struggle?*

— It is essential that each of us should be aware of his own role in the present struggle, and take his first step according to a well-defined plan. This means that the non-Palestinian parties and their governments should revert to their natural role on the Arab field, with the parties functioning under their real names, at the same time giving their support to the Palestinian revolution within the context of their role. All the Arab parties should form a national front which would participate in the Palestinian revolution and which would be free of partisan and governmental interference. The Arab and Palestinian revolutions would then complement each other. There would be an end to the contradictions within the Palestinian revolution itself, and an elimination of the contradictory Arab positions regarding its struggle, the sensitivity existing between the parties and the governments would be removed, and the revolution would have the final word.

If we had been aware of these things two years ago, we would have been able to overcome the obstacles facing us, and today's picture would have been very different. Now however, the situation has deteriorated to such an extent that such remedies will not suffice, and new answers and more time are needed. But to begin today is better than never to begin at all, and the current situation of muddled relationships cannot last. At the moment the revolution is neither Palestinian nor Arab, neither a social struggle nor a national liberation struggle, neither patronized nor free, neither dependent nor independent. There is fragmentation under the guise of coordination, division under the guise of unity. Such a situation can only be to the disadvantage of the revolution, and also of the Arab regimes and parties, which did, in fact, establish their organizations for the benefit of the revolution.

When we reach the ideal situation, present contradictions will disappear. The political and ideological resolutions taken regarding Palestinian action are sufficient for a long period to come. What we need now is the implementation of these resolutions. There must be an end to the splintering in the Palestinian

front and we must create a really unified leadership, a unified action, a unified Palestinian revolution that will deal effectively with the Arab regimes.

In short, the Palestinian revolution must be independent of the Arab regimes, but it must also have good relations with them based on the principle of complementary cooperation, and not on interference and patronage. These are the only means that will allow the Palestinian leadership to think freely and act effectively without fearing this or that government.

— *Let us move now to the present tasks of the resistance movement. First, do you think that all bridges for coexistence with the Jordanian regime are cut? If so, do you think that the solution is secret operations against the regime to create the conditions needed to continue the liberation struggle? If the possibilities for coexistence are not completely cut off, how do you envisage their form?*

— In my opinion, all possibilities for coexistence between the Palestinian revolution and the Jordanian regime have been destroyed because of the explosive contradictions between the submissive nature of the regime and the militant nature of the Palestinian revolution, between the regime's will to surrender and the resistance's will to struggle. As a result of recent events, the Jordanian regime now lives in a state of Arab diplomatic isolation.

It is true that the regime was able to strike forcefully at the morale of the revolution during the events in Jerash, [July 1971] but this does not mean that the revolution is dead, as Arab propaganda tries to assert. There are now Arab efforts to impose (and I stress *impose*) coexistence between the Jordanian regime and the Palestinian revolution. In my opinion this coexistence cannot occur unless the mentality of the regime changes miraculously, and it genuinely begins to believe in liberation and to understand that the existence of fedayeen action does not contradict what it calls 'Jordanian sovereignty'.

In spite of Jordan's latest assertion of its commitment to the Cairo and Amman agreements,* the regime does not exhibit sincere and positive intentions on this point. We are used to the regime's great ability for retreating when it finds itself caught in a weak position, as indeed it now does with regard to other Arab countries. It was habitual for the regime to retreat before the resistance as though about to topple, but it was extremely clever in these apparent withdrawals. That is why we cannot be completely confident in what the regime says unless there are guarantees from Arab states which we trust. Our confidence does not come from the mere signing of a "guarantee"; it requires the presence of Arab armies on Jordanian soil, whose role would be to stop the Jordanian authorities

*The Cairo agreement (September 27, 1970) put an end to the fighting in Jordan and established a conciliation commission composed of representatives of Arab countries to bring about peace and reestablish the right of the fedayeen to resume over their struggle against Israel. The Amman agreement subsequently signed by the resistance movement and the Jordanian Government spelled out the rights and obligations of the fedayeen operating against Israel from Jordanian territory.

from harassing the fedayeen who want to fight the enemy in the occupied territories. If this is not realized, there is no hope of coexistence with the regime in Jordan, because it has destroyed all such possibilities. When the Jordanian regime states that it abides by the Cairo and Amman agreements which guarantee the freedom of fedayeen action and the sovereignty of Jordan, it forgets that these agreements assert other points as well, the most important one being that the fedayeen be given the freedom to fulfill the necessary requirements of the Palestinian struggle. This manipulation of position underlines the fact that the regime is incapable of coexisting with the Palestinian revolution.

What is the solution? Is it clandestine action or something else? I do not think I can enter into this discussion now. But if the Arab states do not impose coexistence in Jordan between the regime and the revolution, the revolution must act independently to establish itself in Jordan in such a way that will enable it to realize its ultimate aim.

If the Arab states were to intervene, they would insist on their own conditions, the first being the acceptance of one group and the rejection of another. What is your position?

In spite of the circumstances, there was an overwhelming desire for Palestinian national unity at the last National Congress. It is our intention that there should be no individual existence for any organization in Jordan, not even that of Fateh. The presence of the Palestinian revolution will be in the name of the Palestine Liberation Organization ; the offices will be those of the PLO ; the information will be that of the PLO ; and the military forces will be those of the Palestinian revolution. This will eliminate the possibility of just Fateh and no other group being accepted. It is hoped that all organizations will rise to the level of responsibility and will put the cause above the interests of their individual organizations.

Let us now consider the scheme for political settlement as one of the current problems the Palestinian movement is asked to face. American-Israeli negotiations aim at some kind of political settlement initially through opening the Suez Canal. How do you envisage the role of the Palestinians in coming to terms with this? Can they prevent a deal being struck or not? If these efforts succeed, how will the resistance movement act and what will be its position on the Arab level?

The attacks made on the resistance were intended to weaken its resolve in its rejection of the liquidation scheme. According to American and Israeli sources, and in the lobbies of the United Nations, the strength of the Palestinian rejection was a major obstacle to the settlement plan. This explains all that the resistance suffered from the Arab regimes, particularly from the Jordanian regime, which aspired to effect the Security Council resolution. What I fear is that the strength of the resistance may exceed the resistance's capabilities, for our actual capabilities to prevent the settlement plan are weaker than before.

I cannot predict the situation resulting from a settlement. Maybe the Arab regimes will revive their hostility toward the movement, and a pre-1967 type situation would recur. Harassment and oppression of Palestinians would recommence, there would be attempts to restrict the Palestinian movement. However, the pre- and post-1967 conditions are very different. Now Palestinians have experienced the full meaning of their revolutionary existence, and its implications. In the prisons of Israel and Jordan they have acquired first-hand knowledge of colonial injustice and political struggle. Thus has been created a struggling revolutionary spirit nurtured by dignity and pride. Consequently the 1948 situation of submission and compliance cannot return. Then, even young children in the street would pursue a Palestinian and accuse him of being a traitor. However, if conditions do return to such a degree of oppression, the Palestinian people will eventually react in a manner far more violent than at present.

Arab and Israeli circles state that any political settlement cannot succeed unless there is some form of Palestinian representation. At the same time there are Palestinian elements, especially in the West Bank, moving in this direction. What is your position on this problem?

The American position is clear. It states that it is impossible to reach a conclusive peace without satisfying the Palestinians, and in order to do so, America must create for them an entity which would be present at the settlement talks. This means that the Palestinians must ascribe legality to Israeli existence and consequently they must sign away, at least theoretically and legally, their right to struggle for liberation. This will allow the Arab states to justify their attempts to break the will of the Palestinians.

This is an interpretation of American attempts to induce the Palestinians to participate in the settlement procedures. On the other hand, the position of the revolution is very clear. It refuses categorically to take part in the settlement negotiations, even if the Arab states do participate. The Palestinian revolution refuses to make its people a party to this matter, and will do all it can to prevent anyone from speaking in the name of the Palestinian people in the settlement procedures. Our position then, is one of refusal. But our ability to reject it is related to our ability to put a stop to it.

No group or generation has the right to dispense with the fate of the national homeland, to sell or to buy it. There would be no objection to abating the struggle for a while should the situation require it. But no one has the right to sign away any part of the homeland to the enemy, especially when the relationship between nation and land stems from natural and not merely from legal rights.

— *Your answer deals with a point of principle, but it does not answer an immediate and anticipated situation. If the settlement is realized, we will face two*

undesirable trends. First we will face the intimidation of the Jordanian regime, which desires to expand to the West Bank; and secondly we will face the separatist tendencies exploited by the traditional Palestinian leadership. What is the way out then?

If a settlement does take place with the contrivance of the Arab states and against the will of the Palestinian people, the Palestinian masses will face a new situation in terms of a regime whose basic aim since its foundation has been to eliminate the idea of a Palestinian people by controlling, intimidating, suppressing and torturing them. It has likewise striven to destroy their combative spirit in order to facilitate the annihilation of the Palestinian movement, and the fulfillment of colonialist aspirations. But should a settlement be reached, I do not believe that the revolutionary masses in Jordan will allow a return to the pre-1967 situation. The conditions in Jordan would have to be modified, with the unification of the two banks being based on national democracy, and not on an intimidating dictatorship. There would have to be a new relationship with democratic foundations, and the creation of national democratic conditions to enable the masses to resume the liberation struggle, in spite of all official Arab attempts to halt it. This would allow the revolutionary pivot to continue to exist in militant national circumstances.

— *In the light of the very difficult and complex circumstances in Jordan in which the revolution now finds itself, and in view of the possibility of reaching a political settlement, where does the slogan for liberation now fall?*

— This question should not be answered emotionally. The Palestinian revolution, in my view, is a national liberation movement which demands liberation as the basic and ultimate goal. It is only natural for any revolutionary path to become obstructed by primary obstacles which need much effort to be overcome, and secondary obstacles which are more easily surmounted. From the foregoing analysis it must be realized that liberation is still the main goal, and that the struggle to attain it is still the main aim. But there is a fundamental obstacle confronting us which almost paralyzes any activities related to liberation; and that obstacle can only be eliminated by so altering the circumstances in Jordan and other countries that the Palestinian revolution is free to concentrate on the main obstacle. Liberation remains the main goal, and we must distinguish between the main goal and the main obstacle.

— *In view of these conditions, especially the difficult military circumstances in Jordan, what are the political activities of the revolution at both the international and the national level?*

— At this stage Palestinian action must spring from a primary and established base, which is the right of the Palestinian people to determine their destiny. It is ironic that at a time when international circles acknowledge the Palestinian right

for self-determination according to the General Assembly resolution of 1970,* the Arab states move toward rejecting this right and refusing to allow the Palestinian people to act in accordance with it. Therefore, at the international level, our action must be based on our people's right to self-determination. At the Arab level, our action must be based on the struggle to fulfill this right. This means that we must act on both levels, the official and the popular, in order to establish the necessary environment. At the same time we must act politically to deepen the concept of the Arab depth of the revolution and to bring the revolution to the masses. We must also create an organized popular Arab national force that is able to protect the Palestinian revolution in the Arab area, thus freeing the revolutionary forces for confrontation with the Zionist enemy.

— *What, precisely, is our basic duty in Jordan?*

— The slogan by which we function in Jordan is the fulfillment of the Cairo and Amman agreements. Abiding by these agreements means not only the public presence of fedayeen military forces, nor just the presence of a few fedayeen in the Ghor,* nor merely an active military presence; the Cairo and Amman agreements stipulate the following:

1) the 'Follow-Up Higher Committee' is to prepare an agreement to be signed by both parties binding them to guarantee the continuation of fedayeen activities and to respect the sovereignty of the state within the law, *apart from the exceptional procedures required by the fedayeen action* (Article 8);

2) support for the Palestinian revolution until it reaches its goal of total liberation and the defeat of the usurping Israeli enemy (Article 14);

3) the 'Follow-Up Higher Committee' must form three offices among which is a civil office responsible for *civil affairs dealing with non-military relations between the two parties* (Article 7).

The Cairo-based agreement stipulates the presence of a complete administrative force east of the road Dir'a – al Ramth – Jerash – Amman – Salt – Aqaba. It also stipulates an effective military presence west of this line, provided it does not fall under direct Israeli threat. Therefore the Cairo and Amman agreements do not stipulate mere military presence as Wasfi al-Tal claimed. What is demanded is that through all its military, political and informational means the Jordanian regime function in ways that are advantageous to the Palestinian revolution. This is what must be realized.

— *We should now like to ask a question concerning the general framework of the Palestine Liberation Organization [PLO]. Do you believe its organizational structure has in the past fulfilled the needs of the revolution, and more importantly, is suitable for the revolu-*

* The Jordan valley north of the Dead Sea.

tion's present stage? In other words, is the merging between the revolution and the structure of the PLO an advantage at the present stage of the struggle? There are some who believe that all action at this stage must stem from a revolutionary base, and that there should therefore be new organizational forms differing organically from the present ones—a revolutionary council, for example, instead of a national council.

— The crucial point here is that the organizational form itself is unimportant; what matters is the content of that form. The Palestinian people have been the objects of conspiracy since the Balfour Declaration, which aimed at eliminating them as a cohesive social entity. Consequently, any position which makes the Palestinians an unrevolutionary force is, in my opinion, conniving with Zionism and imperialism. We must differentiate here between an entity and a state. If the PLO represented a state, as did the 'Government of All Palestine',* then it would have a different content than at present. But if the PLO is a representative of the Palestinian entity, it should have a revolutionary content, and at the same time it would avoid the contradictions which emerge from a successful revolution; for a successful revolution must become the representative of the state and form a government, consequently being subject to the laws of state and of revolution.

But in this case we have a very different situation. The PLO is an institution for the Palestinian people, symbolizing their will to struggle. With their dispersal, they lost all their institutions and their sense of belonging, and consequently their cohesion as a society. Therefore we regard the PLO as a revolutionary institution giving the Palestinian people a point of reference, and toward which they feel a sense of militant belonging. This is particularly important after the loss of the usual means of identity. When there is such cohesion, there can be no contradiction between the institution and the revolution; they become one and the same. However, were the PLO to be transformed into a governmental apparatus, it would be used as a tranquilizer for the Palestinian people while destroying their very necessary sense of identity with the Palestinian revolution. There is no contradiction between the terms "the institution of the PLO" and "the revolution", if the content of this institution is revolutionary, and if it allows the Palestinian people to be conscious of their identity.

It has in counter-argument been said that the PLO is the child of the Arab regimes, and therefore is an institution without a content of its own. This has some truth in it. I myself once said that it was "child of thirteen fathers". But the PLO has now become an institution with a revolutionary content; and I hope it will develop into an institution with an *effective* revolutionary content.

— *Finally, from your knowledge of present Palestinian circumstances, what do you expect to be accomplished in the coming stage, bearing in mind the formation of the [PLO]*

* The short-lived government established in 1948 by the Arab Higher Committee headed by Amin Husseini, Mufti of Jerusalem.

Executive Committee which has a broader representation of organizations, and the National Council resolution calling for greater unity and cohesion?

— If I make past events my point of reference, the future looks bleak; but if I take cognizance of the National Council resolutions, there is the promise of a higher level of unity between the various factions, though indeed this might not be the ideal level, where the cause would come before the individual interests of the various organizations. Such cohesion would require a united informational effort in the name of the PLO, one military force with one command—the command of the forces of the revolution; it would also require that all political activities be carried out under the leadership of the PLO. The more we are able to acquire unity in leadership, action, and political program, the more we can realize the strength of the Palestinian revolution on the popular and official level, not only in the Arab nation, but also in the world.

It is imperative that these hopes be realized. We are facing grave conditions which can only be overcome if each individual is educated politically to participate in the revolution for the sake of the revolution and for its unity, and puts aside factionalism and discord. But unity in thought and disunity in action can only lead to the aborting of the unification process and of the coalition.

It is important to point out now that the presence of mutual trust on the Executive Committee will lead to the successful planning of the policies of the Palestinian revolution, while allowing the leadership freedom of movement within the approved political line. But if this trust is lost, political maneuvering will become the basis for interaction within the committee and the effectiveness of fedayeen action will be zero. This is what we must consciously avoid in the difficult conditions now facing us.

ABU IYAD

FATEH

— *There is a widespread feeling that the Palestinian resistance movement is in a quandary. Do you agree? And how do you envisage the way out of it?*

— It is true that the resistance movement is passing through a crisis. It wouldn't be useful to discuss in great detail the conspiracies against the movement, for conspiracies against any sincere and genuine liberation movement are to be expected. What happened in Jordan before September is a clear indication that a plot to annihilate the Palestinian resistance was being planned. It is a broad subject which neither of us wants to tackle now.

In my opinion, the nature and essence of this crisis are to be found in the internal situation, whether on the level of the major organizations, of the relations between them, or of the task as a whole. Let's take Fateh as an example. Any problem within Fateh reflects, one way or another, on the entire resistance movement. Fateh's lack of a clear political line and of any stand on fundamental issues must have an effect on the other organizations and the overall movement. This is why I say that the internal crises of each organization and of the resistance movement as a whole are interrelated. And it is why I believe that the quandary of the movement stems from within.

The broad outlines of the crisis seem to me as follows: *One*: The first point is the absence of a single clear political line embracing all organizations. Discussing minimum and maximum political programs consumed a great deal of our time, and to continue this discussion would be a further waste of time. But agreement on a minimum political program and work toward its realization are possible in the light of the policy of the resistance movement itself. An examination of the political program presented by Fateh to the eighth National Council shows it to be satisfactory; had Fateh really acted in accordance with this program, and had the other organizations respected it, we would have found ourselves with a lucid political line for all Palestinian action.

Two: A distinctive aspect of the crisis is the relationship between the groups within the resistance movement, a relationship built upon organizational rivalry. At a glance, this might seem a simple matter, but anyone who has lived through such rivalry has felt the effect of its organizational problems on the development

of Palestinian action. Even in historic and critical decisions, the leadership of the various groups used to put hierarchical gain before the general good. Had the political line been clear, and organizational relations absent from the scene, the crisis of the resistance movement would not have been as great.

Three: The third point is the lack of frankness toward the masses—and the disrespect implied thereby. Those in positions of authority may, in certain cases, find it difficult to be candid with the people; but we must arrange our own circumstances in such a way as not to fear frankness. True, for many reasons I cannot pronounce my opinion of some Arab regimes. But if our situation had been organized to deal with this matter, I could now do so without paying a heavy price.

Those who have no faith in the masses may think that plain-speaking to them is a case of political auctioneering, mere words. But in fact it means clarification of all the issues raised by the resistance. Many things happen that the people do not understand. If we had tried to explain the reasons for certain actions, we would have won over the people to our side once and for all. They would have refused either to stand against us or to be neutral.

In my opinion it is necessary to discuss these three points; they have not yet been treated in a clear and sincere fashion.

— *In the light of this discussion, don't you agree that the official Arab position and the programs followed by the Arab states have so far represented a greater force than that of the resistance movement, and that it is this Arab force which plays a major part in weakening the movement to the point where it cannot execute its plans?*

— Your question is related to the third point which I have just mentioned. The internal conditions of the resistance movement, or of the main groups within it, have become so complex that financial matters, the interests of the organizations, and relations with the regimes usually predominate, at the expense of the masses. Neither did the resistance leadership attempt to control these conditions, which gave the Arab states an excuse to interfere and influence all the decisions of the movement.

At the moment we feel that there is some justification for compromise with the Arab regimes: our financial situation, our expenses, and our relationships force this upon us. But if matters proceed as they are doing now, I believe the result will be total collapse, for there is a real contradiction between the Palestinian revolution and many—if not all—of the Arab regimes. This contradiction should prompt us to prepare our own organization in such a way as to affect, rather than be affected by, Arab policies. At present, when we are deciding on any given issue, we tend to ask: Does this decision please such-and-such a state or not? I believe that this is the beginning of tragedy for any revolution anywhere—when its decisions become a function of its relationships.

Therefore, I agree that the official Arab scene influences in one way or another

the way in which we conduct our affairs; and we must remedy this fault, little by little. For if we deceive ourselves now by saying that we are conscious of being restricted, the Arab mentality will later be able to restrict us without our awareness. We would ultimately become tools without realizing it. Acting less than being acted *on*, we would lose our very *raison d'être*.

— *You said that the program presented by Fateh and approved by the eighth National Council contained a minimum program from which a single political line could acceptably be drawn. This program contains strategic points, but we believe that the problem does not consist in defining basic strategy for Palestinian action, but rather in everyday policy. For example, how should we deal—on a daily level—with the Arab regimes? How can we preserve the independence of Palestinian action through these daily contacts? Differences of opinion arise in these matters, and not on the accepted principle of independence from the Arab governments.*

— When I brought up the question of a political program, I meant that any such program should contain general lines. The everyday leadership of the Palestinian action is responsible for interpreting these lines, and it is necessary to translate the program into more detail accepted by all. Before approving the general program, anyone was free to raise his voice in the Council and request more detail, so as not to fall out in the future. Or the Executive Committee should have met to draw up these details. In this way, the present temporary crisis could have been averted.

In my opinion, there would be no problems if we really wanted to agree. Even if an objection arose, we should deal with it together in such a way as to benefit the Palestinian cause. Mediation is one example: opposition to mediation could have been expressed by the Popular Front, the Democratic Front, or from within Fateh itself—I do not object to that, provided that the opposition was voiced in agreement with the leadership in order to give the delegation a source of strength. The proper tactic for such opposition should not take the form of a press conference held by a representative of the particular organization member in the Central Committee; instead, the conference should be given by someone from the organization itself. However, the relationship between the organizations is not clear nor based on any obvious principles, each one trying to preserve a separate identity. Attempts at national unity are not taken seriously by any of them. I don't want to give detailed examples, but I think that this is why tactics take precedence over accepted strategic stands.

— *Another issue was and still is the cause of much conflict. Despite agreement on basic strategy, there is dispute over the daily policies of the resistance. There are two trends within the movement: one insisting on the necessity for a national program; and another asserting that every national program necessarily contains an element of class struggle from which it cannot be divorced. What is your analysis of this?*

— Despite the fact that the opinions on this matter are sound and each has its own logic, it still remains that the maxim upon which Fateh was originally founded is that Palestinians cannot liberate their land alone. Fateh attempts to combine its strategy on the Arab scene with its known tactics, to avoid assault or failure at the very beginning. If we care to analyse the topic scientifically in relation to the reality of the Palestine case, we find it impossible to raise any other banner at this time than that of national liberation.

The whole question bears on Palestinian circumstances, the geographical and political dispersion of the people, and their scattering among many ideologies. All these factors are in turn related to the psychological crisis suffered by the Palestinian people for seventeen years before the eruption of fedayeen action. It is impossible to unite the scattered parts except by means of a national liberation movement asserting that the present stage is one of national liberation.

Next comes the question of the Arab citizen—the Lebanese, the Jordanian from East Jordan, the Syrian. The Arab citizen may hold certain feelings toward the Palestinian case which lead him to regard it as a basic cause, but he still has daily preoccupations. Can Fateh or anything else prevent this citizen from struggling with his own everyday problems? I do not believe that Fateh objects to the conflict within the Arab region or through the liberation movements in the Arab world being a class conflict or a struggle to solve daily social problems. Fateh feels that it is completely responsible for crystallizing the conception of national liberation in the minds of Palestinian and Arab citizens. Let the Palestinian case and the Palestinian revolution fall within the program of the militant Arab, whether as the slogan of protecting the revolution or of fighting under its banner. What is important is to have a strong and not merely illusory relationship between the Palestinian and the Arab militant. We must clear up this matter, because allowing it to remain as a problem renders us unable to dissolve organizational fanaticism through discussion. And if we want to solve the problem, we must consider two propositions: firstly, the Arab struggle may take any form it chooses, from a class struggle to the solution of daily social problems; and secondly, the totality of the struggle simultaneously serves the Palestinian resistance, which must not succumb, but must continue to raise the banner of national liberation. There is no solution to this problem except through enlarging the scope of action for the Arab citizen and the Arab organizations.

Even if Fateh wished to form Arab organizations, it should grant them plenty of opportunity to deal with everyday affairs; otherwise such organizations will disintegrate. That is why we made a formal distinction between Palestinian and Arab action. The reality of the situation and its essence suggest a dynamic cohesion of the two fronts; the Palestinian and Arab struggles are united—as they should be—in the tide of the Arab revolution.

— *To make this point quite clear: there is a national and a social struggle in the Arab world, but there is also a movement to emphasize the priority of the former over the*

latter. It is imperative for the Palestinian movement to clarify this point in any program it may formulate, so as to specify with whom to establish relations and ally itself in the future, and to avoid the necessity for alliances in each region according to the particular stage reached.

— I don't want to talk about the program as it was published in the press; instead, I would like to bring up some of Fateh's basic material which was not given a wide audience. One clause states that the Palestine National Liberation Movement (Fateh) is an integral part of the Arab and world liberation movements. It occurs in the basic principles and was approved again at Fateh's last conference, and is sufficient to clarify the meaning of Palestinian cohesion with Arab liberation.

But does this mean that the Arab liberation movement has only national goals? Its social goals are very clear, and I don't see any contradiction. I would say there is only an apparent contradiction. More precisely, there is a specialization which serves the present stage. I still say that if we want to struggle on the Arab level or on the basis of class conflict, we should not mention anything called the Palestinian revolution. It is possible for us to become integrated into Arab parties and movements and to fight on the Arab level, and we did so from 1952 to 1965. The younger generation was divided, struggling on all Arab fronts; I think Fateh was a reaction to that, a reaction to the defeat of the [Palestinian] individual confronted by Arab circumstances and by Arab parties which were not responsible enough to struggle sincerely or to convince the Palestinian that this was the way to his land.

Attention should be focused on the Palestinian case because of its special aspects; but in reality there should be vast Arab masses in support. Thus the problem is resolved, for Fateh considers itself part of the Arab liberation movement, a part of its national and social program. The differences between the two are an illusion, for the existence of Israel and its attempts to liquidate the Palestinian cause will, in the long run, affect the whole Arab world.

— *The Palestinian position, you stressed, is of extreme importance because it has always been a topic of discussion. We believe that the source of conflict lies in the organizational interpretation of this correct ideological stand. There are in fact two positions: one calls for the establishment of a supporting Arab front; the other insists on the necessity for a daily dialectical relationship with the Arab national movement. What is your estimate of the course steered by the Palestinian resistance movement between these two lines?*

— Although you describe this position as important, I consider it to be a simple matter. My opinion is contained in Fateh's basic principles, though I think the specific article of the by-laws was not widely circulated and I shall accordingly try to make it clear, especially since Fateh was for a long time dubbed regionalist, isolationist and so on—I don't care much for names and slogans.

For example, the matter of the supporting Arab front or of organizing the

Arab masses—this is not the question. If the goal is clear in the mind, labels cease to be important. A short while ago we spoke of the program issued by the National Council, how it was limited to broad lines and how it led to disagreement when details were discussed. In my opinion, the important element in dealing with this problem is practice itself and I believe that Fateh's historic value lies in its persistent identification of commitment with practice. The value of labels disappears in the face of commitment to these principles.

I still cannot tell you which of the two positions proved successful; we have not yet witnessed any results. So far there is no clear relationship between the Palestinian revolution and the Arab masses. But let us first discuss Fateh's position. In this case, the Arab supporting front had no ideological content and was consequently limited to the idea of being a mere gathering of militants. Initially, the Arab citizen rushed to the Palestinian revolution; then he began to feel that the supporting front gave him no role beyond that of a fund-raiser; finally, he failed to interact with the revolution. It is true that there were Arab citizens fighting inside Fateh ranks, but this relationship took on no special organizational form which might eventually have yielded effective results.

As far as the other organizations calling for Arab mobilization are concerned, I don't think they succeeded. They gave the Arab citizens slogans and the concept of a limited struggle, but these had no more success. Had they done so, on the other hand, the Palestinian resistance would not now have all these problems. The failure of both fronts goes back to their practice; Fateh gave neither the ideology nor the required effort to the front.

I don't know the reason for the other groups' failure. One may conclude that they were not really serious in making of the Arab masses a true organization. To form a popular Arab organization, it is not enough to have ten men from Iraq, five from Egypt, six from Saudi Arabia. That's not the way to organize the Arab masses. Without doubt there is a fault in setting up the front, in the relationships, or in practice; and I would emphasize the latter.

— *In terms of practical experience, the problem has another side : the Arab national movements. From what you have seen, how do you judge the response of these movements to the task of preparing themselves and their nations to support the Palestine struggle in an effective way?*

— Our own self-criticism should not be taken as denying the responsibilities of the Arab liberation movements. Our discussion has dealt with the spontaneous and unorganized masses, but the Arab liberation movement, as represented by the national progressive parties, shares a great part of the responsibility for negligence. In many meetings with our brothers in these movements, I remember their concentration on blaming the Palestinian revolution. Of course, no one can deny the negligence; we denounced our own practices before September [1970]. But these parties and national and progressive forces failed to understand how

they could benefit from cohesion with the Palestinian revolution. They neither strove for such a union, nor did they indulge in constructive criticism of our activity. Instead, they took up negative positions; to our negativity they responded in kind. The Arab liberation movement was transformed into splinter groups, striking out in all directions. If we were to put aside the Palestinian revolution and turn our attention to the Arab liberation movements, we would find its factions and parties in dreadful disarray. Yet it demands unity of the resistance.

There have been practical experiences bearing on this point. In more than one Arab sector it used to be difficult to unite those with the same ideology for the space of one meeting, let alone during a drawn-out struggle. At a meeting one would come up against a veto directed by one group at another. If this situation is ignored, the Arab liberation movement will be mortally wounded, as others have been before throughout the world. I would say that it is not only the Palestinian revolution that is in need of urgent review; the same goes for the Arab liberation movement, if it is to overcome its organizational and ideological fanaticism, and not lose its *raison d'être*. If such a thing were to happen, the way would be open for a reactionary tide to engulf the region.

We will, then, need many years to regain the strength to renew the liberation movement, and this constitutes a danger to the whole area. In my opinion, the negativity of the resistance movement toward the larger Arab liberation movement is matched only by an equivalent reaction in the opposite direction. But the latter is the more dangerous, for the Arab liberation movement is supposedly better qualified, longer experienced and more aware. As such, it was for the movement to initiate the much-needed and improved new relationship.

— *You have defined a general framework for the relation of Palestinian action to Arab circumstances. But Jordan is a special case. Does your general definition apply to Jordan too, or are special dealings called for?*

— First I want to comment on the general definition, because every revolutionary movement in the world possesses a broad framework. I would emphasize the practical element in this framework; what is more, a true belief in the framework eliminates the concern for detail. Let us discuss Jordan from this standpoint.

I believe—and have often reiterated—that the Jordanian regime has no wish to coexist with us. Moreover, the regime is well aware of my belief. It is the only reactionary Arab regime built on solid foundations and dedicated to certain principles. Its supremely ingenious tactic was to bide its time while we made our mistakes; then, in September [1970] and later, it struck the fatal blow.

The Jordanian regime must be studied, primarily to define the enemy it contains. Our enemy in Jordan is the ruling family in particular, and the agents bound to it and imperialism alike through ideology. I regard Wasfi al-Tal* as

*Prime Minister of Jordan from September 1970 until he was assassinated in Cairo on November 28, 1971 by an underground Palestinian organization.

an agent by ideology rather than employment; if a progressive nation were to try to “buy” him, it would not succeed, for Tal is an agent who believes in his cause.

We were able to pinpoint the enemy on one front, and we must now discuss this front. It is necessary to examine the structure of Jordanian society and to try to mend it by means of a national front comprised of all Jordanians and Jordanians of Palestinian origin. The situation should be approached scientifically, and the front given a real, not merely formal, part to play. Its duty should not be to issue statements on national occasions, but to study—for example—the problem of the bedouin and how King Hussein was able to have them fight and die for him.

We saw their ferocity in September; they wanted to kill the fedayeen because they believed the fedayeen were infidels, unbelievers, criminals. They were well indoctrinated, and everyone who lived through September felt the hatred in the soldiers’ hearts. The Jordanian soldier did not give the impression of one who performs a duty imposed on him; rather, he seemed to be doing what he himself wanted to do. King Hussein indoctrinated the army, and was subsequently able to appear as if in answer to its demands.

He gave the army the task of striking at the fedayeen, a decision that deserves further study. Some of the brothers made the mistake of raising slogans such as “popular liberation war against the Jordanian regime”, which only led to daily skirmishes with Jordanian soldiers and citizenry.

I imagine that such slogans please King Hussein and Wasfi al-Tal very much, for they give the regime an opportunity to build up Jordanian society along Israeli lines, with every citizen feeling that hawks and savages lie in wait and that safety depends on the [protection of the] regime.

Despite all that has been said about the chauvinism of the Palestinian unions and the regionalism of the revolution, these were not alone sufficient to provoke the Jordanian citizen into [local] national fanaticism. This only occurred after September when the number of dead in his village was liable to have reached ten or more. It became commonplace for one small settlement to be presented with fifteen corpses, each possessing fifty or sixty relatives; of course, such a village soon turned hostile.

In my opinion, then, the definition of the enemy is very important, and our slogans must be designed to avoid the major error of antagonizing our people. We must concentrate on attacking and destroying the makeup and power of the regime—given that, we may call this war anything we choose. The problems of the bedouin and the fellaheen (although the scientific meaning of this term is not appropriate here)—both constituting the masses of the regime—should be treated separately. We know that the vengeance for the murder of a member of a clan falls upon the entire Palestinian action. The gravest mistake we can make is to strike at the manifestations of the regime which lack influence and do not represent the real centers of power nor the true enemy in Jordan.

The enemy is the ruling family, a group of individuals, and the powerful forces

of the establishment. Thus, if we were to come across ten soldiers guarding an arms depot, it is our duty to blow up the depot and spare the soldiers. In my opinion, anyone faithful to his intellect and to the long struggle in Jordan should not hope for any form of coexistence with the regime. This hope had become like that of "tomorrow we will return"—it is a hope merely. We would be mistaken to believe that the regime will yield to any Arab pressure, for it has a well-known, non-Arab source of support. The United States contributes arms, dollars and everything else necessary for its survival. King Hussein is now putting his affairs in order, for he has the arms, the army, the organization: he lacks nothing. He does not care about the West Bank because he knows it will not be returned. His current endeavor is to halt any real revolution in the East Bank. That is his duty, and he is performing it to the full. To demand the return of the West Bank and Jerusalem are trivial matters for his regime.

Some may ask why we preach non-coexistence with the regime and what the advantages are to do so. The slogan is important. If a citizen in Amman has a gun or a bomb to use, and if he is aware that his leadership takes an unambiguous stand on non-coexistence, then he will realize that to help destroy the regime is not a useless and vain self-sacrifice. It is abhorrent that anyone caught with a bomb in his possession should face execution, while his leaders shake hands with King Hussein. And here lies the importance of the political decision. What we have said also goes back to the earlier subjects of defining the enemy, of knowing the strongpoints of the regime, and of avoiding a popular liberation war, in a general sense, against Jordanian soldiers and citizens.

The problem of reaching a final decision was the pre-September tragedy, and continues to be our fundamental difficulty. Undecided, we can never regain our strength in Jordan. While in Amman I tried everything to retain part of our presence in Jordan, but I felt that the regime had already committed itself, on ideological grounds, against the resistance. Neither will the regime make the ideological mistake of allowing the resistance to re-enter the country.

However, the resistance has many strengths with which to prevail against the Jordanian regime, and against all the Arab regimes too, should they seek to obstruct the Palestinian revolution. For what do we fear now? In the past, we used to be anxious for our overrated institutions. But now there is nothing to fear.

— *What prevented the Palestinian revolution from taking the decision you describe until now?*

— Different points of view. One says that fighting the regime is a difficult task and that the Arab states are not serious about joining the battle with us. Having emerged from one battle, we should not enter others. Therefore, if we could reach agreement with Amman it would be to our advantage; and if we failed, it would still be in our favor, in terms of Arab and world public opinion. We would have tried our best, and could look for ways to fight the regime.

This is the viewpoint which refuses a final decision, and I say that it is wrong. The whole matter rests on experience. Asked about the biggest mistake before September, I would say that Fateh's leadership, in particular, had no complete experience of the 1957 events in Jordan. Had we lived as ordinary citizens then, had we been inside the prisons and suffered, we would take a different attitude to the regime. Before September it was our minds that opposed the regime; after September, our emotions. Before September, we approached the regime from the top, and were not oppressed—in fact, the opposite was true. The king used to wait twenty days at a time for a meeting with us, and we used to pound the table in front of him. We did not feel threatened; we were the masters of the situation. Our opinion was that, despite the nature of the regime, it treated us better than any other Arab government, even the progressive ones. This hope—this slender hope—was a mistake. The point of view was wrong.

— *You spoke of the necessity to establish a Jordanian national front, to study the Jordanian situation and to understand it with precision. How do you envisage the role of the resistance movement within this front and its relationship with it?*

— The true national front would be one to prepare a definite plan of action in accordance with the problems of the Jordanian citizen, whether native or naturalized. This should be a complete national and political program. The relationship of the resistance to this front should be similar to that with any Arab liberation movement—one of cohesion based on the understanding that each would not substitute for, but complement, the other.

— *Given your analysis of the crisis, what are the basic duties of the resistance movement in the coming stage?*

— I shall approach the present, urgent duties of the resistance by concentrating on its internal conditions, firstly at the organizational level. Criticisms published in the press and aired on panel discussions were mere words, never translated into practice. Each organization should arrange its affairs to prevent disproportion, negligence and continued fear for the relationship with the Arab regimes. We can then move on to deal with the overall relations between the organizations.

Each of the groups should rebuild itself internally so as to proceed from the stage of self-criticism to that of correction. It should then define its position on the question of national unity. When these tasks have been accomplished, all the relationships can be brought into line through the struggle for national unity, which will involve two principles: first, we must clarify our professed program, so that instead of referring to a "clear political line", we may speak of a "clear political program based on a clear political line"; second, we must ensure that the coming stage is an opportunity for elevating ourselves above organizational fanaticism, for developing to the utmost, and for preparing all the cadres—espe-

cially the fanatics, for we leaders made them so—for action. This is the meaning behind a true reconsideration of our internal conditions. Previously, we were faithful to neither unity nor separatism; had we adhered to one or the other, the revolution would have divided into two clear-cut parts: government and opposition. But we always sit together in harmony, thinking that all is well; this must change.

There is another point, related to the Palestine Liberation Organization: it is not yet clear what the organizations demand from it. By the PLO I do not mean the material entity for whose planning and existence the leadership must account, but the framework we occupy. This framework has a constitution, by-laws, institutions and Arab relationships. Do the resistance groups see the PLO merely as a pretext for getting together once every six months? Is it a means for giving vent to our anger, for speaking and launching programs?

According to the fourth National Council, the PLO is supposed to be a national front comprising organizations and individuals, but we have never used it as such. Our duty is to promote our public image through the PLO. All the groups should revert to more or less covert activity, in the sense that there is no need for separate offices in the same country belonging to Fateh, the Popular Front, and the PLO. I mean that we should give the PLO a purpose. We must allow open activity on condition that the opinions of the organizations meet within the auspices of the PLO. Each group should concentrate on putting its own house in order and leave the contentious public issues to the PLO. We do not mean to damage the PLO, but to coordinate the organizations through it, so that no one can say we have burdened it with all our negativity. It is important to practice what we preach, and this is difficult—very, very difficult. We can raise slogans of the struggle, we can say we will fight Israel, the Arab regimes and Jordan. But the slogans will remain slogans for as long as our own affairs are not in order. And meanwhile, the slogans give cause for disquiet, for through them the people can become enslaved.

Part of the correction of our own circumstances consists in clear alliances, in knowing how to choose an ally and to avoid an enemy. We defined the Jordanian enemy, but we must also establish relations with our friends. The issue here stems from nationalist thinking. Our only allies in the world are the forces of anti-imperialism, and it is vital to join them, as a matter of ideological principle. We must enter into cohesive relationships with them in order to guarantee the continuity of the revolution, its allies and forces.

To summarize, we must first look to our own circumstances, then define our allies, and finally move on to confront the enemy. The principal enemy is Israel. Yet the revolution has suffered great losses from the Arab regimes, notably that in Jordan. Martyrs, detainees, and captives represent a part of this loss. The reputation, morale and spirit of the Palestinian people were shattered. The internal front in the West Bank was hit, and Gaza was destroyed. Speaking objectively of the damage done to the revolution, I must conclude that the Jordanian

regime, as well as some of the other Arab regimes who either lent their support or remained silent, is responsible for it.

Clearly, then, we regard Jordan as a natural extension of Israel, and the makeup of the enemy front becomes obvious: Israel, Jordan, plus all forces dedicated in practice to imperialism and our annihilation. This is a vast array. I do not claim that we shall be able to shoulder the entire burden alone, but I do say that if we organize ourselves we may extend a courageous and honorable hand to all movements of liberation in the Arab world. We can help them to overcome present obstacles and opponents. We should also build up sincere relations with these movements and should be prepared to exchange help; but a real intention to establish such cohesion must first exist. Besides concentrating on our internal conditions and our alliances, we should support the Arab front, for it is the most important front on which we struggle.

Another matter is our attitude toward those regimes which accept the concept of peaceful settlement. We must study this relationship and define our place in it, wherever it may be. Looking at the problem scientifically, one finds that the justification used for attacking us in Jordan before September was to a large extent the resistance movement's effective opposition to peaceful settlement. No one can deny this fact. It could be that in September we paid the price for this opposition, for the reactionary regime in Jordan exploited the contradiction between us and the progressive regimes to its own advantage, striking a blow at the movement. Our internal problems are the touchstone of the resistance; if there were no positive aspects to our makeup, our declarations would be no more than emotional speechifying, devoid of significance.

At present, a region such as Lebanon offers a certain irony. Everyone talks of an expected strike at the fedayeen by the Lebanese regime. Did we benefit from our experience in Jordan? Did we organize ourselves, at least as far as our side was concerned, in such a way as to persuade the regime that we could not be crushed? Did we get together with serious intent to study the situation? In the past, for example, we used to say that the blame for the massacre lay with childish leftist slogans, and with Fateh because it failed to take a final decision as regards the Jordanian regime. Much talk of this kind was heard during and after September, but did we seek a change? An officer in the liberation army—theoretically and practically answerable to the leadership of the PLO—insults his leaders through the press, regardless of whether they are right or wrong. How then does an ordinary citizen regard the leadership, and what respect would he have for the revolution?

At the same time, there is the problem of the relationship between the groups in the case of an issue like that of mediation. Everyone is entitled to his opinions, but I am against the way in which those opposed to mediation presented their views, for it divided the spirit of the Palestinians. Imagine how in a single refugee camp one section could come out against mediation and the leadership, the other backing their leaders and condemning the detractors. Such a state of

affairs would ultimately destroy the resistance and its work—the loser would not then be one group alone, but the movement as a whole. Hence my stress on internal matters. I would also emphasize that if the policy is correct, and the program properly conceived, both commitment and practice through that commitment will necessarily follow. The two points go together. If we do not act quickly, then we shall be wringing our hands again—this time over our experience and mistakes in Lebanon. And we shall revert to trading accusations and evading our responsibilities.

— *We have seen, then, that urgent action is called for. But if no group takes the initiative in recognizing its duties and transforming them into a plan of campaign, the entire issue will remain unsolved. It seems obvious that the group with the largest share in the leadership—Fateh—should be the one to take this initial step. Do you agree? And how can it be done?*

— It is true that Fateh is, historically speaking, responsible for the initiative. If Fateh does not take it, no future historian of the Palestinian revolution could blame any of the other groups. This is a fact. In my opinion—and I am speaking now as a Palestinian, not as a responsible leader in Fateh, so what I say may sound strange—Fateh has the choice of two paths. It will either take the initiative, first to correct its own circumstances and then to pursue our goals with a clear plan and policy; or it will fall—and I mean that literally. And if Fateh falls the entire Palestinian movement will do the same.

I maintain, objectively and without sectarian fanaticism, that even in their criticism of Fateh all the other organizations should be guided by a desire to protect the Palestinian movement, and despite organizational ambiguities, anyone can see that the movement stands or falls with Fateh. One must hope that in future everyone grasps this vital connection, so that improvement and transformation will be reflected in the Palestinian movement as a whole.

The problem always begins with fear of correction. Overwhelmed by difficulties and mistakes, one is convinced that nothing can be done. But any process of restoration starts with small steps before gathering momentum; and I believe that such a process within Fateh can prevent us from going over the edge. It can provide the answer to all those who say that the resistance movement has failed. It can heal the current psychological split among young Palestinians—and I speak from experience. The youth no longer ask themselves whether Fateh or the Popular Front represents the foundation; they are concerned now whether the action in which they take part is properly conceived. They are not pleased with the general picture of Palestinian struggle. Hence I say that if Fateh is not able to cure itself, its negativity will be reflected in the Palestinian movement and the end will be in sight. No sincere nationalist could wish for that.

— *Do you think that the present organizational structures of the Palestinian movement are adequate to perform the duties you have outlined? Or do you think there is a need to change or substitute these structures?*

— The Palestine Liberation Organization is the basis for national unity. This being so, the framework should be arranged in such a way as to include the organizational relations at which we aim. The form national unity takes should not be wider than the framework, while organizational relations must be founded on clear principles according to the overall structure. This presupposes the re-evaluation of all the PLO's institutions.

The PLO acts as a symbol for the dispersed people looking for a forum. If we accept that this is so, we may shape the symbol or the framework in any way we please. Therefore, the fault lies neither with the National Council nor the Executive Committee, but in the roles assigned to them. The National Council should be the popular legislative body for the Palestinian people: but in reality, its resolutions have followed autocratic and undemocratic principles. The leadership is "cooked" behind the scenes and selected without reference to the Council. The blame must thus not be put on the Council or its powers, but on the fact that we gave it no role. As for the Executive Committee, it is an organization founded on the bases of representation, conciliation and embarrassment.

I can describe the general lines, if not the specific details, of a substitute. Firstly, it would be a continuation of the National Council as it stands, but invested with a genuine part to play; but this cannot be achieved if the process of organizational representation remains in its present form. The process should be changed and the Council become representative of the broadest organizational base. In other words, a real popular presence should be included. There are many organizations with a seat in the Council who do no more than raise a hand at the appropriate time. There can be no objection to having fifty members from Fateh, on the other hand, provided each has a clear role; otherwise, ten would be better.

The Council should have a certain freedom of choice and decision. When an Egyptian journalist at the Council asked me about the "new resolution" I had proposed, I remember telling him I wanted no such thing; instead, I was asking members to *read* their past resolutions. I challenge anyone to assert that the Executive Committee ever brought Council resolutions to any meeting and studied them. One becomes ashamed and wonders why we are quarrelling over the formulation of resolutions, sometimes even over their wording.

We shall be able to give the National Council and the Executive Committee their proper status only when the members of the former are selected on the basis of their ability to offer something new to the Palestinian revolution and to represent a broad base. Change can occur only when the guiding light is quality, and not organizational quotas. Most important is our conviction that the National Council must play its part.

We come now to the Executive Committee. It can become the arm of the

Council only by means of the scheme I have discussed—an open scheme, not limited to organizations and not based on conciliation. If the scheme is adopted, a leadership to which all were committed could be found for the Palestinian people, and each of us would feel that he had discovered his true leaders.

Although the Executive Committee has representatives from most of the organizations, and although the independents have revolutionary qualities, it is still impotent because of the circumstances we are passing through. It might be asked what the Executive Committee had done within the PLO. What has it renewed? Even in the offices, it has proved unable to renew the furniture. Why? There is no review of past Council resolutions, no concentration, no regulations. But who judges whom? When I hear criticism of the Executive Committee, I feel that Fateh is on trial, and I must defend it with fanaticism, right or wrong.

All of us make this mistake. If, within the organizations, we reach the conviction that the program of Palestinian action through the PLO must be based on strong foundations and clear lines, then our conviction will be reflected in the institutions of the PLO, which can play a practical part in leading the Palestinian people. The present situation is one of formal institutions without value—mere meeting-grounds for the leadership to agree or disagree as a matter of routine.

— *It is true that the PLO is a symbol. But since the fedayeen organizations joined, it has become divided between the identities of an institution and a revolution, and this affects the freedom and movement of the fedayeen groups. What is your reaction to this?*

— I believe that those who established the PLO and sought an organization for the Palestinian people did not contemplate or plan real revolution and resistance to Israeli occupation. A struggle—sometimes public, sometimes secret—was waged between the concepts of an institution and a revolution, before the latter entered the PLO. In my opinion, there are symbols representing the institution idea within the National Council, and those who have attended its meetings will have witnessed this concept at odds with the revolutionary trend which the PLO tried to adopt in order to advance its programs.

For example, the democratic Palestinian state as an idea was considered blasphemous, a desecration, as it were, of the PLO's holy principles, which were manifested by nationalist thinking and a vision of protracted liberation war. Another example is the refusal to allow other Arab citizens to participate in the Council on the grounds that the PLO is a Palestinian organization and that the Jordanians and Syrians have their own. Although weak and ineffective, the concept of the Council as an institution entered into all its resolutions. I see these problems as important in terms of the Council's constituents, for we need new, young intellects willing to develop and change old attitudes that governed the course of the PLO, its leadership, and its planning before 1967.

The leadership of the organizations is able to make the PLO a merely formal symbol, with the leaders expressing definite and varied tendencies: for example, by spending time in Cairo, showing “intellectual strength”, exhibiting theoretical opinion, providing some justification for mistakes, or simply holding discussions. It is also capable of transforming the National Council into a true legislative force, able to judge the leadership and select it in a manner calling for the participation of all Council members. The fundamental requirement, then, is to turn the PLO into a vehicle for the Palestinian revolution rather than for the concept of an institution for the Palestinian people. This is a responsibility of all the organizations.

— *There is another aspect to conditions within the PLO. You spoke of resolutions that remain unenacted, but there are others whose contradictory nature damages the effectiveness of Palestinian tactics. An example is the memorandum prepared at the end of July and presented by Palestinian delegates to the Arab governments: later events contradicted its contents.*

— As I said, the calamity occurred not through failing to act on the resolutions but omitting to read them. The contradiction arises from the fact that some members, including some in the Executive Committee, do not understand the resolutions, yet approve them. The events following the memorandum bear this out, for essentially they contradicted the visits of al-Saqqaf* and al-Khouly.** They demonstrated that some members do not take these resolutions and memoranda seriously, regarding them as mere tactics belonging to a certain stage.

For example, after the Jerash and Ajloun incidents [in July 1971], we wrote an inflamed memorandum and we sent out delegations; then we relaxed into relationships that contradicted these steps. Imagine—someone from Algeria, Kuwait, Libya, defends our memorandum with vigor, only to be surprised by the news of forthcoming mediation. Surely this will have a negative effect on such a person. Boumedienne himself, as well as the Arab governments, asked us if we agreed, and we signed the memorandum. The Revolutionary Command Council met in Algiers and resolved to support it word for word. But then different proposals came from the Tripoli Conference*** with demands flying in the face of the resolutions of the Algerian government.

It is important that we read resolutions and have faith in them. If I do not believe in one of them, on the other hand, I should reject it. But if it has been approved by all, then I should respect it and carry it out, regardless of my personal convictions. Contradictions leave an unpleasant memory within the Palestinian movement and bear witness to the type of individualism condemned by the

* 'Umar al-Saqqaf, Saudi Minister of State for Foreign Affairs.

** Muhammad Sabri al-Khouly, personal representative of the Egyptian President.

*** On June 20-22 establishing the United Arab Republics of Libya, Egypt and Syria.

revolutionary, but which largely rules the mentality of the resistance. This is part of the crisis through which we are living.

It is true that we, as Arabs and Palestinians, suffer from individualistic traits. Nevertheless, there are critical decisions which should not be taken by individuals but by a collective will that has studied and discussed them at length, and becomes the judge. If individualism continues to dominate the revolution, progress will simply be that much more difficult.

— *The Liberation Army is a basic institution within the auspices of the PLO. What is your estimate of it over the years? And what is your diagnosis of the present crisis within the Army and its relationship with the Executive Committee?*

— The Liberation Army is part of the tragedy of the Palestinian movement—a tragedy connected with many issues we have discussed, concerning the reality of the resistance and its internal situation. In addition to these, there are various other reasons for the crisis in the Liberation Army. Meanwhile, if final decisions are not quickly taken, the Army will become a threat to the resistance no less dangerous than the Jordanian regime.

It may seem strange to make such a comparison, but I do so with the conviction that what brought the Liberation Army to such a pass can be determined by enquiring into its formation. The previous PLO leadership was anxious to establish a tangible entity for the Palestinian people—structurally through popular organizations, and militarily through the Liberation Army. However, the initial makeup of the Army was not effectively studied, with the result that the leadership was willing to make many concessions simply in order to ensure its birth. Thus, the Army became no more than a formality.

No doubt the motives behind its creation were nationalistic, but much was conceded. The agreements between the Arab states and the PLO—concluded without regard for whether or not the Palestinian side could honor them—give the impression that the Liberation Army does not exist. One section stipulated that no soldier could be moved from the Arab host country without the permission of that country's army commander. Another asserted that the Palestinian chief of staff could not be replaced without consulting the host state and securing the approval of the other Arab countries concerned.

These were indications that the Army did not belong to the PLO, that it had no independent will. It had no disciplinary problems in the past because circumstances did not permit the PLO to enter the battle for independence; previous leaders were satisfied with the situation, and the officers were pleased with their conditions, their salaries and their way of life. Some of them used to work for various intelligence services; others collaborated with this or that state. They accounted to no one for their actions. This is why there was no apparent crisis in the Army—it was hidden from sight.

But the problem began to emerge when some groups from the resistance joined

the PLO with the intention of freeing the will of the Liberation Army. They were struck by the Arab circumstances which denied its development. In a certain state the fedayeen would outnumber the Army by ten to one; yet the fedayeen recognize no agreements, while the army submits to them. Why? In the past, I believe, the Army was only a formal expression of the Palestinian people's aspirations, and with the passage of time it became the tool of the host country, that being the reason for its protection there. That state did not care if thousands of fedayeen were outside an agreement; it was concerned only that the Army be kept subject so that, when the occasion was ripe, it could be used as a cudgel to strike at the fedayeen.

And this is the most dangerous aspect of the Liberation Army. Certainly, it contains nationalistic officers and men, but the question is not one of nationalism alone. There are those who believe that cooperation with the intelligence, and work for it, represent a nationalistic act; but as a Palestinian leader, I feel it constitutes a danger to the Palestinian movement, for the will of such a person will no longer be bound to mine—indeed, it will no longer be his own, but tied to others'. That is the danger. The present conflict between Abdel Razak Yahia* and Othman Haddad** is not the problem; it goes much deeper than that and centers on the issue of the Army's subservience to this or that state. This is the real struggle. If an Arab state feels that the leadership of the army on its soil is not subordinate to its will, it seeks to destroy every element of the opposition. This happened to the Liberation Army. To realize this is to understand that all the other problems are secondary to this central point.

Let me pose a question: What motivates a captain in the Army, when ahead of him stretch seventy administrative levels before reaching the Executive Committee, to issue a statement against his leadership? On what support can he rely in condemning his superiors? Can we say that he may depend on fifty, a hundred, two hundred, armed men? This is not possible, for the other faction or the other commander will have thousands. Do we conclude that this officer is in contact with his top commander? This too is impossible, for he relies on a more powerful force. The danger is that the Liberation Army, knowingly or not, depends on a command other than its own.

Our people must understand that such is the reality of the Liberation Army. The will of the officers is dissipated and consciously or unconsciously incorporated into that of another. And—I am not sure—but I believe it is conscious, completely so. Here lies the responsibility of the political leadership, which has two choices: it can enter into a struggle with the entire Liberation Army so that it cannot be said that we are unable to fight because of local or general Arab circumstances; or it can abandon the Liberation Army—and there are hundreds of ways to do this, including putting an end to finance and supplies.

* Former Commander in Chief, PLA.

** Former Chief of Staff, PLA.

The choice must be made. I know that it is not an easy one, especially in view of its connection with the Arab situation, but this battle must be fought. It is an aspect of the internal conditions we have spoken of—an important aspect. And if we cannot score a victory for the Palestinian revolution in this confrontation, we shall be unable to enter any other struggle.

One danger of allowing the current state of affairs to persist is the emotional impact on the psychology of the ordinary Palestinian. He does not keep abreast of events, nor does he grasp the Army's real problem; he has heard of it over the years, but knows little about it or its potentialities. The Army lacks reality, and this is exploited by its mentors to influence the people. It became even more dangerous when it adopted the policy of distributing arms to all comers, simply to gain popularity.

There is also the risk of exploiting the image of the Army and its semi-organized popular branches—the Popular Forces of Liberation, and the Special Forces. Ultimately, all these became part of the game. There is always the fear of a confrontation which could provoke internal strife. But for how long will this fear restrain us? We should make the decision, and announce that we will have nothing more to do with the Army, whatever the consequences. We should come to a clear understanding with the Arab states. We should tell them: "Either we rule this army, or you take it with our blessing". It is possible to take such a decision without a struggle, through a campaign to alert the people and let them understand the condition of the Army, concealing nothing. The people should know that this army is not ours; only then will the power of its image as it has been exploited, and its popular backing—which included both sincere nationalists and mercenaries—evaporate.

— *It goes without saying that what we have discussed so far is intended to enable the Palestinian movement to face up to its problems. There are certain topics which we should dwell upon, foremost of which is the continuing desire to make arrangements for the failure of political settlement. In the light of the present state of the resistance, what must it do to counter international activity in search of a negotiated peace?*

— More than four years have passed since the introduction of the Security Council resolution, its riders, and the initiatives that followed. It is amazing that the colonial powers and Israel have not accepted the concessions of the Arab rulers on many issues considered vital to the citizen. For example, it is no longer surprising for anyone to talk of negotiations. Some officials speak of settlement without incurring the denunciation they deserve.

With the exception of the period when fedayeen activity stimulated mass action, we may say that the years since the June war have constituted a recession for the resistance, as well as for the Arab liberation movement. All the events in the area were leading up to a settlement, of which the plan now being put forward is only a small part. That is to say, the Security Council resolution and

all that it entails—the recognition of Israel, a peace treaty, and so on—do not represent the real concessions, for they are the sum of Israeli and American desires. Now we can say that the atmosphere for settlement was created with the attack on the resistance in September.

Of course, the attack also included the Arab liberation movement in more than one region and gave rise to a recession which the citizen saw as an attempt to force him into retreat. The ordinary man began to despair, and his slogan became “What is the use?” He was alienated from national affairs, as if to him they were but secondary matters. And this attitude was the result of various governments obliging him to live in a state of “no war-no peace”, having disseminated pessimism and a sense of the futility of struggle against brute fact.

I would say that the peaceful settlement hoped for is far more dangerous than we know and read about. The real hazard is the peaceful settlement which refuses admission even to the remnants of the resistance and which spurns a national spirit—nothing progressive or revolutionary, but simply a national spirit. This peaceful settlement demands submission and compromise at all times. It is the settlement which satisfies Israel and, as its foremost supporter, the United States. It requires the Arab citizen to be in a state of confusion.

Yet those responsible for directing and leading the people are moving toward settlement, without realizing that the Arab will to resist, manifest since 1948, is declining with each passing year. Why does the will of the Arab citizen dwindle? Because he is not militant? Not at all—rather because we destroy him; we destroy his spirit. We want him to be willing to accept everything. The nationalist forces have never lived through such an aura of recession as now. But still the opponents are not satisfied, because some sparks of life are yet to be found within the resistance and the Arab liberation movement. This is why I stress that the resistance movement must defend itself, partly by exposing the “settlement” and aligning with all forces that stand to gain from non-settlement and are concerned with their defence against this reactionary tide.

The duty of the resistance may not be easy. Many nationalists have come to power and ruled but, in my opinion, they blunted the will of the people by failing to give them a role. The present circumstances do not allow me to be perfectly frank, but I do maintain that many revolutionaries in power have obstructed the masses’ task. Even the worst regimes in the world have become stronger than the people. There is virtually no Arab state in which the masses are the predominant force. In some, for example Sudan, the masses became confused and went astray, having once been organized and strong. [President Jaafar] al-Numeiri is my friend, and he reproached me for a word I said against the regime.

More than one Arab region lacks a mass movement. The tragedy of the whole situation is symbolized by the ability to move most freely in a country such as Lebanon, whose sectarian regime is the only one to allow demonstrations, even of only ten people. Meanwhile, the Arab mass movement has vanished elsewhere

not because the Arab is incapable of political action, but because of psychological pressure, suppressive measures, imprisonment, beatings, executions, which oblige him to be a mere observer. What is asked of us is to face a more dangerous enemy than the challenge of peaceful settlement; we must confront the real requirements of such a settlement. In spite of all that I said about the masses and attempts to destroy them and push them to the edge of despair, I am confident we can prevent settlement if we regularize our own affairs, form a strong front, and lend an honorable hand to all the militants in the Arab world in order to put up an opposition equal to the task. The Arab man performs miracles when he can see a ray of hope and a clear path in front of him.

Despite the gloomy picture I can see, I believe that a great process of correction and change is in the offing. We are at the centre of this change and, along with others, we must work in the manner required to confront concessions beyond the comprehension of the ordinary Arab citizen.

— *Currently, certain activity in the West Bank could lead either to a Palestinian state or to Palestinian involvement in political settlement. What is the way to counter this tendency?*

— These activities are not new but used to be covert, owing to the threat of the resistance. After the conspiracy of the Jordanian regime against the resistance, however, they were resurrected and began to take place in public, exploiting a weakness in the Palestinian people of the West Bank and Gaza—their fear of returning under Jordanian rule.

The activists were extremely clever in their manipulation. Of course, our people in the West Bank hear the radio broadcasts and they observe and dissect the unbalanced Arab situation which we discussed a short time ago, including the concessions hoped for and granted. All these factors combine to form a trend in the West Bank which the clever agents exploit to fill in the remaining gaps in the plan for peaceful settlement sought by Israel. The missing link is the Palestinian people, and as such is vital to the planners of the settlement, for when the Palestinians have signed the resolution, their job will be done. No matter how strenuously the Arab states or Hussein try to claim that they represent the Palestinian people, they will always exist in their own right. If the Arab situation changes—and it is impossible for it to remain as it is now—it will do so in accordance with the honorable individuals among the Palestinians who say: We did not sign.

America and Israel insist on the full participation of a Palestinian body in signing the settlement—the settlement as they desire it to be, not as it is presented. For as they see it, the settlement would give the Palestinians a kind of autonomy which meant nothing except that they had become a tool in the hands of Israel which, in turn, would be at liberty to claim that the problem was resolved and at an end. What is more, the events in the West Bank are dangerous. The risk does not lie

in the Sahour meetings, in the municipality elections or in the many statements on the Palestinian state and self-rule, but rather in the purpose behind this weak state, because its planners envisage it as a bridge between Israel and the Arab states.

At present there is an unacknowledged bridge. You may be surprised, but I have information to the effect that all merchants apparently marketing Palestinian vegetables and oils are in fact dealing with non-Palestinian goods; they are not even cultivated on Palestinian soil, or by Palestinian labor, but are Israeli products exported as if the output of the West Bank. Israel has established several factories under Arab names which export merchandise to Jordan and other countries.

Those who live in East Jordan will notice a strange thing: there are many Israeli-produced canned and uncanned goods in the country, although they are not marked as such, and carry the name of an Arab factory. If such a thing can happen even before America and Israel achieve their peaceful settlement, what will happen afterwards? Regrettably, the Arab League is at present receiving West Bank merchants, believing what they say, and allowing them to export citrus fruit which is 'Arab' only in name.

I shall not speak of the crime perpetrated by Jordanian rule in creating this situation, nor of the regime's responsibility for the ambivalent trend in the West Bank which is exploiting public resentment for its defeatist purposes. It is not enough simply to expose these things; the important question is how to deal with them.

I repeat that we have no alternative but to put our own house in order. Once we have laid strong foundations, then we can reveal our knowledge and the masses will respect our stand. At the moment we have only a nominal right to represent the Palestinian people. When we began in Fateh we were only ten, twenty, and we said: "We represent the Palestinian people". We said this as we took up arms, and we created respect for fedayeen action. If this respect is not recovered soon, those working for a peaceful settlement will crush all their opponents. And if its advocates accomplish their plans without a word of opposition from us, then the greater part of the settlement issue will have been resolved.

Let me ask, who in the resistance supports these people? We do not support them, yet we remain silent. Why? We must reorganize ourselves and reinstate the fedayeen, so as to silence and repulse them. This does not mean that we should remain mute until these reforms are complete; we must expose their plans from this moment on. Our people are worthy and if we carry out an information campaign against this plan, exposing these individuals fearlessly and in a revolutionary manner, we shall make a positive advance.

— *Without doubt, the activities in the West Bank try to take advantage of Jordanian intimidation to deflect the Palestinian people from the correct path. Is it not necessary to raise forthright slogans for mass struggle against these trends, similar to those calling for the renewal of unity in both banks on nationalist and democratic foundations?*

— There is an answer to this question in the PLO memorandum to which you have referred. It contains this slogan of unity in both banks, which can form the beginning of a national front. In my opinion, the only slogan that can be raised at this stage is that found in the PLO memorandum.

In spite of the problematical circumstances now facing the revolution, we must stress two principles currently appropriate: firstly, the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. This issue must be, in addition to what you have mentioned, a focal point for all our political relations and publicity; it is a crucial matter. This right must also be upheld as a principle without any qualifications attached to it, thereby avoiding different interpretations as occurred in the case of the democratic Palestinian state. Yet to raise such an issue is not simple. If we give it international dimensions, it will afford us international foundations. We should concentrate on the fact that, in common with any other people, we have the right to self-determination. Subsequently, the leadership should be able to draw the broad outlines suitable to the particular stage and situation.

The second principle is related to the right of self-determination, and should be understood by our people. It covers the nature and significance of the unification of the two banks of the Jordan, and means that the revolution does not believe in the return of the present Jordanian regime. This attitude is acceptable to our people. If we blazon our right to self-determination through all our relations and publicity, we shall deprive the Arab states and the king's regime of the claim to represent the people of Palestine. And by means of the second slogan of rebuilding the unity of the two banks, we shall satisfy our people and give them the goal for which to struggle. I hope that the PLO memorandum may be distributed more widely and that the people may realize its true meaning, so that its contents may become the slogan for the future.

— *The resistance movement introduced the beginnings of a new and revolutionary education to the Palestinian and Arab people. The movement has been criticized for failing to continue this teaching, and for allowing its methods to be taken up by other, sometimes opposing, groups with influence on the Arabs. At times these groups confused the fighting man and thwarted his full participation. What is your reaction to this? What are your suggestions for intensifying revolutionary education among the Palestinian people?*

— In the first stage of the armed struggle to liberate Palestine, it was necessary to raise simple slogans and, at the same time, to translate them into practical mass action, for this was a critical period for the people. They sensed a certain apathy toward the slogans of the past eighteen years, and Fateh stood to gain from straightforward, general maxims.

Studying Fateh's political documents after 1967, we find only memoranda to summit conferences and the National Council. There is nothing more than a few slim booklets explaining simple concepts of armed struggle and some of the organization's slogans. Because of their generalizations, some of Fateh's commentary

on issues related to regional struggle were misunderstood, and gave the enemies of Fateh and of armed struggle the chance to make charges of regionalism, and so on. Had Fateh paid attention to educating the masses, and had it explained the concepts presented in broad outline, the present intellectual decline on the Palestinian scene could have been lessened.

The principle of the "stage of national liberation" is an example: had Fateh clarified its slogans of regional struggle, declaring that they did not contradict national struggle—had it made the dimensions of its relationship with Arab and world liberation movements clear—then it could have put a stop to the proliferation of organizations. Anyone with a sense of reason would have realized that there was no need for many organizations. Had we concentrated from the very beginning on politicizing our people and cadres, we could have averted the confusion of thought and the division between the Arab and the Palestinian peoples.

The question was raised, for instance, of the stage for national liberation and the conflict within Fateh. Fateh should have elucidated this principle in such a way as to show that there is no real contradiction between the activities of the Arab citizen in the Arab arena and those of the Palestinian far from the center of the struggle; that they are united within the Palestinian revolution.

If we had genuinely clarified all these matters, we should now have an ideological legacy to offer to the entire resistance movement—a legacy with effects on multiplicity and all the other problems from which we suffer. Were we able to lay down the issues in a manner to convince the ordinary Palestinian? I say no, and the proof is in the organizations as they stand now, for a common ideology is missing. We cannot say that there is an ideology called the "ideology of the resistance movement"; there are various ideas, theories, opinions, statements. Even within a single organization, differing or opposing trends can be found.

I think the Palestine Research Center can actively participate in unifying Palestinian thought, not through documentation, but by stressing those issues agreed upon and filling them out with additional opinions. It should try to bring the various points of view closer together through general conviction. This is the importance of the interviews published in *Palestinian Affairs**; through its pages we can relate attitudes one to another and extract issues on which there is agreement.

For example, the Research Center can collect everything written on a particular topic and of interest to the ordinary Palestinian; it can study areas of unanimity and present them in a book that represents a part of the thoughts of the Palestinian revolution. Such a program would be an enrichment, launching the unified education of the Palestinian Arab masses.

At present, no organization can claim to have produced a book which represents

* Arabic monthly published by the PLO Research Center.

the Palestinian revolution. Why? Because there is a trend within the revolution not to define an ideology but to stress and glorify the gun. Another tendency, too, is to introduce theories that may be valid as a guide in action, but are not sufficiently clear-cut to pass as features of the Palestinian experience. Can one say that the Chinese have succeeded because Mao Tse-tung is a genius? I cannot. Neither did the Russian revolution triumph because Lenin was a genius, but through theory put into practice. The revolution succeeded because the theory was correctly applied.

Every revolution needs theoretical guidelines to help in formulating an ideology. It is not necessary, however, to insist on one particular theory to the exclusion of others; if I examine the realities of the Russian experience and try to apply them to our situation, I may discover that some of them are inappropriate. Yet there are still anti-Marxist extremists who, in justifying retreat, seize on Lenin and point to him signing the Brest Litovsk treaty, withdrawing before the Germans, yielding concessions. They also remark that the Chinese retreated sixteen times. Such examples are evoked to convince the people. But if we consider the extent to which Fatch has wooed China, we see that its ardor exceeds that of the Popular Front, the Democratic Front and Sa'iqa. Why? Is China a phenomenon removed from the Marxist experience? No; but it developed the Marxist experience, adding what was appropriate to the Chinese reality.

I would reiterate my belief that the Palestine Research Center can make a serious start in dealing with specific topics. We can delay those over which there are differences, but study those agreed upon and formulate the beginnings of a philosophy for the people—one which goes beyond saying that the Chinese experience succeeded, the Russian experience succeeded—and beyond mere praise for Lenin and Mao Tse-tung.

We should study the reasons for these victories and their common problems, so that the people may have a real faith in them. We should not resort to such experiences only when seeking a way out of a tricky situation, nor should we justify retreat by pointing to these other retreats. Instead, we must accept both good and bad sides of the experience, accept it as a whole. This is how the Research Center can play its part. We should teach the people that it is no crime to have differing views, since discrepancies are possible within a single party or front.

Some say that the Algerians were cleverer than us. They say that the Algerian revolution was national, Islamic, socialist, and yet it solved its problems. In fact, I think such people oversimplify. We are at a different stage of struggle and our circumstances are not the same. Let the Palestinian leaders express their views with honesty and sincerity, and let us collect up these ideas and present them to the people as the "thoughts of the Palestinian revolution".

We should have the editorial courage to compile such a book and to distribute it among all our organizations, to let them witness the intellectual dialogue. No danger lies in the fact that, on the one hand, the Democratic or Popular Fronts

advocate class struggle, while I put forward national liberation, for they too discuss the stage of national liberation, albeit in a different context. This could be the dawn of a truly revolutionary Palestinian organization.

Dr. GEORGE HABASH

THE POPULAR FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF PALESTINE

— *I would like us to discuss the responsibilities presently faced by the Palestinian resistance movement. But to get to the heart of the matter, we should hear your opinion of the movement's past progress and whether or not it moved in the right direction. Did it deviate from the prescribed path? In the light of your answers, it will become clear whether or not we should undertake specific reforms in approaching our duties. For example: has the multiplicity of organizations represented a natural phenomenon? Were the schemes for national unity positive at every stage? Were our relations with the Palestinian, Jordanian and Arab masses consciously considered and planned? Did our relationship with the Arab regimes help or hinder the revolution?*

— It is true that we cannot discuss the duties of the future without reviewing the past. Without radical and scientific reconsideration and criticism, we cannot be confident about the progress of the revolution. The present dilemma of the resistance movement is not merely a product of the great strength and ferocity of its opponents; its main cause is the movement itself—its political standpoints, its methods of confronting the enemy, and the major mistakes of the past.

To be faithful to our revolution and our martyrs we must take a critical and decisive stand. The resistance movement held out great hopes for the Palestinian and Arab masses, who gave much to it; its leadership must therefore unflinchingly accept the responsibility for what happened, and any attempt to evade this will do the revolution no good. To do so would indeed be very dangerous, for the resistance movement would then continue to suffer from the ills of the past.

The greatest mistake of the resistance was its failure to appreciate or define scientifically the enemy it faced in Jordan. This error was politically fatal and, to a large extent, explains the present state of the movement. From the very beginning it was clear that the resistance could not establish revolutionary military bases in the occupied territory—this was to be expected and meant that it would have to depend on Jordan and Jordanian land in its development and support for mass resistance against the Israeli enemy.

The movement had to stop and ask itself the following questions: What are the

forces present on the soil from which we operate and on which our primary presence depends? What is our relationship with each of these forces? The political superficiality and vagueness shown by some groups in the resistance played a large part in leading to the consequences which we have witnessed. It was vital for the resistance movement to realize that the Jordanian regime was founded fifty years ago by British colonialism to serve a definite end: that is, to further Zionist and colonialist plans aimed at fulfilling Zionist goals in Palestine. A glance at the history of Jordan will immediately reveal that it was created and succored by colonialism to strike at the same masses who were set to fight colonialism and Zionism in Palestine. The resistance should have grasped this fact and educated its rank and file accordingly—that this regime is an enemy and an integral part of the enemy camp. There is absolutely no difference between Dayan, Hussein and Sharif Nasser; consequently, we should operate in Jordan as we do in Israel itself.

Had this truth been realized from the start the resistance movement would have been set up in a different manner. It would have been aware that it operated from hostile territory, and would have been obliged to make preparations and define its political program and positions in this light. But the class and ideological structure of the movement, together with the absence of a clear vision, led it to imagine that the Jordanian regime could be friendly or neutral—because it did not obstruct the revolution after the June war, because of its own deceitful slogans, and because of the Arabic name it bears.

On the basis of this theoretical and faulty evaluation, the resistance established itself in Jordan quite openly, as if it were on friendly soil. Everything about it was unconcealed: military bases, political organizations, arms depots, offices, its leadership and cadres. Consequently, when the regime took the military initiative and forced the September confrontation, the resistance was obliged to enter the struggle openly. This is the most dangerous thing that can happen to a revolution in its early stages.

If, then, the resistance had begun by defining the Jordanian regime as hostile and inseparably one with the enemy it could have set up its political program, its mass mobilization and its alliances on that basis. And it would have been able to take the initiative in the inevitable struggle against the regime, depriving it of the golden opportunity it has made use of since September, 1970.

In the movement's eyes, such a mistake is considered to be virtually a crime. It should acknowledge its error before the masses if it deserves to lead them.

I am not saying that it would have been possible for the resistance, in its third or fourth year, to destroy one of the most fortified reactionary citadels in the Arab world. But I do say that if it had worked with a full appreciation of these realities it could have made Jordan a base for the revolution, in that we could have swung the balance of power in its favor once and for all. This was its greatest mistake and we, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, do not accept in any shape or form the responsibility for what happened. We pointed

to these facts from the very beginning and we demanded that the resistance movement define its position accordingly in the battles of November 4, 1968, February 10, 1970 and June 9, 1970. In memory of the latter fighting, *Fateh** (June 7, 1971) remarked that it would have been possible for the movement to have won its struggle against the regime at that time had it clarified and defined its stand.

We, the PFLP, said the same thing during these events. We declared that there was no possibility of coexistence with the reactionary regime and that the resistance should unite around a radical and clear political position. We also urged that the movement take the initiative and abandon static defense, preparing itself organizationally, politically and militarily in the light of these facts.

What does all this mean? It means that those organizations that failed to take a decisive stand on this issue and failed to appreciate it fully, must accept the responsibility.

The second major mistake committed by the resistance was to omit the definition, in a scientific and revolutionary manner, of its position regarding the Jordanian people. Once it became dependent on the Jordanian arena, this should have been done. But the resistance did not carry out this fundamental theoretical analysis, continuing to work on the principle of a revolution of the Palestinian people against Israel and Zionism without regard for the other forces in Jordan. The movement presented itself as a Palestinian revolution pure and simple; it avoided interference in the internal affairs of the Arab countries, even in Jordan where its presence was essential to the continuity of the movement itself.

Given the clarity of vision to see that the Jordanian regime was its enemy and that the exploited and oppressed Jordanian people were, by the same token, its allies, the resistance could have joined with the masses to tilt the balance of power in its favor. But the movement neglected this central issue. Moved by nationalist and patriotic sentiments, the Jordanian people consequently gave the resistance only emotional support.

Of course, general sympathy is one thing, conscious revolutionary mobilization another. The masses' nationalist sympathies were unable to withstand the mistakes of the resistance—which were reflected both in Jordanian lives and in the plans of the reactionary regime to stir up regional feelings and distort the image of the revolution, thereby mobilizing the Jordanian people against it. The masses did not appreciate that the revolution was also theirs, directed against the imperialist reactionary Zionist enemy, the enemy of the Jordanian and Palestinian people alike.

Instead, the resistance movement behaved as if it were a substitute for the Jordanian national movement, having neither program nor directives to fulfill the duties of that role. It forgot the enemy and neglected its friends who—if

* Arabic daily published by Fateh in Amman, later (until 1972) in Damascus.

only temporarily—became the enemy's ally. As a result of all this, the balance of power was upset.

The ideological and political structure of the resistance was also reflected in the questions of national unity and its relationship with the Palestinian and Arab masses, as well as in its own organization. On the level of national unity, we may say that the multiplicity of organizations was to a certain extent a natural phenomenon, for more than one class participates in the stage of national democratic liberation: the workers, the peasants and the petite bourgeoisie. It is natural, therefore, for the multiplicity of classes to express itself in political diversity. Furthermore, there are the special characteristics of the Palestinian people, particularly as far as their dispersion and experiences are concerned. Had the main group in the resistance movement, which carries the responsibility of leadership, recognized this reality and scientifically defined a scheme of inter-organizational relationships, it would have helped to create a national front serving the program of the revolution. Not to do so led to the disarray which has in the past engulfed the issue of national unity.

For example, in the light of this analysis of the multiplicity of organizations, was it possible to establish an immediate and enforced unity? Scientific thinking says No, yet from time to time in the past voices were still raised in demand of such unity. Another example: amid the present multiplicity and conflicts, is it possible to create national unity without a basic political program? Talk of the necessity for unity and a national front has often been heard in total isolation from any political analysis or program. For these reasons, it was natural for any attempt at unity to disintegrate, but when it did the blame could not be put on any one particular organization. The leftist forces should have struggled for a more scientific scheme of unity; but what happened was that these forces were not in agreement among themselves on the subject. For purely organizational reasons, some used to go along with demagogic proposals on the subject.

It might be said that the constitution of the Palestine Liberation Organization, as a political program, was sufficient to serve as a foundation for national unity. But it is not, for there are special features to the Palestinian people and their struggle. For instance, liberation movements in general can raise the banner of liberation and take that as their minimum program; but this is not the case with the Palestinian revolution, for which a minimum program is a complicated matter. Some of the Palestinian people are in occupied land, the rest scattered through Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. These people want to mobilize themselves in order to participate in the struggle for national liberation, but they cannot do so without having specific ties to this or that country or regime. Therefore, it is difficult to limit the minimum program to liberation.

The revolution must define its attitude to the reactionary regimes of those states where an appreciable segment of the Palestinian people is found. It must also take up a definite position toward the other Arab regimes and clarify the nature of its relationship with the Arab liberation movement on the one hand,

and the world liberation movement on the other.

The class and ideological structure of the resistance movement was reflected in both the Palestinian and the Arab masses. The revolution is the masses; the masses are the revolution. A revolutionary organization realizes its goal through mass mobilization, its basic strength, and not by means of political maneuvering or its relationship with this or that regime. The basic force able to protect the revolution is the masses; but in order for them to represent a real potential, the revolution must continually present them with its problems, because the revolution is of the masses and is not the property of any of the various leaderships or organizations.

However, the nature of the resistance movement based the revolution's relationship with the Palestinian masses on mobilization through demagogic and emotional propaganda. The movement should have informed the masses of the obstacles it faced, and it should have demanded the forces with which to overcome those obstacles. Instead, it established only superficial relations with the masses and considered military action as a substitute for mass struggle, rather than the peak of that struggle.

All these problems are consequences of the class and ideological structure of the resistance, whose leadership is petit bourgeois. The national liberation struggle against the fierce imperialist attacks cannot be victorious, particularly at this stage, while led by the bourgeois class, with its indecision and vacillation, and its vague political and organizational understanding. The sole class force capable of leading the struggle for national liberation to victory is the working class, by virtue of its clear-cut, scientific and well-planned political principles, its iron-clad organization and its comradely, democratic relationship with the other mass strata.

At the moment, the resistance movement is not cast in this mould, a fact which explains many of the mistakes of the past, beginning with the wrong political stands and ending with gunshots at weddings —and exemplified by the [badly-trained] militia and poor military science. Had the resistance been led by a revolutionary political organization, the feda'i would have behaved differently; he would not have carried arms to show off or to further his personal ends. He would have been a revolutionary who knew that he represented a cause, that he was responsible for that cause, and that the cause belonged to the masses. As a consequence, it would be his duty to serve the masses at all times and to recognize the importance of commitment and discipline.

This is a brief analysis of some of the aspects of the movement's past which were raised in your question.

— *Let us now move on to discuss the duties that presently confront the Palestinian resistance movement. In your opinion, what are these duties?*

— The primary duty at the present stage is to continue the struggle against the

Zionist Israeli enemy in the occupied land, without this occurring at the expense of other struggles now imposed on the resistance movement. Currently there are one and a half million Palestinians in occupied territory, but they cannot directly confront the reactionary enemy, especially the reactionary Jordanian regime. Their militant duty is to fight the immediate enemy: the Israeli occupier. In their struggle they strongly support the resistance movement in its secondary battle, which consists of overthrowing the reactionary regime in Jordan.

Although both duties are interrelated, I want to point out that the primary responsibility of the resistance is to pursue revolutionary violence against the Israeli enemy. The movement must pause to review its activities in occupied Palestine during the past three or four years in order to root out its contradictions and deficiencies, enabling it to face Israel and Israeli measures against the resistance, and to draw up a clear plan of its own.

— For example, the violence in Palestine has not been carried out in the light of planning and a sense of history; rather, it was a matter of organizing discreet military operations here and there. In reality, the organization of the internal resistance should have taken a revolutionary form, mobilizing all the masses for the struggle and leading them in a people's political movement which would have adopted violence in order to confront the colonialist enemy.

There is a difference between scattered military operations and a coherent revolutionary vision aimed at mobilizing the people under the leadership of a revolutionary organization to fight the enemy with every means at their disposal. Furthermore, it is vital to study Israel and its schemes, for we cannot guarantee the continuation and growth of the resistance in occupied Palestine unless we know our enemy. You, at the Palestine Research Center, must know what this entails: the study of Israel's economic and social plans for the occupied territories which aim at creating good enough living conditions to pull out the rug from under the feet of the resistance. It also involves research into the specialized repressive apparatus which Israel learned from American experience in Vietnam. Given the results of these studies, an appropriate plan should be prepared for the activities of the resistance movement in occupied Palestine.

Another duty forced upon us is the struggle against the reactionary regime in Jordan, with the aim of overthrowing it. There is absolutely no possibility of coexistence between the revolution and the reactionary regime in Jordan. The struggle is inevitable and the movement must organize itself accordingly. It has paid for the grave errors of indecision, hesitation and vacillation in its stand toward that regime. The movement must take an authoritative and final decision on this matter, not relying on temporary measures which can be thwarted by the maneuvers of the regime and its long experience of putting down mass movements.

In achieving this position, the resistance must begin with forthright public criticism of its past attitudes, together with a deep, scientific belief in the impossibility of its coexistence with the Jordanian regime. The resistance must declare

this conviction publicly; it must move from a vacillating, defensive, submissive position to the offensive. It must be unambiguous in its aim of overthrowing the regime by revolutionary violence—the only way to fulfill this duty.

The movement's struggle against the reactionary Jordanian regime is at present its central struggle. The continuity of the resistance in Jordan, and of the phenomenon of armed struggle, constitutes the central backbone for the perpetuation of all its branches as well as of armed struggle outside Jordan which can give birth to the new Arab liberation movement.

Since the struggle is now directed at overthrowing the Jordanian regime, not at gaining by force the rights of coexistence, freedom of action and coordinated regime-resistance relations, then it is no longer the responsibility of the resistance movement alone; it also becomes the duty of the Jordanian masses. The reactionary nature of the regime is not only reflected in its betrayal of the Palestinian cause; it has repercussions on the lives of the Jordanians, the East Jordanians and Palestinians themselves. The peasants suffer poverty, misery and exploitation. The same is true of the workers. This class force must be mobilized in the struggle against a regime which not only betrays its national cause, but exploits and oppresses it daily. Here, we postulate the presence of a Jordanian political organization that mobilizes the masses and allies itself with the resistance movement, which would engage in the same battle. Such a Palestinian-Jordanian front constitutes the necessary tool for overthrowing the regime.

This understanding informs the slogans of the struggle. The Jordanian and Palestinian masses will not do battle against the regime simply because the regime plans to strike at the resistance movement and liquidate the Palestinian cause. The masses must be mobilized by other slogans—social, political and class slogans—from which they may realize that the regime is to blame for all the backwardness in which they live.

Of course, the struggle against the regime in Jordan is not easy. The regime is a citadel, and colonialism supplies it daily so that it may withstand all pressures. Colonialism recognizes what defeat of the regime would mean. Consequently, we are faced with regular imperialist supplies, material and technical, to a regime which has abandoned all values and has no qualms about fighting the movement of the masses. Hence we must indeed know the nature of the struggle confronting us, so as to be neither arrogantly overconfident nor simplistic in our vision.

The resistance movement and the Jordanian national movement must benefit from past experience. They must establish themselves underground, to prevent the reactionary regime from striking at them. The process of mass mobilization against the regime can begin in this form. The masses will not be able to conclude decisively their battle against the regime except through revolutionary violence. Of course, revolutionary violence must have a dialectical relationship with all other means of struggle, but the contradiction between the regime and the masses cannot come to a final end except through revolutionary violence.

When we speak of revolutionary violence, we do not do so from emotional

precepts—the romance of arms, the spirit of adventure. We take our lead from the strategic principles of people's war as the only pathway to liberation, from an awareness of the possible historical consequences should the phenomenon of armed struggle disappear, and from the reaction of the enemy should it be finally destroyed. For then the enemy would have complete control over any unarmed political mass movement, which would be constrained by the limits of the enemy's permission. Such a mass movement would be unable to achieve liberation.

To practice revolutionary violence requires that the resistance movement assert the elements of this violence as a military science. These elements are: avoiding large-scale military confrontations; adopting hit-and-run tactics; choosing the enemy's most sensitive targets—ones that are acceptable by the majority and are not open to extensive debate as to their legality and validity; perfecting the art of camouflage, ambush and concealment, so that all may be hidden from the enemy's view; achieving the highest level of political, moral and military organization for the fighting men; attaining a high standard of intelligence operations and psychological warfare; thoroughly grasping the principles of guerrilla warfare in the mountains and of clandestine operations in the city; and benefitting from the wealth of historical experience, selecting what is appropriate for our struggle.

However, revolutionary violence—guerrilla action—should not be a substitute for mass movement when confronting the enemy and his plans. We should not think purely in military terms when examining, analyzing and planning the struggle, particularly when defining its problems, the balance of forces, the possibilities of action, and the future. Revolutionary violence and guerrilla action should form the peak of mass involvement, not be its substitute.

It is of fundamental importance to emphasise the role of revolutionary violence, but it is equally vital at the same time to assert that its practice must not take an adventurist form, thus abetting its annihilation. Revolutionary violence must depend on the mobilized masses, who constitute the strong base and mainstay for a protracted people's war of liberation. The enemy can be slowly bled only by means of the masses and through focusing that strength of the millions which cannot be defeated. Practicing violence must be the product of a revolutionary party leading a broad national front and surrounded by vast mass institutions. The masses of the revolution are to be mobilized through these institutions, so that the revolution itself may be a huge historical action taken by the millions, by means of hours of daily labor, to build up their own power and to develop and expand their militant and military effectiveness.

Among other definitions, mobilizing the masses means placing before them the facts of the new political situation and explaining to them our analysis of that situation—what led to it, and how we see the way out of the crisis. We listen to their views and we learn from them. The first major step toward mass mobilization is to clarify the relationship between daily problems and the political struggle that aims at liberation and the establishment of democratic power working for

the benefit of the revolutionary classes. The importance of mass organizations and unions, as well as that of the political program presented by the revolution to the people, must be stressed.

— *May we return to the struggle against the Jordanian regime? What would be your reaction, were it possible to implement the Cairo and Amman agreements* and provided that the Arab states guaranteed their execution?*

— Our opinion is that such talk is nonsense, nonsense, nonsense. Pursuing this line of thinking can only mean that we have not learned from what happened, and that the blood of our martyrs was spilled in vain. Experience has shown that both the Cairo and Amman agreements are mere empty words, ink on paper. We look at things objectively and as they really happened; in fact, the Cairo agreement was an instrument which the Jordanian regime used to strike at the resistance. By means of this agreement, indeed, the regime accomplished what it was unable to achieve in the September military confrontation.

Continuing to think in this way is nonsensical. All of us know that a state such as Saudi Arabia is reactionary and that it wants to bring the resistance to an end, unless it were to be so humiliated as to agree to becoming a formal presence under Saudi patronage. No revolution can emerge from such reasoning; these slogans have no meaning. The resistance should declare that this kind of talk is rubbish and that there can be no coexistence—or any relationship at all—with the Jordanian regime. It should declare that its primary strength lies with the people and not in a relationship with Saudi Arabia or any other state. The resistance must depend on the masses; it must organize and mobilize them, and start its struggle against the regime. It is true that the struggle will be long and hard—but if we desire liberation, that is our way.

— *American-Israeli negotiations aim at some kind of political settlement, initially through opening the Suez Canal. How do you envisage the role of the Palestinians in coming to terms with this? Can they prevent a deal being struck or not? If these efforts succeed, how will the resistance movement act and what will be its position on the Arab level?*

— There is no doubt that the struggle against a political solution is very difficult for us, because in such a situation we face not only the traditional forces of the enemy—represented by Israel, imperialism and reaction—but also, regrettably, another whose plan for the Palestinian cause is political settlement. In this case, the resistance movement has no choice but to depend on a clear-cut political program as well as on the masses. There is no possibility of alliance with the nationalist regimes involved in the settlement process.

* See Chapter I, page 19.

In our opinion, the September events and their aftermath were intended to pave the way for a political settlement, striking at and weakening the resistance which represented a major obstacle to such a solution. We are all aware that after September and the attacks on the movement, voices were heard among American officials and others to the effect that the circumstances were most propitious for stability in the Middle East—that is, stability for their interests—and that since this opportunity would not recur it should not be allowed to escape. The weakness of the resistance movement opened the door to these conspirators.

In our estimation, a peaceful solution approaches despite the contradictions between Israel and the nationalist regimes which pursue it. Day after day, one obstacle after another is overcome.

Certainly we shall find such a situation extremely problematical in every sense of the word. Our struggle will be not only against the reactionary forces in Jordan but also against all those in the Arab world, as well as the submissive elements that want to disband the resistance for its rejection of a peaceful settlement. Yet I believe that our struggle is not hopeless, for as long as there are conflicting forces and as long as there are people in camps, exiled from their land, then there will be revolution. Our revolution will not be defeated unless our will is first destroyed. While our people carry on our cause and continue to support it, we cannot be beaten.

We simply say this: in the midst of this fierce assault we should preserve our strength, lie low and not allow ourselves to be attacked or uprooted. In this case we should practice our militant potential against the enemy, no matter what form it takes. In Gaza, for example, there is resistance to the Israeli occupation. If a political settlement is reached, the resistance must remain in Gaza, whether to fight the Israeli occupiers, a reactionary regime returning to Gaza, a reactionary "Palestinian State" created by a political settlement, or any other non-Israeli power introduced to rule our people in Gaza—which, in the case of a settlement, would be hostile to the masses, their hopes and their aspirations. Consequently, it is important for the revolution to persist, and to do so in such a way as to fight power which does not represent its will.

This gives you a general idea of how we approach the question of a peaceful settlement. We see no difference between fighting Israel and fighting the Jordanian regime; they are identical in the fullest sense. We fight Israel's occupation of the West Bank, and if it was replaced by its partner, the reactionary regime in Jordan, we would continue to fight. This is vital: that our people pursue the struggle as far as the goal of ultimate liberation.

— *We come now to some issues related to the PFLP as a political organization. The PFLP talks of a minimum political program agreeable to all resistance groups; this is a valid position to take up. But, with the exception of the very general nine points pre-*

sent to the United Command before it became known as the Central Committee, you make no mention at all of the terms of this program.*

— The program which we presented to the United Command dealt with the particular period in which it was written, while that tendered to the National Council** at its last session was concerned with the issues of a later stage. The points of the program constitute what we mean by a minimum political program, that is, not the nature and definition of organizational relations and so on, as much as a political plan. One of the main points of the program is the call for fundamental criticism and review of the resistance itself. But is the resistance ready to undergo such a process and to admit publicly to the major mistakes responsible for the present situation? This is an important question for us.

Another example: we should define our attitude to the regime in Jordan in no uncertain fashion, raising the slogan of overthrowing that regime by revolutionary violence. Is this a matter for agreement by all groups within the resistance movement? If so, how do we explain the Saudi mediation, al-Saqqaf and his visits, [Tunisian Foreign Minister] al-Masmudi and his erratic declarations on the possibilities of agreement, and so on? Rather, these indicate that the question is not yet settled. But this is what we mean by a minimum political program.

— *There is also the question of hijacking. It is clear that the PFLP tried to assume a particularly militant stance, striking at imperialists everywhere, on the grounds that the struggle is against Israel, reaction and imperialism alike. But there is much criticism of this position. Let me ask you first, does hijacking really represent an attack on imperialist interests, such as oil, and on the political and economic influence wielded by the ruling reactionaries? Secondly, you assign these large problems to be tackled by the Palestinian movement—yet it is up to the Arab national forces, by opposing imperialist and reactionary influence in their midst, to make a reality of the united struggle against Israel, imperialism and reaction. Thirdly, doesn't the fact that you direct the people's attention to hijacking and declare through communiqués and the press that they represent attacks on imperialist interests, conceal those very interests and confuse the masses?*

— I will answer the third point first. Our activities were not limited to aircraft. We struck Tapline*** and the Coral Sea****. Our action was a symbol, and we said that if the entire resistance movement followed this strategy it would threaten imperialist interests in the Arab world. We do not aim to substitute for the Arab national movement, rather to work at one with it. But there are

* The Central executive body of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

** Palestine National Council, the body representing the various Palestinian organizations and groups, including student unions, workers unions, and "independents".

*** Trans Arabian Pipeline running from Saudi Arabia to Sidon on the Mediterranean.

**** Israeli tanker attacked by PFLP in the Red Sea on June 11, 1971.

also the specific characteristics of the Palestinian people and their cause. I believe that the Palestinian people, who do not all live in their own country where they may confront the army of Israeli occupation, are justified in striking at Israeli, Zionist and imperialist interests wherever they may be.

— *Another point. PFLP operations in Gaza consist of some straightforward activities, together with others that need more explanation. I would like us to clarify one of the latter. The number of PFLP strikes at the enemy equals those against spies and those who work in Israel. Dayan described the phenomenon as "terrorism turned upon itself". How do you explain it?*

— In Gaza there is one struggle against the enemy, another against his agents. The agents are an inseparable part of the enemy. We have not kept count of operations against the enemy on the one hand, and those against his agents on the other, because we do not differentiate between the two. There is the enemy and there are his agents; we confront them both.

We believe that tackling the spies was to our benefit, for it led to cohesion in the surrounding masses. It also curtailed many such contacts which would otherwise have become much more widespread than they are now. Dayan's talk is nonsense. Our terrorism is directed at the agents, not the masses. You can be sure that no agent is executed unless we are one hundred per cent convinced that he is an agent. He gets a proper trial and sometimes we record his confession. No agent is executed unless he has previously been warned. And I really mean what I say here; these are not euphemisms meant for the press.

— *Still on the same topic—Gaza—what are the things to stress in order to prevent the growth of any terrorist elements within the context of fedayeen action?*

— There is no [individualistic] terrorist phenomenon within the activities in Gaza for which we are responsible. In particular, Gaza is known for its mass demonstrations on all national occasions; sometimes the people gather at fedayeen funerals. This underlines the fact that our work is not individualistic terrorism, but dependent on the masses and the entire mass movement. This is clear, for besides military operations in Gaza, extensive mass action occurs now and then which the enemy is forced to acknowledge. Political statements and manifestos are continually circulating among the Gaza masses, and when the enemy enters the territory he is thoroughly boycotted by the women and children. This is a product of the political education undertaken by secret organizations in Gaza.

For example, one Israeli newspaper wrote less than a month ago: "There is no doubt the terrorists succeeded in their action particularly as a result of the people's cooperation...The security authority has very clear proof of real cooperation from the citizens, and here lies the basic difficulty of controlling the terrorist activities." (*Haaretz*, July 14, 1971) This is why the Israeli authorities decided on

vast displacement programs for those in the camps—an attempt to disperse our people and disrupt their solidarity with the resistance.

— *There is some talk of exaggerations contained in the communiqués of the resistance movement, and the PFLP has apparently been no exception. There have been announcements that various targets have been blown up—aircraft, a hotel, large buildings. Such incidents could scarcely be concealed, yet the press made no mention of them. How do you explain this?*

— Let us first be aware of the fact that latterly the enemy and hostile forces have striven, quite intentionally, to bury the struggle of our people in the occupied territory. We must acknowledge this reality, for it is part of the enemy's plan. Our standing with the people is at stake, and we realize that we cannot afford to introduce a deliberate error; for us, verification of our operations is a vital matter. Any monitoring of Hebrew broadcasts would reveal that many of these operations are mentioned in a single newscast, but without repetition and, of course, in the Hebrew language. A case in point is the commentary on various incidents involving aircraft: the helicopter at Ashdod, the airplane at Khalandiyah [airport, near Jerusalem], the halt to all movement at Lydda Airport.

Is it possible that these things happen by chance? Do we really expect our enemy to declare that the resistance is still steadfast—that it is able to strike violently in the center of Tel Aviv and at the very heart of the Israeli entity?

— *What is the position of the PFLP on alliance with the other leftist forces? Do you think it is time to form a united leftist front with which to confront the rightist tide mounting in the Arab world?*

— Alliance with the forces of the left is a necessity, especially at a time when the Arab regimes are concentrating on the question of the left. These regimes have begun to regard the resistance as of two kinds: one that they protect and do not see to be a threat; and one to be sneered at and insulted as a danger to their plans for submission. This being the case, the leftist forces in the resistance movement should come together and discuss this threat, a threat directed at them alone.

But any alliance with the left must take into consideration national unity as a whole, so that the groups in the resistance may continue to agree on a political program by means of which to meet the danger surrounding them at present.

— *How does the PFLP view participation in leading the Palestinian movement through the Executive Committee of the PLO?*

— We believe that our participation in the Executive Committee is based on a serious attempt by all concerned to prevent the resistance movement from devia-

ting from its goals. These are: total liberation; opposition to all submissive [peace] projects; considering as treason all plans for a Palestinian state or entity; and asserting the unity of the movement in its struggle against the reactionary regime in Jordan, with the ultimate aim of overthrowing it. We believe that our participation is necessary and proper, provided the PLO keeps to this minimum political program and sincerely struggles for its realization. On the other hand, if the PLO were to swerve from any one of these fundamental aims, there would be no possibility of our taking part.

NAYEF HAWATMEH

POPULAR DEMOCRATIC FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF PALESTINE

— *We want to deal with the problems currently facing the Palestinian resistance movement, but in order to do this we must have a proper understanding of past events, so that the present situation can be evaluated in relation to the whole Palestinian struggle. What is your own evaluation?*

— An objective, realistic view of the struggle against Zionism and Israel leads to a critical appraisal of the past life of the resistance. The whole Palestinian question is one of national liberation and has certain prominent and deep-rooted characteristics. First, the conflict with the Zionist movement is historically linked to the relationship obtaining between Zionism and imperialism (British imperialism up to 1948, American imperialism after that date). Thus the struggle for the liberation of Palestine is against Zionism and imperialism. The latter not only manifests itself in its economic and strategic interests in the Arab world, but also in the reactionary classes and regimes which are linked to it, and which are happy to police those interests. This characteristic (that is, the relationship between Zionism and imperialism) leads us to the obvious conclusion that the struggle against Israel is inevitably linked to the struggle against imperialism and the reactionary protectors of its interests in the Arab world. It likewise follows that any defeat for imperialism in the Arab world is a practical step toward resolving the conflict with Israel in favor of the liberation of Palestine.

The second characteristic lies in the historical and fateful link between the Palestinian question and the conflicts occurring in the rest of the Arab world. It is this which distinguishes the Palestine question from any other cause of emancipation or national liberation in the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, such as the Algerian, Vietnamese and Chinese causes. The fate of Palestine and its people has been decided throughout ancient, mediæval and modern history in the light of the sum total of the conflicts in the Arab world, especially in the Arab Middle East. That is, the Palestine question has been dominated by the process of mutual interaction between what occurs in Palestine and what occurs in the neighboring areas. This compels us to stress the daily

dialectical relationship between the Palestine question and the Arab cause in toto and to transform this relationship into the practical task of unifying the struggle of the two wings of the Arab national democratic revolution (the movement of our people in the form of an armed struggle, and the Arab liberation movement). In this struggle, our people confront Israel while the peoples of the Arab nation confront imperialism and the local Arab reactionary regimes.

The third characteristic we must note carefully is that any attempt at erecting a barrier between the struggle of the Palestinian people against Zionism and the state of Israel, and the events in the rest of the Arab world (under a slogan such as "What have we got to do with the other Arabs?") is a move of extreme political stupidity. For it overlooks the historical background of the Palestine question, particularly when we consider the inequality of the struggle between the Palestinian potential on the one hand, and that of Israel supported by imperialism on the other. The Palestinian people belongs to the underdeveloped world. This means that backwardness reflects itself in its culture, politics, technology and class structure. On the other hand, we are faced with the state of Israel which possesses a relatively advanced level of culture and technology, in addition to the multifarious immediate imperialist backing it receives. The conflict between the Palestinian people and Israel, then, rests in fact upon the principle of the inequality of the struggle. Hence, the notion that the Palestinian people alone can defeat the combined forces of Israel and imperialism is an unrealistic one; unless this is realized, we will be sinking into a series of utopian illusions or demagogic proselytism among the ranks of our people and the peoples of the area.

These are the most salient features of the situation. From our comprehension of these we can determine the nature of the basic line to be followed by the movement of the Palestinian people in its struggle for the liberation of its land, and for the defeat of the state of Israel, Zionism and imperialism.

— *In the light of this analysis, do you believe that relations between the resistance movement and the Arab regimes have developed in such a way as to serve the revolution, or is the opposite more correct?*

— Were I to answer your question in one sentence, I would say that the relationship between the resistance movement and the Arab regimes developed in a direction contrary to the interests of the revolution. However, this would be an incomplete answer; the fact is that the type of relationship obtaining between the resistance and the Arab regimes did not come about accidentally. It derived rather from the movement's very constitution and formed one of the items on its overall program. Hence a clear answer requires that a very quick survey be made of the inner structure of the movement.

All the resistance organizations were objectively an extension of the Arab national liberation movement with all its intellectual, political, and class contradictions. There was nothing new in this phenomenon. Throughout modern

history, the Palestinian and Jordanian liberation movements have represented such an extension. This means that the problem of the resistance did not lie in its penetration by Arab political parties, as some people in the movement claim. According to them, the Arab political organizational extensions within the resistance movement constitute the prominent issue in the relationship of the Palestinian revolution with Arab conditions in general. The fact is that the resistance movement was dominated by leading cadres from the petite and middle bourgeoisies who produced for the movement an ideological and political program in keeping with the nature and constitution of this bourgeoisie. When the Arab national liberation movement rose under the leadership of this class, particularly after 1948, it strove doggedly to solve the problems of national liberation and fulfil the tasks of the national democratic Arab revolution (that is, economic and political independence from imperialism and the world capitalist market, liquidation of feudalism and the big bourgeoisie [compradore] solution of the agrarian problem, industrialization, modernization, unification of the Arab nation: all employed to mobilize the potentials of the Arab revolution toward the liberation of Palestine.

These tasks, in addition to the overall transformations which occurred in the Arab world, had their extentions into, and left their impact on, the Palestinian scene. Prior to June 1967, the program of the Palestinian-Jordanian nationalist movement was basically an ideological, political and social extension of this general Arab program although the Palestinian-Jordanian movement failed to realize any of these tasks. It was hampered by subjective factors connected with its ideological, political and class weakness (the objective product of the degree of our people's class and social development and of the effects of the 1948 disaster whereby nearly one half of our people now live in camps), and by objective factors connected with the situation on the West and East Banks of the Jordan. The general situation there was, and on the East Bank still is, controlled by a reactionary royalist regime whose relationship with the masses rested upon dictatorial police rule, upon the preservation of the traditional social structure (tribalism, clannishness, semi-feudalism, the compradore) and upon the suppression of the nationalist movement.

It was under these conditions that the Palestinian resistance movement, embodied in the experiment of Fateh, took up arms early in 1965. This experiment carried within it, in addition to all the ideological and political ills from which the rest of the national liberation movement in the area suffered, a conglomeration of parochial Palestinian reflexes. Instead of extracting these ills and rejuvenating the ties of the Palestinian nationalist movement with the Arab liberation movement through a revolutionary platform, Fateh developed isolationist characteristics which rested upon the principle of "Palestinizing" the Palestinian question and turning one's back on the surrounding Arab countries. Hence the resistance movement, from the start, carried within itself the fault which led to its characteristic attitude toward the status quo.

This attitude became well established after June 1967. At that time, all the nationalist and revolutionary forces in the Palestinian sphere and in the Arab world were called upon to offer a revolutionary program in lieu of the one which had led the Arab petit bourgeois regimes to the June 1967 defeat. The new program should have rested specifically upon a minute examination of the nature of the conflict with Israel and its dialectical link with the struggle against imperialism and the local reactionary regimes responsible for the outcome of the 1948 war. For we must not forget that the armies of these reactionary regimes had fought, under the leadership of King Abdullah and the guidance of British imperialism, within the framework of the imperialist-Zionist plan to Zionize a part of Palestine. In fact these armies had operated strictly within the framework of the 1947 partition plan. Thus, the resistance was called upon to act on the basis of an ideologically and politically clear strategic position which defined precisely the counterrevolutionary camp represented by Israel, imperialism and the local reactionary regimes opposed to the liberation of Palestine. Accordingly, the resistance should have felt prompted to build active daily ties of militancy with the other wing of the Arab revolutionary movement (the Arab liberation movement) so that they might confront jointly those opposed to the liberation of Palestine. This the resistance movement has so far failed to do.

So much for this first point. Second, the resistance movement was called upon to designate to the masses of our people and to those of the Arab nation the precise dialectical relationship between the conflict against Israel and the situation obtaining in the East Bank in particular. Prior to 1948, this situation constituted a safety valve for the Zionist movement and later for the state of Israel. It formed, as well, a reactionary bastion opposed to the cause of the Palestinian national revolution and the Arab revolution in general. For Jordan occupied (and still does) a special position in the struggle against Israel and the occupation. Objectively, Jordan constitutes the principal base for the resistance and the Palestinian liberation movement, while the regime itself represents the negation of this condition. Before and since 1967, this regime has done its best to make its secondary contradiction with the nationalist movement (and later with the resistance movement) prevail over the primary Arab contradiction with Israel. At the head of its daily and permanent agenda, the regime has placed the suppression of nationalist and resistance movements.

Recall here that the first martyr who fell after Fateh took up arms against Israel was killed at the hands of the royal Jordanian forces. Recall also that this regime conducted, after 1967, the first campaign to liquidate the resistance on February 2, 1968, when the movement was represented by one organization only, namely, Fateh and limited to the Ghor area* in Karameh. This was before it had expanded to the villages and towns, before the masses took up arms, and before any infractions were committed by persons in the movement of the kind that naturally

* The Jordan Valley north of the Dead Sea.

occur in any armed mass movement. Here again it was necessary that the resistance should define exactly the nature of its relationship with the Jordanian regime which refused to coexist with the national movement and the resistance, and which compelled the latter to spend the greater part of its energies in self-defense. Jordan was, and still is, the most suitable area for a revolutionary base, because the majority of the Palestinian people live on its territory and because of the historical bonds binding the two banks. The unity of the people in both banks gives the Palestinians a complete and legitimate right to make of the East Bank the main base of their struggle.

Third, the resistance should have had on its agenda the examination of the nature of its relationship with the new bourgeois regimes. In more precise terms, the resistance should have defined its position vis-à-vis the regimes' platforms on the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict as they crystallized after the June defeat. For these regimes stood by the whole of their previous programs which had led to the defeat. Their platforms continued to rest upon an internal policy which accorded with the interests of the ruling classes. They relied on conventional warfare only (where the internal relations in an army are based on class stratification, bureaucracy and the suppression of political and revolutionary thought among soldiers and officers); they rejected the arming of the people, and refused opening up to the masses in any democratic revolutionary manner so that the latter might bear their full patriotic and national responsibilities instead of waiting on the sidelines for the outcome of the conflict. The said regimes refused also to incorporate the productive resources of their countries into the war effort. Nor would they open a front against imperialism and the Arab reactionary forces (this being the true nature of the conflict in the area extending over Palestine and the Arab world). They justified this deficiency under the pretext of forming a broad Arab front in opposition to Israel and Zionism. However, militating against Israel and Zionism presupposes necessarily militating against imperialism and Arab reaction as we said earlier or, as Nasser put it, "fighting Israel and those behind Israel".

Nevertheless, the greater part of the resistance movement—in which Fateh occupied the effective position of power—was satisfied with appealing to our people to take up arms against Israel, ignoring in its calculations firstly, all the principles of the dialectical connection between the conditions prevailing in Jordan and the general Arab situation and secondly, the relationship between Israel and imperialism. The resistance movement, however, did bring forth a number of theoretically revolutionary slogans such as "the people's national war", "the people's war of national liberation", "protracted war"; yet these were hollow and empty of content. To transform them into meaningful slogans requires, from the start, mobilizing the Palestinian and Arab masses against the whole camp opposed to the cause of the revolution and the liberation of Palestine. Such a mobilization would have been part of a revolutionary program based on a close alliance with all the revolutionary and anti-imperialist forces throughout Palestine and the

Arab world, and which would have been a substitute for the defeated program of the petit bourgeois Arab regimes.

In this struggle, the Palestinian people would play the role of a combat vanguard operating in occupied Palestine, while the peoples in the rest of the Arab world would bear their full share in battling imperialism and the Arab reactionary forces; they would undertake mass struggle at all levels, both political and military, against imperialist interests, and against the classes and regimes which protect these interests. It is at this point that fedayeen action would actually have turned, step by step, into a popular war of liberation against the enemies of liberation. Also, in as much as we would have inflicted defeats upon imperialism and the local forces of reaction, while at the same time broadening the struggle against Israel and intensifying it, we would have actually transformed our war into a protracted one. In this way we would have established the core of the revolutionary program, capable, through a protracted war, of liberating Palestine.

What actually took place was the exact opposite. That is why reaction was able to take the initiative (both strategically and tactically) toward eradicating the resistance movement and disarming the people. That is why, also, the resistance gradually fell captive to the narrow limits of the Arab regimes' policies and sank to the level we are now witnessing. The major responsibility for leading the whole movement into this dilemma lies with those who occupied the main center of power and influence: the representatives of the national bourgeois trend in the resistance. They were received with open arms by all Arab states and were offered full support to maintain their hegemony over the Palestinian resistance in general, while those who pioneered in presenting the alternative revolutionary program were besieged by the Arab regimes in every way: politically, materially and with propaganda. A long period of ideological, political and armed struggle was needed before this vanguard would have been able to exercise hegemony over the movement. It could not achieve this merely by presenting these issues theoretically. Time is required for the masses to discover through their own experiences and in the most concrete and palpable manner, via current struggles and conflicts, that the left-wing program alone leads to salvation, that is, to the political and national salvation of our people and the peoples of the whole area. Then the masses will discover, that the right-wing national bourgeois program leads only to a series of continuous disasters.

— *In your analysis, you stressed the necessity for forging close ties between the Palestinian resistance movement and the Arab national movement for the sake of revolutionizing the Arab situation economically, politically and militarily, and thereby destroying the imperialist and reactionary influence as a basic strategic prologue to the liberation of Palestine. Concerning this relationship with the Arab nationalist movement, what concrete organizational forms would it take? Is it enough, for example, to mount a campaign of political education among the masses, or are there more effective means?*

— This relationship is necessarily at once ideological, political and organizational. Certainly it is also a daily one. The resistance movement is ideologically enjoined to adopt this realistic picture of the principles that govern the conflict with Israel in the area. The movement must effectively exercise its role in spreading revolutionary education among the Palestinian and Arab masses. Its agitation should start by evaluating the position of every Arab regime as regards the issues involving the practical aspects of the struggle with Israel and imperialism, as well as by placing the regimes in a situation whereby they are daily and persistently subject to demands for implementing this program. The regimes will certainly reject the program (which is only to be expected). This will provide the peoples of the area with the opportunity to discover, through concrete experience, that singing the praises of Palestine and presenting a mere pittance by way of aid to the resistance movement is not the program required from the Arab regimes. Such a discovery will impel the masses increasingly to assume the responsibility of determining the fate of the conflict themselves, instead of turning their backs on the whole operation, or despairing of the verbal program for the liberation of Palestine to which the Arab regimes adhere.

As for the political aspect of this relationship, it requires the resistance to scrap the principle of noninterference in the internal affairs of the Arab states on the basis of a correct understanding of the exigencies of the conflict and the contradictions that govern it. For it is not a question of “interference or noninterference”. It is a question of the correct understanding of the nature of the conflict with Israel and its relationship to the conflict with imperialism and the local reactionary regimes. It is also a question of the nature of the revolutionary program which can guarantee the defeat of Israel and imperialism and the liberation of Palestine. Otherwise the slogan of noninterference will really mean actual interference in the internal affairs of the Arab states in favor of the existing status quo, as in fact has happened. Using the day-to-day policies of the Arab regimes vis-à-vis the principles governing the conflict, the Palestinian resistance must expose these regimes to the Palestinian and Arab masses. Thus it will mobilize the masses, within the framework of this revolutionary program, to take the initiative against the enemies of the liberation of Palestine in the area.

On the organizational level we must realize that the question is not limited to criticism, political and ideological education, nor to the presentation of a revolutionary liberation program, although these are basic matters, because ideas acquire an invincible material power once the masses are convinced of them. It must be linked to the establishment of organizational ties with the Arab national liberation movement, with all the ideological groupings opposed to Israel, Zionism, imperialism and the forces of reaction, with a view to building a broad Arab national front. In such a front each of the peoples of the area assumes its role, in its own country, in battling against the enemies of the liberation of Palestine and in evolving the conditions favorable to this program in its own home, subjecting the economic, social and military conditions of its country to the exigencies of

popular protracted war. This presupposes also that all the forces affiliated with the national front support each other in every way and strive to develop forms of struggle in keeping with the necessary requirements of transforming the masses from despairing onlookers to increasingly more active participants in the struggle. In this way it is possible to turn the Middle East—in the short and long term—into a second Vietnam and actually defeat the enemies of the Palestinian revolution through bitter struggle.

— *Has the Palestinian left taken steps in this direction, and if so, to what extent has it succeeded?*

— If we review all the ideological and political theses put forward by the Palestinian left, we see that it went a long way in this direction. For example, since 1969, the Democratic Front has been making an issue of the subjective and objective crisis through which the resistance movement is passing in connection with its program, its relationship with the situation in Jordan, its Arab and international relations, and in its numerous writings and pamphlets. The Democratic Front has pursued this line in its day-to-day ideological contacts and relations, as well as in all that it has proposed. For example, in connection with the true understanding of the dialectical relationship between the struggle against Israel and the events in Amman, the Palestinian left pointed out, prior to September, the necessity of seizing the initiative in resolving the duality of power in Amman in favor of the revolution, and thus securing a main base for the revolution, especially since the reactionary regime refused to freeze the secondary contradiction with the resistance in favor of the primary one with the national enemy and since the initiative to liquidate the resistance movement rested in its hands.

After September [1970], the Palestinian left pointed out the necessity of moving on to define a clear stand with regard to the existing conditions in Amman. It declared the treasonous nature of this regime and its refusal to coexist with the movement of our people, in lieu of persisting in the policy of dancing the “one step forward two steps back” tango with the regime. The left proposed entering into political and armed struggle against the regime until it retreated, and conceded our people’s national rights, including its right to transform the East Bank into a main base for the revolution. In the Arab world, the Palestinian left hastened to establish a series of organizational relations with numerous forces of the Arab national revolution. There were, and still are, numerous forms of cooperation and mutual support between the two sides. But this program (of the left) has not yet become the prevalent force either in the life of the resistance or in that of the area.

— *In this interview you have expounded the Arab factors that prevented the left-wing line from prevailing as regards relations with the Arab national movement. But in*

Jordan, the Palestinian left was free to operate. Why did it fail even there to impose the line in question?

— Let us be more precise in defining the issues. In Jordan, numerous subjective and objective factors dominated the day-to-day developments of conditions in the resistance movement. We should not minimize their effect on the ability of the left in the resistance to wrench away the initiative from the right and develop the situation in the direction of making the national revolutionary program prevail. First, the effect of the Arab situation on the resistance in Jordan was not slight. A great deal of material assistance was given to the right wing of the movement, thus linking it to the Arab regimes. This had the effect of restraining the movement from taking radical measures with regard to the dilemmas facing it in Jordan. But more importantly, pressures were brought to bear on this element with the aim of perpetuating its weak and ambiguous stands, for it was not in the interests of the Arab regimes to resolve the problem of the duality of power in Jordan.

In its book, *The September Campaign and the Palestinian Resistance*,* the Democratic Front stated that the reluctance on behalf of the reactionary regimes to resolve this duality was due to the fact that Jordan constituted a first line of defense for these regimes. In fact King Feisal often said as much to resistance delegations. The same applied to the petit bourgeois regimes, because a resolution of the conflict in favor of the resistance would mean that they would have to shoulder material, political, and military responsibilities, which they are not prepared to do.

In addition to these factors, we should take into account the conditions of our people who are subject to the influence of the cultural, political and propaganda processes taking place in the Arab world. To sow the seeds of a revolutionary culture among them requires inflicting a defeat on the prevalent reactionary rightist culture. Effecting such a defeat requires a protracted struggle.

To the objective factors should be added the subjective ones pertaining to the left. The Palestinian left was factionalized and in disarray. More precisely, not all of this left was revolutionary. There were adventurist Blanquist and other progressive forces whose practices were predominantly characterized by petit bourgeois traits. This led to the rise of divergent stands among its ranks. Nevertheless, if we consider the development of the situation in Jordan up to September 1970, we note the continuously increasing influences that the Palestinian left was exercising on the conditions of the resistance and on its day-to-day methods of operation. In the summer of 1969, the left gave a detailed analysis of this duality of power, thus exposing before the masses the nature of the two forms of power existing in the country: the reactionary power represented by the regime and the national power represented by the Palestinian resistance. A struggle was carried

* Beirut, 1971 (in Arabic).

on to make the latter expressive of the hopes and ambitions of the masses, and render it capable of controlling the conflict, so as to meet the attacks of the reactionary government which had begun to take the form of organized military campaigns as early as February 2, 1968.

In the conflict with the reactionary authorities, the left defined the nature of these two powers in the slogan "No power is above the power of the resistance". Objective events thrust matters a step forward in the direction of developing still further the nationalist power. This took the form of a struggle to build up the powers of the elected people's councils, so the people might seize its just and legitimate right to determine the course of the national cause. The left did succeed in imposing the rudimentary beginnings necessary for reinforcing the nationalist power of the resistance movement. It pushed, next, in the direction of making the resistance as a whole take the initiative in resolving the duality of power by raising the slogan "All power to the resistance, the soldiers and the armed masses". All this after it became evident, *one*, that the reactionary regime would not tolerate any power other than its own reactionary police dictatorship; *two*, that it was launching a series of campaigns to exterminate the resistance; and *three*, that it had already carried out its white royalist coup d'état in the state agencies, especially the army, the internal security forces and the intelligence services. This was in preparation for the campaign of total extermination against the resistance carried out in September 1970.

But for this revolutionary process to ripen in the shadow of existing Arab conditions and those prevailing in Jordan, more time was needed. The development of the revolutionary process in this direction was the prevalent trend in Jordan right up to the September campaign. For the behavior of the reactionary regime had pushed the masses and the resistance rank and file to the realization that the reactionary massacre was imminent. Thus voices were raised demanding that the resistance wrench the initiative from the hands of the reactionary forces.

That is why the extraordinary session of the seventh [Palestinian] National Council held on August 27, 1970 affirmed "the necessity for taking the initiative for the sake of transforming Jordan into a stronghold of the Palestinian revolution under nationalist rule, where the power of the armed masses would fuse with that of the soldiers". The same assembly affirmed the necessity for resolving the contradiction with the reactionary authorities, which had become a primary contradiction (on account of the determination of the regime to eliminate the resistance and disarm the people) so as to enable the resistance to mobilize all its forces toward continuing the struggle against Israel and Zionism (the direction of resolving the primary contradiction). The Central Committee also affirmed the necessity to organize the revolutionary process so that it would lead to the establishment of nationalist rule in Jordan and the overthrow of the "agent regime" as mentioned in its statement of September 9, 1970.

All these steps were certainly achievements that had required constant and resolute ideological, political and organizational struggle on the part of the left

in the resistance. But the effects of this struggle came too late to counter developments within the Arab world, particularly Jordan.

In the Arab world a new development emerged at the beginning of July 1970, when Cairo accepted the Rogers peace plan.* This caused a division in the overall nationalist movement in the area, and even among the ranks of the Palestinian resistance in Jordan. Until then the latter had held a unified stand against all plans for a political settlement of the conflict and had been moving quickly, under the pressures of its practical experiences, toward a unified stand vis-à-vis the prevailing conditions in Jordan. For its part, the Jordanian reactionary regime used Cairo's acceptance of the Rogers plan as a cover under which it energetically mobilized all its forces in order to speed up the campaign of encircling and suppressing the resistance as well as everything that smacked of patriotism in the country. King Hussein was able to carry out a white royalist coup d'état in the army, the intelligence services and the internal security forces, by securing control of all state agencies. He dismissed the cabinet which had played the role of Trojan Horse as far as the resistance was concerned, through the inclusion of some elements from the national bourgeoisie.

These are the circumstances that arrested the whole process of development which had taken place in the resistance under the influence and pressure of the left at the level of decisive political stands vis-à-vis the situation in Jordan. Yet these stands were not translated into a practical plan for ending the duality of power in the country. To these circumstances should be added considerations connected with the subjective constitution of the resistance movement, and with the time it had at its disposal when compared with the noticeable speed with which the reactionary regime was moving.

— *You mentioned that Fateh's program prevailed and that it represented an extension of Arab politics into the resistance movement. In the light of this, how do you explain Fateh's major participation in the confrontations with the Jordanian and Lebanese governments?*

— Because Fateh is a broad nationalist organization it is easily affected by Arab contradictions and pressures.

But we must constantly remember that Fateh's armed resistance against the campaigns of official suppression in Jordan and Lebanon proceeded from a position of passive defense. The major criticism against this position is that it assumed purely passive, defensive postures; in the history of all revolutions such postures have led to defeat. All the retreats that the Palestinian resistance movement made, before and after September 1970, emanated primarily from such stands—leaving the revolutionary forces exposed and besieged while the initiative rested in the

* Bringing about cease fire on the Egyptian-Israeli front but not the solution of any of the outstanding problems.

hands of the counterrevolutionary forces. The resistance movement, as everyone now concedes, had been capable of resolving the duality of power since the end of 1969, especially between February and July of 1970. But after that, Cairo's acceptance of the Rogers plan immediately affected the situation in Jordan, as I said earlier. However, Fateh's leadership (more precisely those elements who determined Fateh's policy), rejected, throughout the period prior to September, constant appeals for reorganizing the movement's conditions so that it would be able to seize the initiative and move from its position of passive self-defense to one of active defense. This was the case, notwithstanding the fact that Fateh's organ, *Fateh*,* had been demanding since July that the next round be the decisive and final one. After September this policy was clearly demonstrated by the uninterrupted and disorderly retreat of the Palestinian resistance in the face of continued reactionary attacks against it. This was the reverse side of the right-wing policies which had characterized the practices of Fateh's leadership. In contrast to this, the left stressed the necessity for severing all connections with the reactionary authorities in Amman, which would have meant going underground militarily and organizationally, without relying any further on the remaining forms of public presence which the resistance movement still enjoyed. The left also stressed the need to abandon the illusory hope of making coexistence acceptable to this regime through Arab pressure. In other words, we were enjoined to unmask the political deceit of the reactionaries when they declared their desire to coexist with the "honorable" fedayeen while in practice they were continuing their military campaigns of extermination and terror. We needed also to intensify the struggle for establishing a national democratic regime in the country. But all these appeals found no response among the Fateh leadership, who were gambling on the possibility that Arab pressure might still succeed in imposing on the reactionary regime coexistence with the resistance, and in conserving the remaining forms of public presence still available to the movement in Jordan. Once again events were to emphasize the faultiness of this policy and the soundness of the left-wing line. The left had clamored for the adoption of such positions in the meetings of the Central Committee in December 1970 in Amman, and on January 5, 1971 in Jerash at the meeting of the Secretariat of the Central Committee, and again in Damascus in March 1971. But Fateh's leadership persisted in its policies and continued, after September, to gamble on the illusory possibility of seeing the reactionary regime agree to a coexistence policy with the resistance under pressure from the Arab regimes.

— *Was not the retreat subsequent to the September [1970] battle inevitable, and what do you mean by "an orderly retreat"?*

— The path of revolution is full of turns, sometimes sharp ones. But the differ-

* Arabic daily first published in Amman (until September 1970) later in Damascus (until 1972).

ence between a successful revolution and a fumbling one lies in the way each deals with these turns imposed upon it by shifts in the balance of forces. Let me give a quick example, one of many from the Chinese revolution. The Chinese Communist Party called for the continuance of its alliance with the Kuomintang in a national front against the War Lords. This front existed up to 1927, but the Kuomintang violated the agreement. Instead of directing all its weapons against the enemy, it began to mount successive campaigns of encirclement and extermination against the Communist Party and the Red Army. In the face of superior Kuomintang forces, the Red Army retreated in its famous Long March. This started with 300 thousand people and came to an end with only 30 thousand, out of a population which numbered at the time about 350 million.

This sharp turn imposed on the Chinese revolution was a great retreat that caused it to relinquish many of the revolutionary bases it had gained from the Kuomintang and from Japanese imperialism, and had been using as support and operating bases. As a result, it also had to give up many centers of influence in the towns. This withdrawal, however, was an organized process based on the principle of preserving the core of the forces that had started out on the retreat. Simultaneously, a cover for the retreat was organized. Many revolutionary bases remained behind and many militia elements stayed in the towns, in order to fight and disperse the Kuomintang forces. The retreat was used, also, to strengthen and build up political and organizational ties in all the districts through which the revolutionaries passed, and to organize the redistribution of arms among the peasants, thus keeping the struggle against the Kuomintang forces alive. The basic forces of the revolution, meanwhile, were able to preserve themselves and reorganize in order to resume the armed struggle against both the Kuomintang and Japanese imperialism. This was a retreat, but an organized one (a step back for the sake of taking two steps forward).

What befell us, however, was a different matter. When the fighting stopped in September, most of Amman was still in the hands of the resistance; so was the area extending from al-Baqa'a Camp to al-Ramtha. The resistance was called upon, at that point, to hasten and reorganize its ranks in accordance with the Cairo agreement,* which guaranteed for the movement *one*, bases wherever needed for continuing the fight against the Zionist enemy, *two*, the continuation of its public status and *three*, the preservation of its organized and armed militia. Instead of moving a step back in order to reorganize ourselves for the sake of taking two steps forward later on, the Cairo agreement was turned into a series of steps back only, that is, into continuous retreats under Jordanian pressure.

But even after all these steps were taken and the resistance became contained in the woods of Jerash and Ajloun, the left sought to limit the conspicuous presence of the resistance in order to avoid a crushing blow, considering that our forces were surrounded on all sides. The left stood for a speedy return to secrecy

* Between Jordan and the fedayeen concluded in Cairo on September 27, 1970.

in successive stages before we lost every square foot of our public existence, in order to prepare for the resumption of the struggle against the reactionary regime which was continuing to liquidate the resistance and disarm the masses. However, the line which prevailed was, as I said, passive self-defense and a gamble on Arab pressure to impose coexistence with the resistance on the reactionary regime, while the latter was continuing its aggressive policies without respite, and utilizing all forms of political duplicity and blackmail.

— *You mentioned the general mistake underlying the interaction between the resistance movement and the Palestinian and Jordanian masses. Would you discuss this subject in greater detail and precision, especially as regards the relationship with the Jordanian masses and the organizational forms used to mobilize the masses supporting the resistance?*

— The mistakes committed in dealing with the Palestinian and Jordanian masses emanated in essence from a basic misunderstanding of the nature of the situation in Jordan. The view mistakenly held by the resistance which said: “What have we got to do with whatever happens in Amman?” is incapable of comprehending the principles connecting what we do against Israel and what we ought to do in Amman against the agent Jordanian regime. Because of the regime’s stress on the importance of the secondary contradiction with the resistance over the primary contradiction with the Israeli enemy, it was clear that we should increase the strength of our forces and intensify the revolutionary situation in Jordan, so as to resolve the contradiction between the regime and the resistance in favor of the latter. It is from here that all our mistakes sprang. The resistance dealt with the Palestinian masses on the basis of a nationalist standpoint, vaguely and emotionally conceived. Thus it called upon the masses to carry arms against the Israeli enemy, without passing them through a process of revolutionary education in order to politicize the gun and transform it into a revolutionary weapon, from which would actually stem political power and the ability to continue the armed struggle from a firm basis, relying on oneself and the masses. This process of politicization necessarily presupposes concentrating the political education of the masses on the issue of resolving the basic contradiction with the reactionary authorities in Amman, and backing up this effort by creating an armed militia well-acquainted with revolutionary military science, developing the coordination committees in the camps and towns into administrative bodies capable of replacing the reactionary administration, and creating and developing people’s councils to become the legislative bodies which represent the will of the masses and their leadership. But the political vision of the rightist forces in the resistance was narrow, and the left had little time in which to develop these issues for the masses to take and remould in accordance with their actual circumstances, which would have led to their actual participation in leadership. For these reasons, these nationalist forms of organization remained weak and unable to perform their proper role. The role of the militia was limited to immediate and minor

defense operations in the face of reactionary attacks; the role of the coordination committees and people's councils remained limited to solving some problems arising among the resistance organizations or with the masses. In addition, the resistance could not understand correctly the nature of the organic relations existing between the Palestinian and Jordanian masses. They rushed in the direction of the "total Palestinization" of the cadres of the movement and of its mass, labor and professional organizations, by creating a chain of purely Palestinian labor and professional unions in Jordan which fostered the growth of parochial attitudes among the Transjordanians. So much for this first point.

Secondly, the resistance on the whole turned its back on the causes of nationalism and democracy in Transjordan, while the Transjordanian masses were enduring oppression, class exploitation and the betrayal of their national interests by the reactionary regime. This indifference to the Jordanians affected the program of the resistance, making it largely a parochial Palestinian one, in spite of the attempts made by some resistance organizations to provide a solution to this problem. Such attempts as there were aimed at unifying the masses in a Palestinian-Jordanian national front. This would be achieved by the uniting of all the mass, labor and professional organizations, and by encouraging the aspirations of the masses in the East Bank—their interest in establishing a nationalist regime expressive of their anti-imperialist, anti-Zionist aspirations and of their opposition to the domination of a selfish oligarchy (in which one hundred families grab half of the gross national income). But these attempts failed significantly to affect the relationship of the resistance movement with the Jordanian masses (because success needs a prolonged ideological, political and organizational struggle until such a pattern becomes prevalent in the resistance). This failure weakened the role of the Jordanian nationalist movement and that of the Jordanian masses, thus reducing them to a force merely sympathetic to the cause of the revolution out of patriotism and nationalist feelings. This was at a time when these masses were being exposed, over and above the blows of the reactionaries and the exploitation of the oligarchy, to Israeli reprisals against Jordanian towns and villages. This should have impressed upon the resistance (and ought to so do now) the necessity of including in its program the national and democratic tasks to be performed in the East Bank. In other words, the resistance movement in Jordan should have become an inseparable part of a unified Palestinian-Jordanian national front, in order to participate alongside the Jordanian national forces in realizing the task of the national democratic revolution, which is the establishment of a nationalist regime opposed to Zionism and the forces of reaction. This would entail a nationalist regime that would liberate the majority from the domination and exploitation of the selfish oligarchy (which acts as an instrument of imperialism); return democratic freedoms; arm the masses; and mobilize the total material, economic and human resources of the country to the needs of the Palestinian revolution against Israel and imperialism. This could have solved the crisis existing in the relationship between the Jordanian and Palestinian masses, and between

these masses and the resistance in Jordan. But the line which the right wing in the resistance followed, and continues to follow, moved away from this program, retaining a practical attitude which in its turn fostered a parochial Transjordanian reaction whose historical origins lay in the state of cultural, social and economic backwardness of the Jordanian masses as compared to the Palestinians. This enabled the reactionary authorities to exploit the whole situation to deepen provincial bigotry so as to try to mislead the East Bank masses into rallying around the regime, which would then appear to be their representative in facing the Palestinian resistance (which acted as the representative of the Palestinian masses). It enabled the regime to influence numerous strategic villages in the East Bank which would serve its purpose against the resistance and the nationalist movement in general. In this it followed the example of the agent Saigon government, which constructed such villages in the Vietnamese countryside. The reactionary authorities were able, in addition, to exploit the deteriorating economic conditions in the Transjordanian rural areas, and to absorb consciously and systematically the manpower of these areas into state agencies, particularly the army, thus making the state the basic source of their livelihood.

This process of absorption is not of recent origin. It had begun before 1948 and was intensified later. At present, if we were to conduct a social survey in the villages of Jordan, we would find that about half of the poor peasants in the northern and central villages are employed as soldiers. The percentage rises when we turn to the southern districts.

This condition does not signify for one minute that the Transjordanian masses are loyal to the Jordanian regime, which is opposed to their true national, class and democratic interests. For the nationalist movement has been built since 1948, on the shoulders of the poor, the workers and the petite and middle bourgeoisies in the towns and villages of the two banks of Jordan. The Transjordanian cadres played a pioneering and leading role in this nationalist movement before June 1967. After this date, most of the leading cadres joined the ranks of the Palestinian resistance. It is not the masses of this movement but the Palestinian resistance itself which is at fault; for, from the start, the resistance failed to understand correctly the nature of the aforementioned political, economic and social conditions in the East Bank, just as it failed to understand the peculiar position of Jordan as regards the Palestinian national revolution. The resistance movement dealt with all these circumstances as though they were totally unaware of these implications. At best it dealt with them as it did with the masses in Syria or any other Arab state.

From all this we conclude that it would have been possible to transcend this entire situation had the resistance organizations properly comprehended the significance of the conditions prevailing on the Jordanian-Palestinian scene and dealt with them on the basis of a correct understanding of the unity of the ties between the Jordanian and Palestinian masses, and the oneness of their fate at the historic and day-to-day levels. We say also that it is still possible to formulate a

policy for the resistance movement that will make it an inseparable part of the Jordanian nationalist movement. Thus we will build a united front which meets both the demands of the Palestinian revolution and the demands of defending the East Bank, as well as meeting the needs of its national and democratic cause. Accordingly, we would be restoring the relationship among the members of this one people to the right basis, and pointing to the real problem and the manner of solving it.

— *Considering the great responsibilities which you place upon the resistance movement, what is the role of the Jordanian nationalist movement in all this?*

— Let's be very clear at this point without any demagoguery or play on words. The greater part of the Jordanian nationalist movement now forms an integral part of the resistance. The cadres of the Ba'ath Party, the Arab Nationalist Movement and the Communist Party have all joined, along with the national bourgeois cadres, the ranks of the resistance movement—some early, some late. Hence we can say that the resistance, which took up arms against the national enemy, was able to absorb and incorporate the greater part of the Jordanian nationalist movement. This clearly means that there is no room for any arbitrary separation between the resistance movement in Jordan and the Jordanian nationalist movement. On the contrary, they have come to represent an intertwining unit. Hence we say that the solution to this problem lies in making the resistance an inseparable part of a united front comprising the resistance organizations on the Jordanian-Palestinian scene and the nationalist political forces working through labor unions and other professional and mass organizations. The front's program of action ought to combine the realization of the tasks of the Palestinian revolution at the present stage, and those of the national democratic revolution in Jordan. To search for a Jordanian nationalist movement, however, outside this framework is, in fact, to search in a vacuum and to continue in the arbitrary, stupid and short-sighted policy of separatism.

— *Your whole analysis poses a very important problem which has been a point of great contention within the resistance. You are in fact saying that it is impossible to separate the national fight against the external enemy from the internal class struggle. What is your exact interpretation of this point?*

— In the history of peoples struggling to accomplish the tasks of the national democratic stage of liberation, the national struggle becomes linked with the class struggle. In other words, the stage of national liberation has a class content; for liberation from any form of colonialist or imperialist domination necessarily presupposes directing the struggle against the class forces linked to imperialism. To clarify this principle let us start with the following quick remarks.

Prior to 1948, the Palestinian national liberation movement acquired at the

outset a class content opposed to imperialism and the Palestinian reactionary classes. If we review the history of the 1936 revolution, for example, we find that it was a national revolt against the attempts to Zionize Palestine and against the British Mandate. We should note, however, that at the outset both its leadership and rank and file possessed a clear class and revolutionary character. The leader, Izz-al-Din al-Qassam, was a poor sheikh who belonged, with his assisting cadres, to the impoverished classes. It should be noted that the religious feudal class and the big bourgeois families in Palestine stood against the 1936 revolution. Why? Because, first, the interests of this minority were at odds with the revolution; second, this minority depended upon the stability of the political status quo; third, it feared the damage that could befall its interests at the hands of the British if it joined the revolution. But the revolution forced all these class forces to coexist with it after getting under way.

When the reactionary forces infiltrated the revolution and reached positions of leadership, they steered it toward a dead end, in accordance with their class point of view which called for appeasement and compromise with the colonial rule. This caused the failure of the revolution. This reactionary leadership remained at the head of the Palestinian people's movement until 1947-48, when it led the mass uprisings against the partition plan and the attempts to Zionize Palestine. Once again they brought the movement to deadend. After 1948 matters became much clearer; all the big Palestinian bourgeois families hastily gave up their positions in the national struggle for good, and, owing to their administrative, commercial and industrial interests, linked themselves to the reactionary regime in Amman, the embodiment of national treason vis-à-vis the Palestine question. These reactionary forces allied themselves with their counterparts in the East Bank, together forming the mainstays of the reactionary regime in economic, social, political and administrative terms. They committed themselves to the regime opposed to the Palestinian national liberation movement and to the aspirations of our people to continue the struggle for the liberation of its homeland. Historically, since 1948, they have acted as instruments of the reactionary royalist regime in its suppression of our people's uprisings in Jordan, especially in the West Bank; and since June 1967 their role has been extended to cover suppression of the resistance. We must not forget, here, that the premier [General Muhammad Da'ud] who headed the military government in September 1970 was a Palestinian, and the premier who succeeded him [Wasfi al-Tal] belongs to a Palestinian bourgeois family. As for the West Bank, this reactionary class played the dual role there of alternating between carrying out the Israeli plans for the West Bank and responding to the calls of the royalist regime in Amman. The cadres of this class acted as intermediaries between the Zionist occupation and the popular masses in the West Bank and the other occupied territories. They also stood opposed to fedayeen action and to the uprisings of the masses. We all remember how the mayors, the sons of bourgeois families, and the reactionary elements appealed to our people in 1970 to end the general strike in the West

Bank. Their role in opposing national liberation did not stop at the point of mediating between the occupation and the masses of our people (which facilitated for the occupation the administration of the West Bank through reactionary Palestinians). When larger and larger sectors of this class realized that the occupation might continue for a long time, they began to lean toward executing the Israeli and imperialist plan of fragmenting the problem of Palestine (which is one of a people, a homeland and a destiny). This they hope to achieve with the slogan of autonomy under the shadow of the occupying power, in preparation for the declaration of a so-called sub-state of Palestine. Their latest activity has been the meeting held by the West Bank mayors in Beit Sahour on August 18, 1971. The mayors called for the election of municipal councils which would act as the legislative and representative bodies of our people in the West Bank. They called also for the establishment of a parliament of 100 members as a preliminary step toward the declaration of autonomy under the auspices of the occupying state. A second meeting was scheduled for the following week, under the auspices of Sheikh Ja'abri, Mayor of Hebron, to confirm the above-mentioned steps. The meeting was not held, owing to fedayeen pressures and threats. Meanwhile Ja'abri went in person to Tel Aviv to confer with Moshe Dayan and urge the University of Tel Aviv to admit West Bank students, so that they would not disperse among the universities in the Arab world.

This is a quick survey of the nature of the contradictions which exist between those classes which have an interest in national liberation and are historically capable of engaging in a resolute struggle for the liberation of the country, and the reactionary bourgeois classes who are ever willing to bargain with and stoop before the occupation. This contradiction stands out sharply in the stage of national liberation, showing the nature of the class contradiction involved in this stage of the struggle.

Of course this situation is not peculiar to our people. When we examine the experiences of national liberation movements, we note that the reactionary classes pay lip service to the national cause at the outset; but later on they begin to compromise until they end by betraying it. The Kuomintang in China finally tied itself to imperialism and opposed the national liberation movement in the country. In Vietnam, feudalism, the compradore bourgeoisie and the bourgeois-infiltrated bureaucracy are siding with the agent Saigon government (which is allied to imperialism) against the aspirations of the Vietnamese people. In Algeria, the feudal minority and the grand bourgeoisie took their stand on the side of French colonialism and in opposition to the cause of the national revolution. These experiences indicate a clear phenomenon: that the struggle for national liberation and against colonialism and imperialism is connected with the class struggle against the reactionary class which is either linked to imperialism or willing to compromise and appease it at the expense of continuing the struggle for national liberation.

This leads us clearly to say that what determines the attitude of each class

toward the problems of national liberation during its various stages, (for liberation is not achieved all at one time but in several stages), is basically the interests of these classes (their material, economic, political and social interests). Thus we find the feudal, the compradore and the bourgeois military bureaucratic classes constantly on the side of colonialism and imperialism and against their own peoples and the national liberation movements in their countries. They act the role of the constable in suppressing the national liberation movement and the national democratic revolution, and in protecting the imperialist interests in their own countries. This does not mean that there are no individual exceptions where persons belonging to the feudal and bourgeois classes acquire a revolutionary education and assume a radical nationalist stand; but they remain individual exceptions as in the case of some leaders in the Laotian and Cambodian national liberation movements.

The point we should concentrate on, however, is that the problem posed during the stage of national liberation is not that of the class program for social transformation, but that of defeating the national enemy and the local forces connected with it, (or accepting to coexist with it), by virtue of their selfish interests which they place above the national interest. Contrary to what is always said, it is not a question of those who desire social revolution during the stage of national liberation and those who do not, because putting it this way is either shutting one's eyes stupidly to all the facts of history or making an intentionally inept presentation of the problem, which is tantamount to committing a fraud punishable by law. The first problem on the agenda of the national liberation movement is this: which are the classes actually on the side of national liberation, which realize the tasks of the national democratic revolution, and which are the classes opposed to them and hence allied with the enemies of the national revolution? Modern history shows that the feudal and compradore classes quickly give up their verbal nationalist stands, enter a phase of bargaining with the counter-revolution and end up by selling out the national movement of the masses at the start or, at best, halfway through the struggle, in favor of a new alliance with imperialism against their own people. The nationalist classes, on the other hand—the workers, the hired and impoverished peasantry, the petite bourgeoisie and a sector of the middle bourgeoisie—have a vested interest in the national revolution and in the realization of its program.

The working class and the poor peasantry stand out as the most steadfast classes during the struggle for national democratic liberation. This is so because during the prolonged national struggle, some sectors of the petite and middle bourgeoisies join the counterrevolution, others sit on the fence waiting for the results of the struggle, while the lower sector joins the cause of the revolution and ties its destiny to the movement of the majority of the people dominated by the workers and peasants, by the classes which have a total interest in the liberation of the homeland, and have nothing to lose in the struggle but their chains. For the working and impoverished classes are always revolutionary and permanently armed with

revolutionary ideology.

The second problem to be discussed in this context is that of the leadership, which is central to the overall national and revolutionary process. For when we specify the class which leads the national movement and when we say that the task of this leadership really falls on the shoulders of the impoverished and working classes, we mean that the interests and ideology of these classes alone can lead the national revolution to a victorious end, without making compromises of a strategic nature. They are the classes capable, at every stage, of adopting the correct nationalist policy, and of translating it into firm, revolutionary, political, organizational and mass tactics, thus evolving the necessary form of struggle in accordance with the nature of each stage. Under these objective circumstances, the cause of the revolution comes to rest upon firm ground, and the prolonged struggle continues, irrespective of the internal problems which the revolution may face or of the external problems which arise on account of the attacks of the enemy forces.

Third, the ideological and political orientation of the national liberation movement is a decisive matter in the history and fate of the whole of the national revolution as well as in each of its stages. For there can be no revolution without a revolutionary theory. The revolutionary ideological and political orientation arms the revolution and the people with a clear strategy and tactics, and leads it to victory in every stage. It does this by applying the revolutionary theory to suit the circumstances peculiar to the country in which the national liberation struggle is taking place; whereas the ideological orientation of the nationalist right is incapable of understanding the principles of national liberation at every stage, thus causing the revolution to hesitate, flounder and dissipate itself. As a result it brings the revolution to deadend and places it at the mercy of the existing objective circumstances with a diminishing ability to influence these circumstances. (The present condition of the Palestinian resistance is a conspicuous example of this.)

— *We turn now to the present tasks of the resistance movement. Naturally, we begin with Jordan. How do you view current relations between the resistance and the regime?*

— In the wake of September 1970, a new situation arose as regards the relations of the resistance and the [Jordanian] nationalist movement on the one hand, and the reactionary regime in Amman on the other. For the regime put an end to the internal dialogue that was taking place among the ranks of the resistance and of the masses. The regime categorically refused, to the point of shedding blood, any form of coexistence with the Palestinian resistance movement. This imposes upon all the resistance organizations the necessity of taking an unambiguous nationalist stand vis-à-vis the Jordanian regime. But we must also look at the nature of the relationship with the reactionary regime in Jordan in the light of the overall developments that have taken place in the Arab world since September,

and the possibilities of effecting a political settlement in the area. This is necessary in order to be able to determine exactly the nature of the present tasks of the Palestinian resistance, vis-à-vis Jordan and a number of other issues, because it has become impossible for the movement, since September, to go on with a conglomeration of general slogans. Such slogans as "The continuation of the armed struggle until total liberation", "The protracted popular war of liberation", "The rejection of all plans for a political settlement at the expense of the rights of the Palestinian people", are all of a long-term historical and strategic nature. Hence we say plainly that it is no longer sufficient to adopt such slogans, and that the resistance faces the problem of determining the intermediary goals (which link it to its ultimate aim) in its strategic struggle, so that it can lead the cause of the revolution toward victory in the long run. These intermediary goals, or links, are what we call the present tasks of the resistance movement. More specifically, after September 1970, we have to respond unambiguously to all the developments in the Arab world. We have to see how, in the light of all these circumstances, we can actually continue the Palestinian armed struggle by means of a protracted war of national liberation so as to obstruct all the plans for a settlement at the expense of the Palestinian cause, and to liberate our homeland entirely. This strategic undertaking requires the specification of these intermediary links without which our project will be neither serious nor feasible.

At the head of these intermediary links stands finding a solution to the present predicament of the movement. The resistance is now being exposed to pressures of containment outside Jordan as well, and its ability to reject the political settlement, continue the armed struggle and wage a protracted war, has become subject to solving certain current problems (which form intermediary links), the first among them being that of Jordan; a reactionary dictatorial government has been directing all the forces at its disposal against the resistance and the nationalist movement, suppressing democratic freedom in the country, and closing Jordan to the Palestinian resistance. Another situation has also developed there: the rise of reactionary parochial bigotry against the whole Palestinian people, its nationalist movement and, specifically, against the Jordanian nationalist forces. As a reaction to these developments, spontaneous secessionist tendencies have appeared among the masses of our people as a form of escape from the regime's massacres and police repression. Through this separatist reaction, the masses are expressing their spontaneous yearnings for escape from the reactionary regime and from their perpetual daily sufferings. This has created an atmosphere which is ripe for exploitation by Palestinian reactionary and bourgeois forces. These forces are attempting to tame the struggle of the masses of our people, and channel it in favor of the secessionist tendencies embodied in the call for autonomy under the auspices of the occupying power. They hope thus to prepare them for the possibilities of the creation of a petty Palestinian state, and of Palestinian collaboration in the political sellout through these reactionary right-wing forces. All this imposes upon us the central task (central to the set of revolutionary tasks we face

at present) of resolving the basic contradiction with the reactionary regime and converting the East Bank into a base for the national revolutionary movement. We should start by taking a firm and unambiguous nationalist stand, and by mobilizing the masses and their entire potential on the basis of a unified national Jordanian-Palestinian front, in order to resolve the basic contradiction with the regime. Thus we can offer a nationalist solution in lieu of the anti-nationalist solution prevailing now in the East Bank and the anti-nationalist Palestinian secessionist solution which originated as a reaction against the attacks undertaken and the provincialism fostered by the forces of reaction. In our consideration, unless this present predicament is confronted and overcome, further capitulations will be forced on the Palestinian resistance and the field will remain open for the defeatist, compromising currents currently existing among the right-wing and reactionary Palestinian leadership in both the East and West Banks.

By finding a solution to this main problem, the resistance will be taking a real step toward giving some substance to its theoretical revolutionary slogans. It will present its emphatic No to a political settlement of the conflict (which can come only at the expense of the national rights of our people) from declining in vigor, a process which would bring them close to the notorious three No's of the Khartoum Summit Conference [1967].* So much for the East Bank of the Jordan as referred to in the first part of the question.

Concerning the present tasks connected with other issues, the following are the most prominent. First: to continue and to develop the armed struggle against the national enemy (Zionist—imperialist) as an immediate and historical necessity. This task remains the constant expression, in the short and long term, of the persistence of our people in the process of liberating its homeland, and of its insistence upon the legitimate and just right to undertake armed and mass struggle against Zionist colonization. We know very well that the resistance must keep the enemy hopping in the occupied territories, thus robbing it of the stability it needs to carry out expansionist plans or projects aimed at the dissolution of the Palestine problem. Examples of these plans are: autonomy for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip under the auspices of the occupation and evacuation of the refugees from the Gaza Strip camps as a step toward resettlement, a measure that would pave the way for Zionist expansion as well as for decimating the armed resistance of the masses in the camps of the Strip etcetera. The resistance must also continue to direct its military operations against the enemy, on the basis of a protracted struggle, so as to deplete its vital resources as extensively as possible (particularly its manpower), subject it to moral and material attrition and disperse its forces throughout the occupied territories.

The second task is to continue the struggle for revolutionizing the West Bank in particular, in spite of the fact that this process is connected to a great extent

* No (direct) negotiations with Israel, no settlement with Israel (based on the status quo), no recognition of Israel.

with the solution of the main problem facing the revolution: the situation in the East Bank. For it is the situation in the East Bank which left the West Bank an easy prey to the occupation by stripping it of all weapons, keeping its people without military training, and following a policy of repression against the nationalist movement, so much so that on June 5, 1967, most of its cadres were incarcerated. These are the basic factors which caused resistance against the occupation in the West Bank to be much weaker than that in the Gaza Strip. In the Strip the Egyptian administration had trained large sectors of the population and left in the hands of the masses more than thirty thousand pieces of assorted weaponry, in addition to the many arms (guns, hand grenades, explosives) abandoned in Sinai, which later came to constitute a permanent reservoir at the disposal of the inhabitants, many of whom were familiar with the terrain in Sinai.

After June 1967, the reactionary regime in Amman worked at weakening the struggle of the West Bank inhabitants by two major means: first, by adopting the policy of encirclement and eradication of the resistance and militia forces in the East Bank; second, by following the policy of open (economic) bridges between the two banks of the Jordan. This policy provided abroad opportunity for the Palestinian bourgeoisie (mercantile, industrial) in the West Bank to flourish, and produced the basis for supplying the enemy with many strategic goods (iron, cement) at low cost which facilitated the construction of military fortifications, as the Israeli leaders themselves have conceded. The reactionary regime in Amman continued, in addition, to administer injections of gold (this money was supposed to help the people of the West Bank in holding out against the occupation) to the bourgeoisie and administrative apparatus which acted both as intermediaries between the occupying authorities and the West Bank masses, and as absorbers of the shocks generated by the uprising in the West Bank.

All this placed huge obstacles in the face of the resistance on the East Bank which had been trying, by all means available, to revolutionize the West Bank. It is plain now that this task is basically conditional upon resolving "the problem of the existing situation in the East Bank".

Yet, in spite of all these obstacles, continuing the armed struggle in the occupied territories and revolutionizing the West Bank remain among the present tasks of the resistance movement. In addition, the aftermath of September has made it imperative that the resistance offer to our people in the West Bank nationalist solutions, instead of those offered by the reactionary rulers in Amman, who call for "autonomy under the suzerainty of the Hashemite throne", etcetera, and instead of the reactionary Palestinian solutions favored by Israel, which call for "autonomy under the auspices of the occupation" in preparation for establishing a sub-state that would confirm both dissipation of the Palestine problem and the Israeli presence on a part of our homeland. In the meantime the reactionary Palestinian bourgeoisie finds the climate favorable to plunge headlong into treason, profiting from the massacres perpetrated in Amman, and from the spontaneous secessionist reaction of the masses in favor of "any solution which

will save them from their everyday sufferings at the hands of the rulers of Amman”.

This condition, which arose in the wake of September, imposes upon us the task of struggling to revolutionize the West Bank, particularly in the direction of obstructing reactionary solutions and resisting national treason, irrespective of its source. In this struggle we are called upon to carry the people's consciousness and the political situation to the national revolutionary stage, where the armed violence of the masses rejects both the reactionary Palestinian and Jordanian solutions: “No to secession, No to the rule of King Hussein, Yes to the unity of the two banks of the Jordan on national and democratic grounds”. This requires absolute clarity as to the nationalist character of the united common struggle in the minds and consciousness of the masses on both banks, in order to prevent the reactionary Palestinian and Jordanian forces, as well as all the Zionist imperialists, from fragmenting the Palestine problem and liquidating it. When the masses are armed with a position which calls for the unity of the two banks on a true nationalist basis, they will fight, in the face of all contingencies, for the sake of forging their own destiny away from the reactionary solutions that present themselves as if they were an inescapable “fate”.

The third task is to develop the revolutionary condition in the Gaza Strip toward a higher state, for example by drawing the broadest segments of the masses—especially the workers—into the resistance, thus transferring the conflict to the enemy's institutions in Israel where large numbers of Arabs work (this problem exists also in the West Bank where nearly one third of the Arab labor force is employed in Israel, while in the Gaza Strip the figure is about 5,000). In this manner the whole thing will backfire against Israel, and the Arab workers will not then be exposed to Arab bomb attacks to prevent them from working in Israel. Other examples can be drawn from Vietnam, Algeria, the French resistance during World War Two, Cyprus and so on.

The fourth task is to develop and strengthen the nationalist alliances. This is an immediate as well as a permanent task, no matter what obstacles stand in its way, particularly at the present stage when attempts are being made to sunder the unity of the resistance organizations from within under various Arab pressures. This is the most serious danger which the resistance movement has to face at present. For once the conflict is transferred from the external plane with Israel, imperialism and the forces of reaction, to the internal one, to the ranks of the resistance movement itself, (and this is exactly what the counterrevolutionaries want), then the movement will expend itself, thereby permitting the enemies of the revolution to pounce and liquidate it.

Developing alliances is a responsibility which falls upon all, no matter how varied or even contradictory are the programs and tactics adopted by the resistance. For this reason the Democratic Front proposed to the sixth National Council (September 1969) a complete plan entitled “Toward a United National Liberation Front”. To the ninth National Council (July 1971) the Front proposed

another complete plan entitled "Toward a United People's Liberation Army" organized on the basis of internal democratic relations (abolition of material, moral and class privileges, creation of soldier councils for surveillance and decision-making, freedom of political affiliation, freedom of political education), all of which are supposed to exist among the forces of any national revolution.

Real progress toward performing these tasks will guarantee that the No's of the resistance to any settlement at the expense of our people's historical and national rights will acquire a practical and realistic significance. So will the legitimate endeavors of the resistance to develop the armed struggle into a national people's war.

This duty falls upon all revolutionaries in the resistance movement, irrespective of their present affiliations. For commitment to the cause of the revolution and contribution to its eventual victory (regardless of how sharp are the twists it undergoes) should take considerable precedence over any current commitment to this organization or that.

— *In the light of this interpretation, then, what is your attitude toward the agreements with the Jordanian regime, primarily the Cairo agreement;* and what is your view of the mediation efforts that have already aroused a great deal of controversy even before coming to any conclusion?*

— Let's be frank with our people. Had the reactionary regime in Jordan been serious about implementing the clauses of this agreement, it would have done so in September 1970. But obviously the reactionary regime went on with its campaigns of encirclement and eradication of the resistance and of all the forms through which it legally manifested its presence: administrative, political and military. The regime plunged headlong into disarming the people, suspending all democratic freedoms and establishing a dictatorial and police rule based on terror. In the light of this, and now that the agent regime has taken the last step in liquidating the Palestinian resistance with the Jerash campaign of July 1971, all talk of these agreements and the possibilities of implementing them is meaningless—mere verbal slogans completely devoid of content. For it is impossible that official Arab pressures could persuade the reactionary regime to abide by the Cairo and Amman agreements. Hence we say very clearly that chasing after these mediation efforts in the hope that Arab pressures may bring the Jordanian authorities to implement the Cairo agreements and Amman protocol is an unfounded illusion. On the other hand, keeping the situation fluid [the way it is now leads, firstly, to further general confusion in the ranks of our people, and among all militants and combattants, on account of the absence of definite nationalist political stands, and the implications of this. It leads, as well, to further fragmentation in the ranks of the resistance and possible internecine warring among

* See First Interview, p. 27.

the organizations. The resistance would gradually liquidate itself, the reactionary forces would take care of the rest. Secondly, this fluid situation relieves the Arab states signatory to the Cairo agreements from their commitments to impose sanctions against the reactionary regime which trampled these agreements under the boots of its repressive forces. Thirdly, it relieves the Arab states which took a series of secret resolutions at the last Tripoli Conference from the responsibility of implementing them in case the Amman authorities refuse to abide by the agreements. Fourthly, it provides opportunities for the total success of the diplomacy of political duplicity practiced by the Arab reactionary regimes, (more specifically the Jordanian and Saudi Arabian regimes), by placing the murderer and the victim on the same footing before the masses of our people and those of the Arab nation and the rest of the world. It will also provide them with the opportunity of effecting another conciliation with the reactionary regime in Amman, which will certainly be neither a patriotic act nor an advantageous achievement for the resistance movement. To continue chasing after these mediation efforts will keep the resistance from reconsidering its internal conditions, programs and plans with regard to the developments surrounding the Palestine problem.

This is not to mention that such fruitless pursuits are contrary to all the resolutions passed by the ninth National Council (July 1971) as well as to the Executive Committee's Memorandum to the Arab States (July 1971).

— *What if Arab pressure succeeds in extracting recognition from Jordan of the Cairo agreement and the Amman protocol and in stationing Arab military forces there to prevent any further attacks against the resistance movement by the Jordanian instruments of repression?*

— Phrasing the question in this manner seems logical but only in a formal, not in a concrete sense. Proceeding from a false premise, which posits the possibility of the success of the pressures of the Arab states, we reach an equally false conclusion. Before September and particularly since that time, the facts have shown clearly that the reactionary regime refuses to concede to our people any of its national rights. Indeed, the government embarked on its bloody campaigns to usurp these rights and subjugate our people to its reactionary authority in order to come to a separate capitulative bilateral settlement with the Zionist national enemy. All statements, political positions and practices emanating from Amman confirm the fact that the Jordanian government will not give in to any Arab pressures. As King Hussein put it recently: "Whoever believes he can subject us to pressure has not yet been born." Hence we say that such a possibility is non-existent. We have, therefore, to start formulating, without further hesitation, the program and methods of our people's struggle to resolve this dilemma and force a retreat, from a position of power, on the reactionary regime. This will be a step in the direction of continuing the struggle towards a radical solution to the problem of the contradiction with the reactionary regime which would be

favorable to the cause of the revolution and the people.

Any success for the mediation efforts, regardless of the proclamations made to the public, will in effect mean submission to King Hussein's conditions, that is, concentrating the "resistance in the strip along the river facing the West Bank under reactionary Jordanian sovereignty and laws". Such a situation places the resistance forces in the Ghor at the mercy of the royal army, and exposes them to destruction at any moment.

— *What, then, is the procedure to be followed in Jordan?*

— Once again the situation obtaining since September [1970] prescribes the basic steps to be taken. At the outset we have to set up in Jordan, without any further hesitation, the united Jordanian-Palestinian front consisting of all the resistance organizations, the professional and labor unions and the broad nationalist forces. The united front should constitute the general framework of the national revolutionary movement according to the program outlined in previous answers. It should adopt a clear stand vis-à-vis the reactionary regime in Jordan: no coexistence with the regime as the latter rejects the idea anyway. It should precisely determine the national rights of the people of Palestine in Jordan, principally the full right of the masses to carry arms against the Zionist enemy, against any possible Zionist invasion of the East Bank and against any reactionary attacks or counterrevolutionary actions. There is also the right to mobilize and organize the masses around the revolution; the right to reject any political settlement to be effected at the expense of its legitimate historical rights to liberate its entire homeland; and the right to reject the collaboration of any Palestinian party, whichever it may be, in any sellout political settlement. At the same time, this front should precisely determine the rights of the nationalist East Bank masses which may be summarized as follows: establishing a national democratic rule opposed to imperialism, Zionism and the selfish class minority which acts as an agent of imperialism. Accordingly it becomes really possible to emphasize and develop the unity of the people away from parochial fanaticism and spontaneous secessionist Palestinian reaction. It is within this framework that we have to interpret our militant activities among the masses, in the unions and in the field of armed struggle. Thus we should start by reorganizing our ranks through underground resistance cadres in order to be able to resort to all forms of struggle, primarily organized revolutionary nationalist violence to oppose the imperialist reactionary class violence we are witnessing in Jordan. This means that we must definitely stop gambling on the success of any Arab mediation efforts—on the illusory hope of seeing the reactionary regime implement the agreements and on the possibilities of coexisting with it. In other words, we have to undertake a national liberation war against this reactionary regime to convert Jordan once more into a firm and permanent nationalist fortress that will serve our people's aims and the continuation of its historical and day-to-day struggle against the Zionist enemy.

— *Opposition to the plans for a political settlement with intent to foil them has constituted one of the permanent tasks of the Palestinian nationalist movement. Now, in the light of the power of the resistance and in the light of the feverish activities directed toward realizing a partial settlement of the conflict (in preparation for the final one), how must the Palestinian forces act to oppose this?*

— Achieving a political bilateral settlement between Amman and Tel Aviv was a major factor behind the September campaign. Because that way the agent regime would be free to move more energetically in that direction without encountering much trouble from the rest of the Arab world. Opposing these moves by merely emphasizing the principle of rejecting all political settlements (whether comprehensive or bilateral) and all possible Palestinian involvement in them, is but a meaningless gesture. To be effective such opposition must be accompanied by tangible measures and by efforts to solve our present central problem of resolving the question of our relation to the reactionary authorities in Amman. If this problem remains unresolved, the Palestinian rejections will gradually turn into general declarations of principle which have not the slightest effect on the actual developments pertaining to the political settlement. Worse still, it also means constantly improving the opportunities of the rightist and reactionary forces within the ranks of our people to move forcibly toward a new compromising deal at the expense of the Palestinian problem as a whole. This trend has become clear during recent months, particularly in the East Bank, through King Hussein's plan for striking a bargain with the Palestinian reactionaries, according to which the West Bank will be granted autonomy under his reactionary suzerainty and under the slogan of "Our people's right to self-determination after the West Bank is restored to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan". This same trend manifests itself also in the attempts of the other faction of the Palestinian rightist and reactionary forces in the West Bank, who are seeking autonomy under the auspices of the occupying power. This shows that two plans are being offered to the Palestinians by way of inducing them to participate in a political settlement which can come about only at the expense of the Palestinians. Both plans may lead to a Palestinian sub-state which will either stand as such between the Israeli hammer and the reactionary Jordanian anvil, or renew its ties with the reactionary authorities in Amman on a federal basis. The way to obstruct all political settlements and to prevent any Palestinian participation in them, is by struggling to resolve the central problem of our relationship with the regime in Jordan. This will give our people the iron shield it needs to be truly capable of rejecting any plans that prejudice its full right to the entirety of its homeland, that mean to fragment the Palestine problem, and that rest on the imperialist solutions historically proposed for settling the Palestine problem on the basis of the continued existence of the state of Israel in return for its withdrawal from occupied Arab territories.

— *What is your evaluation of the former experiences in national unity and what is their basic weakness? In the light of this do you think that working through the Palestine Liberation Organization is still feasible in the present circumstances or do you have any proposals for new organizational methods?*

— The experiences in national unity which we have had so far are certainly a legitimate product of the objective and subjective circumstances through which the Palestinian resistance movement has passed. Now, subjectively, we have the fact of the political, ideological and class contradictions among our people, which found legitimate expression in a number of resistance organizations. Objectively, we have the inter-Arab contradictions and their extensions into the resistance. Together, these circumstances governed the previous experiences in national unity, starting with the Armed Struggle Command and ending with the Central Committee. The problem with all these experiences is not to be found in the explanation which the right-wing and reactionary forces like to put about, namely, the multiplicity of the Palestinian resistance organizations. The Vietnamese Liberation Front comprises twenty-two political parties and organizations; while the Zionist movement counted several political and terrorist organizations before 1948, and in Israel there are now 16 political parties. The central weakness lies in the political formation and political program of the resistance movement as I explained previously. This weakness is what made the Palestinian resistance unable to take the initiative in formulating the political and armed steps needed in accordance with the nature of each of the past stages of the struggle. This weakness in the political formation of the movement was not limited to the above, but generated yet another shortcoming: the resistance's inability to include, in its program for revolutionizing the masses in the occupied territories, the correct answers capable of effecting such a process. This applies particularly to the West Bank, where our people lack military training, arms and democratic traditions, owing to continuous reactionary suppression up to 1967, as a result of which they fell easy prey to the occupation.

If we take into consideration the fact that the reactionary authorities in Jordan have obstructed the process of directing the resistance's capabilities against the enemy, and have pushed the movement into employing the greater part of its forces in self-defense, then we get a clear picture of all the factors which have prevented the resistance from developing the process of revolutionizing the situation in the occupied territories. For this process depends upon the resistance's ability to engage exclusively in fighting the national enemy, which in turn depends upon providing it with a secure and solid base from which to operate. Hence, one should say that the problem lies not in the multiplicity of organizations but, essentially, in the nature of the political leadership of the resistance and its programs, as these were expressed in day-to-day practices throughout the previous period. In contrast, we witness a completely different situation in Vietnam, for example, where in spite of the greater number of organizations the Vietnamese

Liberation Front moves from one victory to another. This is due to the political leadership of the front whose backbone is the Revolutionary People's Party (communist) and to its revolutionary line of thought which, as the Vietnamese experience shows, makes possible the formulation of the policies required by each stage of the struggle and the discovery of the intermediary objectives to be sought for the achievement of the goal of liberation. In the case of the Palestinian resistance, the absence of a leadership armed with a revolutionary line of thought, and the occupation by the right wing of the center of power, have led us to our present situation. And as I said earlier, this in turn is due to the subjective circumstances pertaining to our people, and to the objective circumstances prevailing in the Arab world. And yet I maintain that the resistance organizations, particularly those that are aware of the immediate and historic responsibilities, were capable of formulating and participating in a series of experiments in national unity; these could have taken place within the framework of the PLO which they had joined as did—unfortunately after September 1970—all the other resistance organizations. In my opinion, these other organizations were tardy in joining. Such a step could have had greater effect and influence on the resistance movement as a whole and on its policies, had it been taken prior to September. For at the time, all the resistance organizations enjoyed full democratic freedom and were in a position to use many political and other platforms from which to reach the masses of our people directly. This would have brought about the discussion of all issues, regardless of whether there was agreement or disagreement about them. The masses themselves would be the final arbitrator, thus generating a series of democratic pressures applied by the base upon the leading cadres. Such a step is possible only on the basis of a clear understanding of the nature of broad national alliances governed by the principle of self-criticism and solidarity. This includes mutual criticism by the various allies as regards day-to-day policies formulated by this organization or that, and as regards their net result as seen in the general policy of the resistance organizations.

As for the second part of the question, the PLO represents a general framework for a national coalition. The form or title of the Liberation Organization is not the problem. We have to develop this general framework into a united Palestinian national liberation front committed to a precise transitional program which defines the intermediary goals on the road of the protracted strategic struggle. Now if all the left-wing and progressive forces in the Liberation Organization make concerted efforts, it becomes possible, then, to develop the PLO politically and organizationally into a united national liberation front which is not satisfied just with formulating principles of a general strategic nature (as is the case with the PLO Charter) but also seeks to apply them at every appropriate stage of the struggle. This can be done by discovering the intermediary goals that must be achieved in the short and middle ranges and which form a chain-like dialectically-connected series on the road of realizing the historical strategic task of liberation. The joint struggle of the leftist and progressive forces can free the organization

from the bureaucratic conditions which dominate it. An example of this is the Palestine Liberation Army, which is at present a mere appendage to the Arab armies, in accordance with the terms of the agreements between the PLO and the Arab states.

This problem cannot be resolved overnight. It requires a protracted and bitter struggle, organizationally, politically and ideologically, within the ranks of the resistance movement and within the framework of the PLO itself. Simultaneously, this struggle should also continue outside this framework so that the relations and alliances among the resistance organization may be further developed.

One last point must be mentioned in this respect. This responsible policy of working out and erecting national alliances has constantly placed the cause of the revolution and its interests above any selfish or personal interests while, at the same time, it has rejected isolationist tendencies which eventually lead to opportunism on the left or demagoguery on the right. It also rejected the posture of silence vis-à-vis the allies; that is to say, it refused to fall into the trap of right-wing opportunism, by resorting at all times to the principle of alliance with and revolutionary criticism of the allies and by referring back to the masses all the issues about which disagreement existed.

If we carefully and honestly examine the experiences of the past we note the correctness of this national and revolutionary policy of the left in the resistance and the soundness of its alliances with the remaining organizations. As for the demagogic rationalizations presented by some isolationist resistance organizations, they were abandoned all at once after September, when these organizations entered into alliances and joined the PLO.

— *It is very clear that the Palestinian left is facing particularly difficult circumstances on account of the accusations that some Arab rulers level against it. What is your answer to these accusations? And in the light of this, what kind of relations do you think must arise among the left-wing organizations in the resistance movement?*

— Obviously, the ideological and political campaign and the acts of harassment are not directed only against the left wing in the movement. They are levelled against all left-wing groups throughout the Arab world for a number of reasons connected with the present political situation in the area and its possible future development. The Arab world is witnessing at this stage the emergence of the real outcome of the June 1967 defeat. The defeat was not just a military one; it expressed the failure of all the programs which governed the Arab national liberation movement throughout the past twenty years. In order to be able to face the results of the June 1967 war with a revolutionary answer, the Arab liberation movement was required to make a revolutionary choice other than the one it actually made. Had it chosen to arm the masses, to adopt a revolutionary democratic attitude toward them and to subject production to the exigencies of the war effort, the Arab liberation movement would have succeeded in consoli-

dating the leftist and progressive positions it had achieved, and in mobilizing the Arab peoples for the protracted fierce battle against Israel, imperialism, and the reactionary Arab forces. This would have led, eventually, to total victory over the enemies of the Palestinian and Arab democratic national liberation movement. But it was clear that continuing along the same lines that caused the June defeat was to lead necessarily to the following consequences: *one*, internally, to taming the democratic national liberation movement in the area in favor of the right-wing forces, falling back on the traditional bourgeoisie, the remnants of feudalism and the right-wing culture; *two*, externally, to a greater rapprochement with the reactionary imperialist counterrevolutionary camp. All this is obviously leading to a series of capitulations in the interests of Israel and Zionism.

The principal result of this choice has been to expose the left of the resistance, as well as the democratic and revolutionary forces in the Arab world, to continuous attack. Once these are sufficiently weakened it will become possible to erect an Arab status quo based on a political settlement.

As for the Palestinian resistance itself, the Arab political situation after June 1967 dictated the need to bring it under control and subject its plans and military policies to the exigencies of the prevailing Arab politics in order to use it as a tactical instrument of pressure on Israel and imperialism for the sake of implementing political settlements.

At the outset the resistance movement was subject to two policies. There was the policy followed by those who supported the resistance as long as it harmonized with their plans. They wanted to use the resistance as a tactical instrument of pressure without generating any ideological, political, or popular embarrassment for themselves.

There was also the policy followed by the forces of reaction (the Jordanian regime being to the forefront of these). This group was opposed to the resistance in any form, and hoped to make it ineffectual first of all by a policy of "divide and rule". Thus we have such slogans as "The honorable fedayeen action versus the dishonorable one", "The bearers of ideologies versus the non-bearers of ideologies", "Moderates versus extremists", etc. The left of the movement, by its very nature, is the firmest opponent of imperialism and reaction and their attempts to squash the resistance, and thus it becomes the main target for attack. However, attempts at splitting the movement failed, and the attacks upon it culminated in September 1970, when the Jordanian regime made no distinction between left and right.

It is interesting to note that the two different policies toward the resistance have been drawing closer together in preparation for an all-out attack on the movement. It is not just the left which are in danger, since reaction and imperialism are opposed to any form of resistance from the Palestinian people.

The only way to combat these attacks is for all the resistance organizations to unite in a coherent nationalist stand. The progressive forces must put subjective conditions—that is, inter-factional disputes—second to the basic national one.

This does not mean that ideas and disagreement should be muffled. It is still necessary to exercise criticism and self-criticism, because in this way alone can the movement develop and protect itself from left-wing isolationism and right-wing opportunism and formulate a clear strategy for the future.

— *Let us now turn to some issues that concern the Democratic Front in particular. Let us first focus on the ideological political and organizational criticisms levelled against it. The Democratic Front has claimed to be the representative of the Palestinian left, and to have the right formula for the growth and development of the Palestinian revolution. And you have evaluated in this interview the role that the Front was able to perform. But let us discuss specific matters. Has the Democratic Front been able to set up an organizational structure different in kind from the others? Has it been able to forge a new kind of military practice? Has it been able to establish relations of an advanced revolutionary nature with the masses?*

— A revolutionary movement does not hesitate to criticise itself severely at every stage, bearing in mind its historical context. In this it depends on the open “diplomacy of the streets” in lieu of bourgeois diplomacy where criticism goes on among a select few and behind closed doors. A revolutionary movement depends for its life and growth upon a living day-to-day relationship with the broad masses. Hence it has to present its balance sheet to the masses, the true bearers of the revolution and its unlimited reservoir of resources. The task of a revolutionary movement is to instruct the masses and to be instructed by them, in accordance with the elementary principle “from the masses and to the masses”. We have to realize that revolutionary criticism is that which liberates itself from demagoguery and from the apologetic and subjective tendencies which turn it into pure self-defense. Consequently, we regard the critical introduction to the question from a revolutionary point of view in order to be able, together, to draw the resistance movement into the diplomacy of the streets and to avoid demagogic criticism, whether of the abusive or laudatory type. For the resistance movement has witnessed, since June 1967, two types of evaluation: the first was prevalent before September 1970 and consisted of demagogic praise and exaggerated propaganda. Underlying this phenomenon was a certain set of vested political interests pertaining to the area, in addition to the operation of the mechanism of psychological compensation for the defeat. The second type appeared after September 1970 in the form of a series of abusive criticisms in an attempt to distort the image of the movement. Almost the same pens which eulogized the resistance are now disparaging it to the extent that one writer (a self-styled Marxist) did not hesitate to close one of his booklets with the following lines: “We ask everyone to hold a solemn funeral for the theory of the popular liberation war and for the resistance which upholds this theory”.

Now we come to the specific critical remarks brought up in the question. We clearly and unambiguously maintain that the Democratic Front outlined a

coherent ideological position as regards all the issues on the agenda of the Palestinian national liberation movement. This includes the subjective issues dealing with the structure of the national liberation movement ideologically, politically, organizationally and militarily, and the objective ones dealing with the relations of the Palestinian national liberation movement with the Palestinian-Jordanian and Arab masses, as well as with the world national liberation movement and the international socialist forces. This position necessarily requires the creation of new organizational forms which make it possible to carry the gun in one hand and the revolutionary theory in the other; for the politically unrevolutionized gun turns in the end into a counterrevolutionary instrument or, at best, into one incapable of nationalist and revolutionary action. Certainly the creation of a fighting organization armed with revolutionary theory cannot be achieved overnight. It cannot be set up by a series of decrees and bureaucratic directives: "In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate, we decree the formation of a revolutionary organization". The process of building a revolutionary organization is protracted and hard. A long and difficult road has to be traversed before it becomes possible, through the cumulative effect of daily practices, to bridge the gap between theory and practice, to build a revolutionary organization. For only through a series of ideological and political struggles (both strategic and tactical) which have to do with daily issues, will the process of selection take place, weeding out those who fall back or desert, and leaving a strong and resolute core.

Hence, in view of the shortness of our experience, we cannot judge whether or not we have, in fact, offered to our people a new kind of organization. But we do maintain that we took the correct preliminary steps toward establishing a revolutionary organization, which would grow through ideological, political, popular and armed struggle. To arrive at a well-formed revolutionary organization requires more time, as the experiences of the revolutionary movements in the history of various peoples obviously prove. The Bolsheviks, for example, were unable to build a revolutionary organization in two or three years of struggle. Nor was the Chinese Communist Party able to build a vanguard organization ready to lead the national democratic revolution to the end, except after a long ideological, political, and military struggle. The same applies to the experiences of all peoples; for it is at the same time a historical and a daily process. In other words, through struggle, the process of selection and accumulation is completed, thus transferring us to a qualitatively different situation.

As to the military practices of the Democratic Front, we have to note the following: all the resistance organizations have adopted fedayeen action based on limited combat against the enemy in an attempt to develop it into a people's war. Also in their first stages, the military practices of all the resistance organizations were almost identical. Developing these practices into popular armed action capable of mobilizing the broad masses into the ranks of the revolution is a process which can be achieved neither easily nor speedily.

Yet we should note the persistent attempts of the Front, through its practices,

to develop the armed struggle in the direction of collective action and popular participation, and away from all forms of individualistic action. The Democratic Front adopted a military line which sought to evolve fedayeen action into guerrilla warfare inside the occupied territories, using the presence of the resistance in the East Bank and the other Arab territories as a means for sending reinforcements and supplies to the combatants and mass organizations in the occupied territories. This task demanded the greater part of the Front's efforts in 1969; but the overall political circumstances surrounding the resistance in Jordan prevented any significant action in this direction from materializing. For as I said, the greater part of the resistance's efforts were directed toward self-defense; thus the process of revolutionizing the occupied territories in general and the West Bank in particular came to be dependent, to a great extent, upon resolving the basic contradiction (imposed on the resistance) with the reactionary regime in the East Bank.

The Front directed noticeable efforts toward inducing the peasants of the front-line villages to participate in its military operations. In this it was attempting to move from operations that depended on the Front's forces as such, to operations directly supported by the masses, with the intention of reaching a more advanced stage of collective combat against the enemy. This, then, was in fact carried out in such operations as "Operation Red Line", "Operation Ho Chi Minh", "Operation Sheikh Izz-al-Din al-Qassam", and "Operation Gaza's Steadfastness".

In spite of the distortions to which these military operations were subjected by one of the resistance organizations, the Front was convinced that it was on the right track in developing the armed struggle in the direction of mass participation based on collective combat. For this kind of military action leads the broad masses gradually to rally round the resistance, to join its ranks, and to be willing to bear heavy sacrifices. Thus through their everyday experience, the people come to realize that the road to liberation demands perseverance and collective effort. At the same time, the Front opposed all attempts to misdirect the armed struggle toward individualistic and terroristic tendencies, for this does not require collective effort, and the people become mere spectators. The Front waged a broad ideological and organizational struggle among the masses as well as within the ranks of the resistance movement in order to establish this revolutionary position. However, not all the organizations would concede the justification of this until after September 1970. In fact a certain organization criticized its own combat practices, which were based on individualistic acts, in one of its reports published in *Palestinian Resistance*, (Beirut: Dirasat Arabiyyah, 1971, p. 124, if I remember correctly).

The underdeveloped countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America have lived for a long time with the glorification of individual acts of heroism, saturated as they are with stories of swordsmanship and chivalry. Hence the resistance organizations are enjoined to concentrate on collective modes of military action and promote the conception of collective heroism and respect for collective values. We all know from concrete military experience that engaging an enemy patrol

inside the occupied territories costs much more, in terms of casualties and material losses, than the individualistic type of operation which creates wide propaganda. Yet our masses rarely take note of such engagements with enemy patrols (which they consider as quick and transient incidents) while they look with admiration upon the individual acts of heroism. The military line to which the Front is committed is the result of an ideological and political position which rests on the idea that the masses are the saviors of themselves. They must take the initiative in directing all forms of armed and democratic struggle along the path of the protracted national people's war. As examples we have the Vietnamese and Indochinese experiences. The Vietnamese leadership could pursue, if it wanted, a line of individualistic combat action, duels and chivalrous contests, but the final objective can only be attained by nurturing collective capabilities among the people, who like the Palestinians suffer from an underdeveloped culture.

Naturally the time available was not sufficient to crystallize and complete this military procedure to the point where it could become the dominant practice either in the Democratic Front or in the rest of the resistance movement. For this problem, too, is connected to protracted struggle as a whole.

As for the third point in the question concerning the establishment of advanced revolutionary relations with the masses, in my estimation, the establishment of such ties is linked to the Front's overall ideological, political, military and organisational orientation. This rests on the theory of self-reliance and reliance on the masses, and on the realization by the masses, through their own experience, of the correctness of this revolutionary orientation. All this constitutes a coherent revolutionary process which cannot be arbitrarily sundered, and which has to take its historical course, and which we must assist patiently and militantly.

— *It was the practice of the Democratic Front to publicize its political positions in the hope of pushing the other organizations in what the Front considered the right direction. Is such a practice still suitable to the present circumstances or does the new stage require new modes of action? If so, what are they?*

— This is not a matter on which to take a subjective stance either for the Front or for any other resistance organization. We have a continual problem. How correct are the resistance's general political line and tactics, and how effective in terms of liberation?

As I mentioned before, it is the masses who offer the material, human, and moral sacrifices, and it is the masses who will decide the fate of the revolution, hence it is on them that we depend. Our relationship with them should be open on all issues, i.e. concerning both the general strategic issues pertaining to matters of principle, and the political and practical issues pertaining to day-to-day tactics. In fact, there should be democratic arbitration on every issue. Because their persuasions are based on tangible experience, their role in correcting the course of the revolution is very important, and they formulate its policies by means of

democratic pressure applied from the base on the leadership of the resistance.

Our people have witnessed in their modern history more than one abortive revolution, the 1936 revolution and 1947-48 uprisings being the most prominent of these. We should learn from our experience, and in the light of such understanding, the masses of our people will increasingly take the initiative and cease blindly to implement policies handed down from a bureaucratic leadership. We believe that the policy sketched above is the only possible nationalist policy, and should be carried out by all the resistance organizations.

As for ourselves, we did in fact take the initiative in dealing directly and openly with the masses on all basic strategic issues and all daily tactical and political matters. At the same time the Front maintained its broad nationalist alliances and worked hard to develop and strengthen them. Its guiding light in this was twofold: the continuous corrective influence exercised by the masses, and the practice of referring back to them all matters, big and small, for arbitration. In fact the Front used, within the framework of these alliances, all the available political, intellectual and organizational platforms to present matters to the masses. (This was particularly true before September and remained generally true after that date.) For example, shortly before September the Front brought to the attention of the masses the need for a democratic congress of all coordinating committees and middle cadres in the resistance movement to meet with the (PLO) Central Committee. The intention was to discuss the overall policies of that period and determine the immediate tasks facing the resistance in the near future. The other organizations in the movement opposed our move for the simple reason that they wanted to decide the policies of the resistance behind the backs of the masses and of their own members.

This policy on our part led to a series of democratic pressures applied by the masses on all groups in the resistance movement to correct the sort of relations obtaining among them and to determine the immediate tasks they were to face. In our estimation, this method of operating, namely, depending on the masses, remains the correct one as long as there are common grounds which constitute a proper framework for a minimum program shared by the resistance organizations and the nationalist movement. But when does the use of this method stop being correct? When the resistance organizations come to lose the common ground upon which they stand, because of conflict over matters of principle or strategy. Until we get into this situation (we hope never to get there but this depends upon local Arab and international developments concerning the Palestine question, the present tasks of the resistance movement and the stand of the resistance organizations vis-à-vis all this), the correct method remains continuing to seek broad national alliances and referring all issues to the masses for arbitration, so they can assume their role in correcting the course of the resistance and effecting the revolutionary changes necessary for each stage it passes through.

— *The Democratic Front is also criticized for having presented a coherent theoretical*

and political analysis of the Palestinian and Arab situation, but in terms of generalities and without proceeding at the same time to an analysis of the tangible daily issues in a manner directly comprehensible to the masses. This, it is claimed, weakened its effectiveness. Do you agree?

— Any theoretical and political analysis of the Palestinian and Arab situation must be presented, at first, in the form of generalities. In this way it becomes possible to present the masses of our people and of the Arab peoples as a whole, with a very general picture of the situation they are in, and to determine the general revolutionary program to replace the reactionary and petit bourgeois programs defeated in 1948 and 1967 respectively, insofar as the Palestine problem is concerned. The purpose of all this was to enable the masses to sense fully the significance of this general framework in providing the method for solving all daily and tactical problems facing the revolutionary movement.

In the second place, moving from the general to the more specific analysis necessarily presupposed contact with everyday issues. It is through such contact that the answers to all present problems are continuously formulated. Here is a brief example: The early analysis presented by the Democratic Front generated immediate problems in Jordan concerning the people's unity and its national democratic struggle. Consequently, the Front was led to present the formula of the united Palestinian-Jordanian national front as opposed to the parochial orientation prevalent among some resistance organizations, who were pushing for the "Palestinization" of the resistance and the nationalist movement. Hence, to reinforce and safeguard the unity of the people's struggle on the Palestinian-Jordanian scene, the Democratic Front proposed an exact and precise program defining the tasks of this united front. This program dealt with the problems of the Palestinian resistance and revolution, of national and democratic liberation in the East Bank, and of the relations of the resistance and the nationalist movement with the Jordanian reactionary regime. The Democratic Front took the initiative in calling for the development of the resistance movement politically, administratively, militarily and organizationally, in the direction of ripening the revolutionary crisis in the country and seizing the initiative from the reactionary authorities in order to solve the question of the duality of power in Jordan. For this question was the leading immediate task on the agenda of the resistance movement and of the whole nationalist movement in Jordan. In more precise terms, it became necessary to resolve the contradiction with the reactionary authorities, (which had become a basic contradiction owing to their political and material insistence upon liquidating the resistance and disarming the people), in order for our people to resume the armed struggle for resolving, eventually, the main contradiction with the Zionist enemy. This took shape in the Front's call for giving form to and developing the nationalist power of the resistance so it might express the will of the masses through the demand for elected people's councils until, finally, it would develop to the point where a nationalist rule could be

established in Jordan in lieu of the present agent authorities. All the resistance organizations were actually able, though belatedly and under the pressure of objective developments and the subjective initiatives of the resistance left, to develop their positions in this direction. Thus, at the extraordinary meeting of the Palestinian National Council held in Amman August 27, 1970 it was resolved that speedy work be undertaken "to transform Jordan into a stronghold of the Palestinian revolution". This position was confirmed by the Central Committee declaration of September 9, 1970 which called for the establishment of a nationalist authority in Jordan. Through these quick examples the size of the Democratic Front's role in bringing about such developments can be ascertained. This is necessary because of the intimation in the question that the Front's theses did not move from the realm of generalities to that of practical fact. This led to the conclusion implicit in your question that the Front's general analysis had little influence on the masses. Yet we have to note that the influence of this general analysis and of its daily political, organizational and mass applications are not the sort of thing which can be effected under the pressure of time and in accordance with our subjective wishes. For our people, and the resistance, live under the vast influence of Arab intellectual, political and class contradictions. In addition to the extension of these contradictions into our ranks, we have the cultural condition in which they actually live, dominated as it is by rightist ideas and the reactionary roots it springs from. This cultural condition is due to the hegemony of such social classes as the quasi-feudal, compradore, tribal, aristocratic, and military, as well as the determination of these classes to prevent the influence of revolutionary ideas from reaching these masses. Under the circumstances of this prevailing situation, a long time is required before revolutionary ideas will triumph among our people. This rule is not limited to our area and explains the general success of the feudal and reactionary minority in enlisting numerous forces of the working and impoverished classes in the defense of positions and interests contradictory to their own. It also explains why wide sectors of the masses fall victim to rightist and reactionary ideologies during various stages of the development of history. Defeating rightist and reactionary social and political culture in favor of revolutionary positions requires a longer period of time than was available to us. Herein lies the explanation of the inability of the Democratic Front's revolutionary ideas to fire wider sectors of the masses with enthusiasm and to arouse their ardor quickly. For this is a matter of cumulative growth, and, through this patient, quantitative process of accumulation, we arrive at a qualitatively new situation in which the masses affirm their revolutionary ideas and settle the conflict in their favor.

— *The Democratic Front is accused of bearing a large portion of the responsibility for the Jordanian regime's attack of September on account of the "extremist" slogans it raised. What is your answer to this?*

— This accusation is stupid, or else it is suspect. Stupid, because it bypasses the modern history of our people and the entire Arab national liberation movement; suspect, because it starts from positions antagonistic, not only to the left and to the Arab revolutionary groups in general and the Palestinian ones in particular, but, in the final analysis, also to the entire national revolutionary movement. A quick review of the facts of our recent history confirms, objectively and practically, the fallaciousness of the accusation. Before and since 1948 the Hashemite regime, along with all the forces of Arab reaction, stood in the face of our people's movement and thwarted its ambition to win its full national democratic freedom. Ever since the Emirate of Transjordan was formed, it adopted a series of positions determined by British colonial policy east of Suez which were antagonistic to our people's struggle to prevent the Judaization of Palestine. In 1936 this antagonistic stand went beyond political manifestations to the point of sending Prince Abdullah's forces quite conspicuously, under the leadership of a British officer, to suppress directly the Palestinian insurrectionaries who had taken refuge in the woods of Ajloun. This was in addition to Hashemite political interference, along with other Arab kings and heads of state, to liquidate the 1936 revolution by calling upon our people to lay down their arms and permit the reactionary Arab states to negotiate with Britain, "our ally", as they put it. This policy continued until 1948, when the Hashemite forces led by [Brigadier General John] Glubb Pasha fought only within the boundaries drawn by the U.N. Partition Plan and withdrew without a fight from areas that did not constitute part of the Arab territory as set in the partition resolution so as to facilitate their occupation by the Zionist forces as, for example, in Lydda and Ramleh. Part of the secret plans of the 1948 war was a deal for the establishment of the State of Israel in a portion of Palestine and the annexation of the West Bank by the Hashemite throne to form the Kingdom of Jordan in the territories lying on both sides of the Jordan River. All this took place at a time when the left wing in the Palestinian nationalist movement occupied no positions of influence and was no more than a spontaneous nationalist stirring directed against the Judaization of Palestine and the British Mandate. After 1948, the Hashemite throne and the Arab reactionary forces did not once take a nationalist stand as regards the problems of the Palestinian people. On the contrary, this regime historically formed a safety valve for the state of Israel and Zionism, and suppressed most savagely the nationalist movement and our people's uprisings in the East and West Banks. As to the regime's stand vis-à-vis fedayeen action, it was characterized by open antagonism from the moment fedayeen action first started in 1965. All struggling elements who took up arms were subject to continuous suppression, incarceration, and physical liquidation. After 1967, the Jordanian authorities adopted, directly, a position of enmity toward fedayeen action, long before the left wing in the resistance came to have its independent organizational and ideological existence. Let us remind ourselves that the first military campaign to liquidate the resistance took place on February 2, 1968 when fedayeen action was still only embodied in Fateh, that is, before

the left-wing organizations were either born or had put forth any "extremist" slogans, as your question puts it. Throughout this previous period, the regime tried to liquidate the resistance movement in two stages: at first under the slogan of liquidating the "dishonorable" faction among the fedayeen while retaining the "honorable" one; then, when the first plan failed, by trying to destroy everybody at once. I mention these facts in order to show concretely that the reactionary regime worked hard to suppress and liquidate the Palestinian nationalist movement before 1967, and to annihilate the resistance movement after that date, without distinguishing between this organization or that, between a left-wing nationalist or a right-wing one. Its police measures, its machine guns, tanks and artillery fire did not distinguish between one Palestinian combatant and another, or one organization and another. These are historical facts. Anyone who tries to ignore them is, I repeat, either stupid or suspect; for the reactionary forces in Jordan and in the Arab world consider the Hashemite throne as their first line of defense, just as they consider the Palestinian resistance movement, in its entirety, to be far more dangerous than imperialism or the State of Israel itself. The history of Arab reaction testifies to this. The reactionary forces have historically striven to suppress the nationalist movement, considering it, and not Israel or imperialism, as the basic enemy. They see the contradiction with the resistance and the nationalist movement as a basic one which must be resolved in favor of their ties with imperialism and their continuation as a reactionary bastion in the Middle East, representing a historical safety valve for Israel. It should be remembered that Israel has lent a helping hand more than once to the Jordanian regime, whenever in fact the Palestinian-Jordanian scene witnessed a rising nationalist movement. Israel has always declared that it will interfere in favor of the Hashemite throne if the nationalist movement were to succeed in defeating it. Furthermore, in 1958, in the wake of the July 14 revolution in Iraq, Israel permitted the use of its airspace for the transportation of British imperialist troops to Jordan so that they might protect the Hashemite throne. The same phenomenon was again repeated (as reported lately) when the Israeli authorities facilitated the passage to the East Bank of military equipment, (received by Jordan as a gift from American imperialism), through the occupied territories. I mention all this to emphasize that the reactionary Arab regimes have assumed a certain historical position toward the whole Arab national liberation movement, not just the Palestinian one. Hence, to say that the Democratic Front or the progressive forces in the resistance movement, by their practices and slogans, have brought about the September campaign is but a nonsensical allegation. The truth is that we, as well as all the other organizations, should have been more carefully aware of the law of the dialectical interconnection between the struggle against Israel and the political settlements on the one hand, and the inevitability of collision with the reactionary Jordanian regime on the other. This would have enabled us to take the initiative in drawing up our daily military and mass policies.

The Democratic Front tried to develop a policy which would give the initiative

to the resistance movement. It expounded this policy before the masses and called upon all the resistance organizations to adopt it. This we feel was a realistic and cognizant attitude to the situation.

Nevertheless, it may be useful to note that if you go back to the newspaper *Fateh* during the period between June and September 1970, and compare its contents with those of *The Spark*, [the PDFLP publication] you will find that the positions and slogans formulated by the Front expressed a stand almost identical to that of *Fateh*. Similarly, the seventh Palestinian National Council took a decision to the same effect at its extraordinary meeting in Amman, August 27, 1970. So did the Central Committee on September 9, 1970. But the political and military practices of the resistance organizations and the degree to which they were effective amongst the masses failed to live up to the standards set by *Fateh*, *The Spark* and other publications. Some resistance organizations were entrenched in their positions and actually followed a policy of passive self-defense, remaining satisfied with an aggressive propaganda campaign launched against the reactionary regime through their papers and radio programs. If the resistance had taken the initiative in its confrontation with the regime, the tables would have been turned and the national catastrophe of September 1970 would never have happened.

The continued reappearance of these phrases about the "extremist" slogans of the Front serves those who are unable to justify their incorrect positions to their rank and file, by giving them a scapegoat on which to blame all failures. This same line is enthusiastically adopted by Arab reactionary forces in their antagonism not only toward the left wing of the resistance movement, but also toward all the Arab progressive forces which are now passing through a very difficult stage. For this reason I emphatically say that the duty of every responsible patriot and every revolutionary intellectual is to scrutinize the various positions in question, so as to discover exactly who (through their erroneous policy) enabled the reactionary authorities to make such a ferocious onslaught upon the resistance movement and our people. This is necessary in order to defeat the ideological campaign launched by the rightist forces in an attempt to conceal their vacillation and inability to produce a sound analysis of the conflict between the contradictory forces, as well as their inability to bear the practical consequences which flow from such an analysis. They remain prisoners of the policy of "carrying ten melons in one hand", a feat so well performed by non-leftists for so long and leading to nothing but failure as far as the basic problem of our people is concerned. It is necessary to reveal all this in order to deprive these forces of the opportunity of directing unjustified criticisms against the left wing of the resistance movement.

— *The Democratic Front has lately been accused of contributing to opening the way for the establishment of a Palestinian state by expounding a position before the National Council calling for the resumption of the union between the two banks of the Jordan on a national democratic basis (as opposed to a basis which serves the interests of the Jordanian regime). What is your answer to this accusation?*

— Those who ignore the need for presenting nationalist solutions to the existing problems are the ones who open the way to defeatist positions and tendencies to capitulation among the Palestinian bourgeoisie. In the end this can only lead to the fragmentation of the Palestine problem and make more possible the erection of a Palestinian sub-state. On the other hand those who undertake to present nationalist solutions to the existing problems are countering such tendencies. This is what the Democratic Front has set out to do recently at the ninth Palestinian National Council (July 7-13, 1971). Within less than two months it became apparent that the views put forth by the Front represented the nationalist solutions and answers to a pressing and acute problem.

Since the September campaign, new and exceptional circumstances have appeared on the Palestinian-Jordanian scene. If the revolutionary forces do not deal with them in the manner suggested, the right-wing and reactionary forces will exploit the situation to the detriment of the nationalist cause and the unity of our people's struggle in the Palestinian-Jordanian arena. In September the reactionary authorities in Amman mounted a campaign of annihilation against the resistance, aided by the strong sense of bigoted parochialism which they had nurtured among the people. The regime presented itself as the protector of the Transjordanians and of their interests against alleged Palestinian attempts to absorb them. In this way it hoped to justify its actions against our people, and to generate cohesiveness among the Transjordanians (especially in rural areas and among the employees in the state apparatus) with the aim of gaining their support in the suppression of our people's national rights and in the imposition of its police dictatorship on the inhabitants of both banks.

These divisive tactics have in turn generated a spontaneous separatist reaction among the Palestinians, in both the East and West Banks. Such a reaction is an escape from the daily and historical sufferings they have borne at the hands of the Hashemite regime since 1948. The September massacres, because of their demoralising effect on our people, reinforced this separatist reaction, which, in the final analysis, is no more than an unrevolutionary escapist operation harmful to the Palestinian cause and to our people's future.

These prevailing conditions are exploited by the Jordanian regime in the furtherance of its plans for a Palestinian sub-state of one sort or another. Simultaneously in the West Bank the big bourgeois families and the reactionaries have their own plans for a Palestinian state, and are likewise taking advantage of the prevailing conditions. Thus there are two projects under consideration concerning the Palestine problem. King Hussein seeks to solve the problem by granting our people autonomy under Hashemite suzerainty. In this way the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan will be re-established on both banks of the Jordan River under the leadership of the same right-wing, reactionary and pro-imperialist social forces which have for so long oppressed our people and their liberation movement.

In an official memorandum sent to Arab kings and heads of state on November

2, 1970 King Hussein called for an Arab summit conference to discuss his project for a Palestinian sub-state and to adopt a general policy concerning it. He expressed his willingness to agree to the establishment of a Palestinian sub-state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Parochial bigotry and continual daily police and military suppression are all part of the scheme. Fragmentation of the Palestine problem and its eventual liquidation on the basis of granting autonomy for the West Bank within the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan will give King Hussein and his government freedom of political maneuver and will enable them to act as the sole representative of our people in reaching a bilateral political settlement with Israel.

The other project currently being hatched under the auspices of the occupation is supported by the bourgeoisie and the feudal families in the West Bank. Between 1948 and 1967 these two classes aligned themselves with the reactionary forces and came to constitute the economic, social, political and administrative pillars of the regime. These same classes later played the role of mediator between the occupation and our people and acted as a kind of shock absorber which neutralized all the revolutionary uprisings in the West Bank. Now, owing to the present circumstances, they are discovering that their interests are more closely bound to the occupying authorities than they are to the reactionary authorities in Amman, notwithstanding Amman's efforts since June 1967 to keep the loyalty of these social forces. In order to achieve this, the Amman regime has given these classes all kinds of political, moral and material support under the pretext of backing the "steadfastness" of the West Bank in the face of the occupation; whereas in reality all the Jordanian funds ended up in private pockets instead of reinforcing the struggle of the West Bank masses or going to the support of the militants in Zionist prisons. Proceeding upon their compromising and cowardly path, these classes are exploiting the sufferings of our people in the East Bank and the pogroms being perpetrated by the reactionary authorities in Amman, with their resulting separatist reaction among our people. They hope in this way to create an autonomous West Bank which serves their interests and prepares the way for the creation of a Palestinian sub-state.

In fact, these social forces attempted to take such a course in the wake of the June defeat but they failed utterly to elicit any response from the masses of either bank owing to the influence of the Palestinian resistance movement at the time. But the September campaign and its aftermath, particularly the weakening of the resistance movement, enabled these forces to reactivate their project and to call publicly for autonomous rule in the West Bank under the auspices of the occupation (the above mentioned Beit-Sahour convention). This was to lay the way for the establishment of a Palestinian sub-state independent of the reactionary authorities of Amman and linked, in some way or another, to Israel.

Both these are equally reactionary projects which serve the interests of Zionism and imperialism. Under no circumstance do they serve the interests of our people or of its national cause, because both projects rely upon the elimination of the

Palestine problem and upon compelling our people to surrender before the State of Israel and the idea of a political settlement. Furthermore, the second project will establish a state constantly under Israeli military surveillance, a state falling between the Israeli hammer and the Hashemite anvil, in addition to constituting a bridgehead for the new Israeli economic imperialism in the Arab countries.

Thus it can be seen that the quarters which really work on projects leading to the liquidation of the Palestine problem and to the creation of a Palestinian sub-state are the right-wing and reactionary forces in the West Bank on the one hand and the Hashemite rule on the other. Under the circumstances, the revolutionary forces in the resistance and in the nationalist movement have to present alternative solutions to the reactionary projects which serve only the interests of Zionism and imperialism. Hence the Democratic Front hurried (prior to the emergence of the reactionary projects in a concrete and definite form) to present before the ninth National Council nationalist solutions which provide an alternative to the parochial bigotry exploited by the regime in the East Bank, the spontaneous separatist reaction among our people and the attempt of the West Bank bourgeoisie to channel this reaction in the direction of turning the division of the two banks into an irrevocable *fait accompli*. The plan of the Democratic Front called for the necessity of recognizing that one of the present tasks confronting the Palestinian resistance is the unified struggle (through a Palestinian-Jordanian united front) for correcting the existing relationship between the Palestinian and Transjordanian peoples. This should lead to democratic equality and mutual participation in shaping the economic, military, cultural and political life of both banks, and should ensure the establishment of national democratic rule guaranteeing all our people's national rights in Jordan: its right to reject any political settlement injurious to its historical and national cause, its right to take up arms against the Zionist enemy, to mobilize itself in mass organizations around the revolution, to exercise its full democratic freedoms and its right to self-determination on its own land.

This stratagem put forward by the Democratic Front provides the patriotic answer to the parochial bigotry and spontaneous separatist reaction mentioned above. Armed with such an answer in its daily struggle, our people will be able to defeat all the suspect projects for fragmenting the Palestine problem and for creating a Palestinian sub-state under Israeli control or Hashemite suzerainty. Accordingly, the Front proposed the idea of a united national front in the East Bank which would struggle for the national rights of our people (as previously outlined). At the same time it would solve the problems of national democratic liberation in Transjordan by setting up a democratic, nationalist regime antagonistic to imperialism and Zionism and opposed to the selfish class minority, which has acted historically as an agent of imperialism. We must, however, start now to struggle for developing the evolutionary nationalist line in the West Bank to rout the defeatist tendencies which are growing under the present circumstances. At the same time we need to escalate the mass and armed struggles against the

State of Israel and the Zionist occupation, while striving to develop the nationalist and revolutionary forces so that they can oppose the Jordanian authorities as well as face all political contingencies in the area regarding the Palestine problem. We have to insist upon the unity of the two banks of the Jordan on a nationalist basis opposed to Zionism, imperialism and reaction. This will enable the masses to seize the initiative in reformulating the relationship between the two peoples in both banks in favor of establishing a well-founded and stable union.

This is the path that gives our people a patriotic alternative to the other suspect projects and provides them with a definite and detailed answer to the pressing problems currently being faced, thus making it possible to frustrate attempts at exploiting their suffering and their spontaneous reaction to the Amman massacres.

But we are opposed to the policy of keeping silent about the existing problems arising from the September campaign (reactionary parochial bigotry, spontaneous separatist tendencies, destruction of the unity of the Jordanian-Palestinian people, suspect plans for autonomy, and of being satisfied with verbal rejections of the suspect plans, while bypassing the resultant manifestations of disunity in our society and the reactions that they have generated, and of failing to offer nationalist solutions to the problem at hand and to militate for their application. For this policy, in imitating the ostrich, refuses to look at the course of events and its realities, thus creating a favorable atmosphere for the advocates of such things as the fragmentation of the Palestine problem, the autonomy of the West Bank and the Palestinian sub-state. Such an atmosphere misdirects our people along the lines of imperialist and reactionary solutions. This is the sugar-coated pill.

Those who follow the steps of Haj Amin al-Husseini* in merely recording verbal rejections and reasserting general strategic principles without offering definite nationalist solutions to existing problems, are in effect favoring the compromising and defeatist kind of solution to the detriment of the national cause. In other words, this kind of leadership in the resistance movement is objectively and in effect responsible for allowing the spontaneous reactions mentioned above to take their full course, thus enabling the compromising forces to exploit these feelings for their own purposes. For example, the same sort of thing occurred with the Egyptian-Syrian union of 1958. The reactionary and right-wing forces exploited the difficulties and problems generated by the union to push Syria toward secession, while the progressive and nationalist forces were satisfied with merely criticizing the unified state. They failed to offer revolutionary alternatives to the masses, which would have armed them in their struggle toward a progressive, nationalist solution to the difficulties of the union. As a result the masses fell victim to the spontaneous secessionist current which led to the rupture.

Likewise in Pakistan, the revolutionary forces failed to pose a viable alternative

* Mutti of Jerusalem and head of the Higher Arab Committee, which led the Palestinian movement until 1948.

to the secessionist tendencies of the people of East Pakistan, which had been the result of the reactionary forces' denial of their national rights.

The facts are stubborn and he who turns a blind eye to them is likely to find solid ground slipping away from under him.

SAMI AL-ATTARI

SA'IQA

(Vanguard of the People's War of Liberation)

— *It is necessary for the Palestinian resistance movement to examine its present problems, but this examination can only be meaningful if we take into consideration the basic characteristics and weakness of past experience. In terms of this statement, to what degree did the resistance movement succeed in devising plans appropriate for national unity? And what are the primary loopholes in the past experiences?*

— If we take a look at past Palestine National Council resolutions dealing with this matter, especially those of the ninth National Council, we find that they all offer an acceptable minimum plan for unity. But the position of the political leadership, represented by the Executive Committee, was greatly affected by events (Jerash,* the Jeddah Conference,** [Premier] Wasfi al-Tal's death). It began its term optimistically and actively, but the circumstances it now has to face are no secret. These circumstances remove any real hope of meeting in any form of coalition and they negate the spirit of collective and democratic leadership, for they are the result of the individualistic action of certain resistance groups, who flout the simplest rules of cooperation. It is to be hoped that these clouds will disperse and that the spirit of correct and collective leadership will prevail.

Attempts have been made in the past to establish a national front with a clear and defined program, starting with the Armed Struggle Command, followed by the United Command (formed after the February 10, 1970 confrontation with the Jordanian authorities), and finally by the Executive Committee. These attempts could have been developed and revolutionized had the spirit of democratic collectivism prevailed, but their basic error lies in the fact that they were all a hotchpotch of rushed reactions to events and were not the outcome of a clearly defined strategy. They were all triggered off by externally imposed events and did not emerge from the clarity of vision of the resistance groups. It often happened that a group would go along with a plan for a while, and would later drop out quite arbitrarily, or for mere self-defense.

* Attack by the Jordanian army on the remaining fedayeen forces in the Jerash area in July 1971.

** Held on September 15-24, 1971 between the resistance and the Jordanian Government to attempt (unsuccessfully) to reach a reconciliation.

— *Was the resistance movement able to establish firm relations with the Palestinian masses in terms of mobilization, organization and political education?*

— It was the masses themselves who took the initiative and flocked to the resistance movement. It constituted for them the first glimmer of hope since their initial dispersion. They were the ones to be subject to continual attacks from the enemy, and this convinced them irrevocably of the necessity for armed struggle, and they were quite prepared to establish themselves in the first trench facing the enemy. But there was another reason for our people to turn to the resistance. They did so as an emotional reaction, or as an expression of resentment against the ineffective Arab regimes, who had been unable to win a single battle or fulfil a single promise of the many they had made to the Palestinian people; this applies in particular to the Jordanian regime.

Because of its deficiencies, the resistance movement was unable either to absorb this popular tide or to channel it along the correct lines. The individual resistance groups were continually disputing among themselves over many basic and important issues, that is, raising the slogan of non-interference in the internal affairs of the Arab regimes, the nature of the relationship between the resistance movement and the Arab liberation movements. These disputes developed into public defamation, and the parties concerned became arrogant. Finally, their unwillingness to be totally frank with the masses only accelerated the latter's disenchantment; it points to the primary fault—that the resistance had no unified and specific minimum program around which the masses could rally.

Like the Palestinians, the Jordanian masses saw in the resistance movement their salvation after years of repression by [the Hashemite puppet regime. It offered them the restoration of their dignity after the 1967 defeat, the promise of a united struggle against a common enemy. But the same deficiencies which alienated the Palestinians likewise alienated the Jordanians, in particular the largest group's slogan of non-interference in the internal affairs of the Arab regimes, which included the Jordanian regime. Thus regionalist tendencies were increased with the formation of various Palestinian professional and workers' unions; the long common struggle against the regime was in this way broken and fragmented.

All this points to faulty analysis on the part of the resistance. It ignored the historical basis of the Jordanian national movement and failed to perceive its organic link with the Palestinian struggle. In fact the resistance tended to act as a substitute for the Jordanian national movement, denying it a role. Much of its behavior toward the Jordanian masses can only be regarded as ignorant or stupid. The miscreants were not publicly tried, a move which would have set an example and would have assured the Jordanian masses of the resistance's good intentions toward them.

Things such as these, stemming from faulty comprehension, served the Jordanian regime well in its exploitation and intensification of regionalist tendencies, and the resistance movement did nothing to regain the confidence of the Jordanian

people. It is because of this that we insist that the Jordanian national front should be rebuilt on sound and objectively correct grounds, away from the patronage of the gun. The front is the only force capable of rectifying the rift, for we are one people, not two.

— *How do you see the relationship of the resistance movement to the Arab situation, and with the regimes and the popular movements?*

— The Palestine National Councils have defined the constant principle regarding this issue. The relationship between the Palestinian revolution and any Arab regime or any popular movement should be measured and determined by what this regime or that movement does to serve the revolution and the struggle to liberate all of Palestine. Not all these regimes placed their capabilities and facilities at the service of the revolution. There are progressive Arab regimes who drove and still drive their energies to preserve, protect, and support the revolution; and some regimes have been merely observers. On this basis, the Palestinian revolution must distinguish between those who are for it and those who are against it. We stress that we are a national liberation movement and consequently part of the larger Arab liberation movement.

— *The PLO constituted a framework for all forms of national unity. Is this framework still appropriate for realizing the needs of the Palestinian struggle, or is there a need for more developed organizational forms? If so, what are these forms?*

— I answered this question previously. I want to assert here that the title is not the problem and the PLO is a framework containing all the main organizations in the resistance. It is a sufficient and acceptable framework. All the National Council resolutions could have been executed through it and definite minimum programs acceptable to all the groups could have been adopted. But as I said, because some organizations attempt to act singly, away from collective and democratic leadership, the organization is weakened and its effectiveness paralyzed. We, along with others who were lacking in the correct spirit, insist that matters should take their natural course. We believe that if we can place matters in their proper perspective the Palestine Liberation Organization would be appropriate for fulfilling the needs of the Palestinian struggle. The organization itself can be revolutionized or developed into a more sophisticated form.

— *The Palestinian resistance movement faces danger and difficulties at present requiring concentration in effort and practice, and more clarity in political position. Based on this reality, what are the appropriate means for facing the efforts currently being expended for realizing political settlement plans, especially since they have begun to acquire a clear American color?*

— We rejected the Security Council resolution from the start. Armed struggle and people's war are the only means of liberation, although the road may be long and arduous. The aim of the Palestinian resistance is the liberation of the whole of Palestine, and the reassertion of its Arab character, and any attempt to foil this aim must be met with revolutionary violence.

The efforts now being expended on behalf of a political settlement need to find a Palestinian party, which, claiming to represent the people, will accept it. It is the task of the resistance to foil any such schemes for conjuring up such a party. This means the continuation of resistance activities in the occupied territories, even if these operations are selective, aiming at quality, not quantity. In this way the resistance will assert its resolution to liberate the whole of Palestine, and will counter attempts by any Palestinian party to respond to the imperialist plot.

— *Activities to promote the acceptance by certain Palestinian elements of a political settlement are on the increase, especially in the West Bank, under such slogans as "autonomous entity", or "Palestinian state". How should the revolution face this issue?*

— These strange and dubious maneuvers are not new. They have been going on for some time, but before the confrontation with the regime [in 1970] they were covert. Now that the regime has severely crippled the resistance movement in Jordan, these movements can be more overt, and tally with the regime's unwillingness to enter any new struggle with the Zionist enemy. Naturally Zionism and imperialism, which realize the importance of a Palestinian signature on the settlement document, encourage such moves. The timing is astute, for the Palestinians feel that the resistance movement at present cannot face new confrontations. However, a simple rejection will not suffice. The answer must lie in the increasing mobilization, organization, and political education of the Palestinian people, combined with a clearly defined minimum program to which all the groups can give their support. A continuation of the trend can only serve the settlement [plans]. Political mobilization should go hand in hand with the escalation of military action inside the occupied territories. In this way people will apply theory to practice, and vice versa.

— *In view of the ebb of fedayeen action since 1970, and in view of the counter-movement of the Palestinian right to misrepresent the Palestinian political position, how do you look upon military action in the occupied territory, and what are the means to escalate it?*

— The right began moving openly for the signing of the submission document after the massacre of September [1970] in Jordan, and after the decline in activity which followed. As I have said in answer to the previous question, it is only by behaving in a more disciplined manner, that we can deal with the situation. We must unite the revolutionary nuclei in the occupied territory and strengthen the steadfastness of our heroic people in Gaza. I believe that this is the only way to confront the plans currently afoot.

— *What type of relationship is needed between the organizations themselves, and between them and conditions generally prevalent in the Arab world, so that we can treat the problems scientifically?*

— A coalition of national forces within a national front led by a progressive revolutionary party is the historically proved method of fighting a national liberation war.

If we take a look at the Palestinian experience in attempting to achieve national unity, the policy put forward at the last national conference proposed such a method. This meant the realistic deployment of personnel and an end to organizational fanaticism. However, some organizations attempted to monopolize activities, thus damaging not only national unity itself, but its very spirit. A natural follow-up to the conference would have been the submission of a theoretical guide, a program for revolutionary action, defining the objective relations within the framework of national unity, to which the groups would contribute. This failed to happen and the multiplicity and diversity remained.

We believe the relationship between the resistance and the Arab reality could be defined according to the following principles:

1. The resistance movement is progressive by nature and consequently it is an inseparable part of the Arab progressive movement.

2. The primary sphere for the Palestinian resistance is the Palestinian sphere and no other duties should preoccupy it to the extent that it cannot struggle in its own sphere.

3. This does not mean that the resistance movement will take away the right of the Palestinian, as an Arab citizen, to struggle ideologically on the Arab arena.

4. The resistance movement should avoid side struggles with the Arab regimes, for side struggles divert the efforts of the Palestinian revolution and keep it from practicing its primary duty, which is also one of the duties of the Arab national movement in its different regions. The resistance movement must not substitute itself for these movements; it is asked, at the same time, not to allow itself to play any role on the Arab level which may paralyze the Arab revolution or keep it from fulfilling its goals.

5. Finally, the relationship of the resistance movement with the Arab regimes should be determined according to the degree to which each regime supports the revolution.

— *In a specific way, what are the present duties of the resistance movement in Jordan which can lead to the resumption of action by the fedayeen against the Israeli enemy? I ask this in particular reference to the regime and the Jordanian national front.*

— This is one of the most difficult issues confronting the Palestinian revolution. When we went to the Jeddah conference we made sincere efforts to settle our differences with the Jordanian regime, but the latter vacillated and evaded the

issue, and was generally insincere, and we came away with empty hands. We look upon Jordan as a primary base for the resistance movement, for it will facilitate contact with our people in the occupied territories, and the leadership of the resistance should be found among the masses and not divorced from it. It is now impossible for the resistance to return to Jordan peacefully; how then can it establish its base there? It may be forced to divert its forces from Israel, in order to wage a protracted struggle against the Jordanian regime, a situation which the enemy would be only too happy to view, for it guarantees the isolation and preoccupation of one million, two thousand Palestinian Arabs living in the East Bank, (as the latest statistics in Jordan show), or in other words, half of the Palestinian people.

With regard to the Jordanian national front, it is realistic to demand that the national forces in Jordan should unite for the struggle to establish national rule, thus opening up the way for the resistance movement to return. However, if the pre-Black September [1970] trend continues, it is more than likely that a "formal" front will be formed, which will not include genuine national forces, and will simply be hiding behind the gun, and hindering any real attempt to form a Jordanian national front.

— *We have a question particularly for al-Sa'iqā. We want to be frank in these questions. There are certain accusations which require serious and revolutionary answers. The following is the most important of these accusations:*

Al-Sa'iqā is a product of a national party which struggled over a long period of time for unity and socialism. With such a militant heritage, al-Sa'iqā could have played a prominent leadership role in the Palestinian struggle. In actual fact, al-Sa'iqā was always presented as a supplement to Fateh. It offered no criticism, nor did it try to answer any. By this lack of initiative it helped sustain the faults in the movement. Do you consider this to be a fair picture?

— Al-Sa'iqā was indeed the product of a national party which struggled constantly for the Arab cause. It was not obligatory for al-Sa'iqā to participate in the Palestine resistance movement, but the rank and file of the party were convinced of the necessity for a progressive fedayeen organization which was both nationalist and leftist, and which would attract to it other such elements throughout the Arab nation, thus filling the gap in the movement. Such a conviction is justified because al-Sa'iqā has a militant base, the result of the party's historic role. This would have allowed it to play a prominent leadership role, but as mentioned earlier, its main aim was to absorb the popular progressive energies not catered for by the other groups, and to play its part in a national front, for it does not believe that any one group should monopolize the leadership. Because the Arab Socialist Party (Ba'ath) looked upon Fateh as representing the trend of the resistance at the time, it had no desire to supplant it, and indeed strove for its continuity.

Moreover, the party felt that if al-Sa'iqa retained its independence, rather than, say, merging with Fateh, it would facilitate dialogue between the groups. Its dialogue with Fateh and the Democratic Front in particular went on continually, despite the different views the party held of each. From this dialogue there sometimes emerged a theoretical vision of the future, which could only remain within the realm of abstraction. In truth, this is what Fateh hoped for.

The base of al-Sa'iqa, however, often rebelled against the continuation of a fruitless dialogue, and the leadership often promised them to reach an acceptable relationship. Indeed they thought that Fateh had conceded certain definite issues which would contribute for al-Sa'iqa a minimum limit for coalition.

But it seems that the rank and file were more aware of the realities of the situation than the leadership. After the dispute with Fateh at the beginning of 1970, they suggested meeting with the left of the resistance, regardless of the possibility of polarizing fedayeen action. In fact a coalition did take place between ourselves, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Partisan forces,* in a progressive list against Fateh in the elections of the Union of the Workers of Jordan. A similar thing happened in the election of the General Union of Palestinian Students (Damascus Branch). These are two of several incidents that could be cited. While the al-Sa'iqa leadership was agreeing with Fateh on various topics and plans, the bases stuck to their position contrary to the leadership's instructions (other groups had similar experiences); and stemming from their meetings with the left of the resistance, the groups confronted the Jordanian regime on several occasions. They refused the leadership's interpretation of self-defense, took the initiative themselves instead of running after events, and abandoned the slogan of non-interference.

The rank and file saw the futility of the dialogue, but rebelled a little late, yet their rebellion is a fact. Al-Sa'iqa was not alone in contributing to the weakness of the resistance. The other groups all behaved similarly in varying degrees, and this is a reflection of the organizational fanaticism of the groups of the resistance, and is one of the reasons for the inability of the resistance movement to weather the crises it faced.

— *It was noted that al-Sa'iqa did not pay enough attention to the political and popular side of armed struggle, and therefore had little influence on daily practices. Do you agree with this observation, and if so, what do you think are its causes?*

— As I said just now, al-Sa'iqa is a product of a national party with a historical struggle, a party which had roots and popular support almost a quarter of a century before the birth of the resistance movement. This surely shows a fallacy in the question. It should be noted that although al-Sa'iqa joined the resistance

* Volunteers recruited from among members of the communist parties of Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq.

movement somewhat tardily, it was able to mobilize more of the Arab masses than the organizations which preceded it. Also, quality and not quantity was the important thing. When you refer to al-Sa'iqa's lack of influence on daily practice, you should remember that in proportion to its short existence, it was very effective in the area. However, publicity that warps reality was never its obsession. We have always taken great care not to embellish the truth, and to answer the incorrect image given of us with simple facts and figures. For example, if we take a look at the fedayeen's communiqués during the September struggle in Jordan, we would see that al-Sa'iqa constitutes a common denominator to all the organizations in the battle field. It is well-known among the organizations and the masses that in Amman [in September 1970] ninety-three men of al-Sa'iqa were martyred while defending the Palestine revolution. They were all from the rank and file of the party and from al-Sa'iqa militia.

— *The prevailing belief is that al-Sa'iqa has outstanding military facilities, whose effectiveness did not match their capabilities. This deficiency is said to be related to its popular and political work. What is your opinion?*

— Such an image is based on the misconception that the military facilities of al-Sa'iqa are in fact the facilities of the Syrian state. This is the result of a campaign by those seeking to liquidate the resistance, who say that al-Sa'iqa is being used as a means of interference in the internal affairs of other Arab regimes. But al-Sa'iqa emerged from the rank and file of the party, and it is natural that the party should be the backbone of the organization, although al-Sa'iqa contains within its ranks non-party members, who are among the best and most progressive of Arab youth.

The relationship between al-Sa'iqa and the Syrian regime is not as depicted by hostile commentators. All its needs and problems are handled through the office for fedayeen action in the party's command. The military facilities of al-Sa'iqa were below those of the largest resistance group, and in proportion its presence was effective, especially in terms of operations deep in occupied territory. The battle of Kafr Shuba is not erased from our minds, nor that of Khasfein and the heroism of our comrade and martyr, Said Muhad, hero of the battle and one of the leaders of al-Sa'iqa, nor the Arqoub battle led by our heroic comrade, the martyr al-Akhdar al-Arabi; these are all examples of our effectiveness. Neither should we forget other operations deep inside occupied territory, which were claimed by other fedayeen organizations; for example, the incident in which our comrades fought against the Israeli intelligence building in Ramallah, and in which the enemy and intelligence director were killed.

As for relating this weakness to what was termed the weakness of the political and popular side of our action, we deny this categorically. The fighter in al-Sa'iqa is fully aware of why he is carrying a gun, for he is, first and foremost,

a son of a nation defending the Arab cause, and our hopes for unity, freedom and socialism. He is a conscious being carrying a gun in defense of man and land.

— *Al-Sa'iq's position on Wasfi al-Tal's death caused popular surprise because your criticism of the operation was not based on the efficacy of this method in a revolution, which is an issue always under discussion. Rather you made an outright condemnation of the assassination. What is your opinion and how do you justify this position?*

— Al-Sa'iq's position on Wasfi al-Tal's death need not be surprising. Although al-Sa'iq did not criticize the operation, we reject and condemn this method. Al-Sa'iq tried to take an objective and scientific view of the matter, bearing in mind what Wasfi al-Tal stood for. Our position was removed from emotional and political auctioning. Certain suspect elements made insinuating noises regarding our stance, wishing to exploit it. Al-Sa'iq feels that as an active participant in the Palestinian revolution, it has the right to ask whether or not a certain method serves the revolution, and to question whomsoever determines such methods. We believe that such individualistic acts cannot benefit the revolution, and in fact set it on a new path, far from collective leadership.

But let us add that such an end was inevitable for Wasfi al-Tal.

A. SA'ID
ARAB LIBERATION FRONT

— *We believe that the resistance movement must review its past experience and define its mistakes and weaknesses in order to overcome them and rise to the challenges of today. What are the issues to be focussed upon? And what is your analysis of these issues?*

— In my opinion, the resistance has suffered from two major crises. The first was the objective one, involving its general strategic thinking, the need for vision in plotting the course of the present struggle, and the necessity to meet that struggle on its own terms. In terms of the spark of resistance and the primary center of power at the present stage, the movement represents a reaction, a rebellion, a rejection of the overall Arab condition, of the crises of the Arab revolution and the Arab liberation movement as manifested by two predominant forces—that is, Abdul Nasser and the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party.

The group which constituted the nucleus of the resistance realized at an early stage that the Arab liberation movement was not primarily concerned with the struggle for the liberation of Palestine. In its general battle against colonialism on behalf of national liberty and Arab unity, the Arab movement seemed not to be aware of the focal position occupied by the Palestinian case. It failed to undertake a special and daily armed struggle against the Zionist presence in Palestine. The Arab liberation movement did not realize the importance of this struggle or its fundamental part in attaining the ultimate goal. This basic deficiency in the Arab liberation movement justifies, to a certain extent, the emergence of the Palestinian reaction in the form of the resistance. But in itself, this reaction does not constitute a revolution, although it often establishes the proper groundwork.

At this stage the beginnings of the resistance were correct, but it still failed to provide an adequate answer, because the Palestinian response had, for the previous quarter-century, denied the positive aspects of the Arab liberation movement. Consequently, from its inception the movement missed many possibilities for developing the rebellion and the reaction into total revolution—one capable of encompassing the strategy of liberation and of mobilizing the forces necessary to fulfill its duties. It should also be pointed out that this fundamental objective factor was always bound up with a certain structure of the movement. It overlooked the need for comprehending the complementarity and interaction of

the national struggle with the social struggle to liberate the man who will free the land. Therefore, the reality of the resistance movement—its nature and actual effect on the Arab scene—is more proper and more positive than its theoretical principles, even though some groups showed sound ones.

Now we come to the second crisis—the internal one concerning the leadership of the resistance, its personal experience and its class and ideological background. These latter factors provoked the crisis, for to lead the liberation struggle is no easy matter and cannot be undertaken by the ordinary man. It is a duty fit for the historic leaders of nations. The present leadership, without offense or meaning to detract from its militancy, is not historic. It has proved unable to lead the struggle both through its misunderstanding of the nature of that struggle and of the formula for liberation, and by virtue of personal experiences which have produced defective vision. Thus the leadership was unable to grasp the meaning of popular Arab struggle against corruption in the Arab nation at large, nor to understand the close ties between that struggle and the liberation of Palestine.

Then there is the issue of multiplicity and rivalry. Conditions in the neighboring Arab states, the dispersion of the Palestinian people and the contradictions within their ranks, plus the shortsightedness of some leaders, combined to open the way for multiplicity—although this in itself is not necessarily disruptive. The problem is that the diversity became transformed into distorted and harmful rivalry which led the groups to engage in dubious practices for political gain. Much effort was expended in such activity instead of in confronting the enemy, mobilizing the masses and increasing the capabilities of the resistance.

This problem requires total and fundamental review not of secondary errors and passing phenomena, but of the very principles of the resistance movement and of its awareness of its own strength and dimensions. Some basic questions must be answered: How will liberation be attained? Who will achieve it? When will it be done? Without answering these questions, we cannot follow the correct path and the resistance will remain a captive of the limited comprehension and deficiencies from which it once suffered and continues to suffer.

— *What are the broad answers to the three questions you have just posed?*

— I think we must begin by asking: What is the Zionist challenge in Palestine? In answer I would say that it is the epitome of colonialist attempts to dominate the entire Arab world by forcing it to submit to the will of an advanced armed Zionist vanguard that will prevent Arab unity and the liberation of the Arab masses. This is the basic framework of the struggle. When it is understood within this historical context, the answers to many questions become clear. The target of occupation is the entire people of the Arab world. That the Palestinian Arab people are the direct victim does not mean that they are the only victim. Through an understanding of the imperialist challenge we may respond to it on its own terms.

In other words, when we say that the object of the conspiracy is the Arab masses we mean that colonialism has mobilized (as it will always attempt to do when challenged) the forces capable of confronting the Arab reaction it provokes. The belief that the Palestinian people are the sole, or the primary, target entails our dependence in the struggle on the Palestinian people alone. It also means that we shall continue to chase what I call the equation of liberation.

Briefly and simply, the equation of liberation exists when we mobilize forces and capabilities surpassing, in the long run, those of the enemy. The opposing forces are colonialism, plus Zionism, plus all the reactionary or submissive Arab elements moving in their midst. One cannot equate the Palestinian people with this huge world force. The essential factor on our side of the equation is the masses of the entire Arab nation who, aided by every movement for world liberation, constitute the only power equal to the challenge.

But this, in my opinion, does not rule out the role of the Palestinian Arab people as a vanguard for inspiring the energies of the Arab masses and for further defining its momentous advance toward liberation. This role is the product of human, geographical, historical and logical factors. The Palestinian masses are the spearhead; the Arab masses are the spear itself. In my opinion, this understanding answers many of the questions—indeed, most of them.

The fundamental issue is: how to spark off Arab energies and how to direct the progress of contemporary Arab history toward liberation by resistance to the Zionist occupation of Palestine. And for Palestine to be liberated, the Arab individual must be freed and must acquire the necessary awareness and ability in terms of thought, organization, production and human relations. At that point he will be enabled to realize his will in liberating Palestine.

To look toward Palestine is at the same time to view the liberation of the Arab masses and a change in their circumstances. The struggle to liberate Palestine presents the Arab world with a crisis. And in an atmosphere of crises the state institutions are stripped bare. The nature of the present conspiracy is exposed through the fragmented structure and superficiality of governments that remain aloof from the masses and, since it entails their own downfall, oppose the liberation of the people.

— *In the light of what you have said, what value do you put on the relations which the various resistance groups have established with the Arab national movement, on the levels of both government and people?*

— In answering this question we must begin with the criticism directed at the Arab liberation movement, not that aimed at the resistance. I believe that the primary responsibility for the liberation of Palestine, given the nature of the struggle and the target of the conspiracy, lies with the Arab liberation movement. If that movement made mistakes and failed to address itself to Palestine or to understand the focal position of the Palestinian question, yet it was also unfair to

itself and opened the way for a warped reaction even against its positive aspects. The responsibility falls on the mother movement—the Arab liberation movement. But this fact does not absolve the Palestinian resistance from the major shortcoming of misunderstanding the nature of its relations with, and of failing to direct itself toward, the mother movement.

For many reasons, which I do not want to elaborate on here, the vanguard of the resistance looked upon the Arab liberation movement as a phenomenon of another world and another issue. As a result, the present spark of resistance was kindled outside the milieu of the Arab liberation movement. In these circumstances, which account for the crises in both the Arab and the Palestinian movements, a proper relationship did not develop. If we wish to define the nature of this shortcoming, we would have to point out that the Arab liberation movement is still in the throes of its crisis, as demonstrated by its divisions, the dissipation of its forces, and their recourse to fighting. Some of the groups within the Palestinian resistance understood the Arab liberation movement and its role to no greater extent than praising it and contributing funds. These groups regarded the Arab movement as being no better than the Arab governments, even those known to be reactionary.

Hence we may see that the gap is great; closing it will take two forms. First is the growth of an appeal among the ranks of the Arab liberation movement calling for a new definition of the common understanding shared by the movement and the masses of the Palestine question and its central place in the Arab struggle. The Arab struggle seeks the liberation of the masses, Arab unity, and the formation of a front embracing all the forces of Arab liberation—a front which gives to Palestine its proper standing in the plan of campaign. This front should embody the realization that to direct its forces to Palestine is in reality to address an occupied nation to the liberation of its land. It would be similar to the Algerian national liberation movement which regarded the whole of Algeria as an occupied nation despite the fact that, after the development of the revolution, three-quarters of the land was freed.

The Algerian movement used to approach all its affairs from the standpoint of total liberation. In other words, the Arab liberation movement must consider itself as the movement of an occupied nation. On the principle of true unity, we cannot regard the Zionist occupation of Palestine as an occupation of part of the nation; for the occupation of the part is occupation of the whole. The non-occupied section is put to use in fragmenting the Arab struggle and splintering the unity of its direction.

In fact, this non-occupied part of the nation is subject to foreign influence in varying degrees—there is not total Arab independence. Not one Arab country is independent, for there cannot simultaneously be independence and division. Division means continuing subjugation of the Arab world to colonial interests and influences. Some Arab states are totally subject; some are partially subject; but there is not one wholly free from foreign influence. The colonialist presence

is felt wherever there is weakness, and division is a guarantee of weakness. By founding the attitude of the Arab liberation movement on that of a militant nation occupied and controlled by foreigners, we put the question of Zionist occupation in its proper place at the hub of the struggle. Such an understanding of the requirements of liberation will inform activity within and without the Arab liberation front. Other stands can be taken on many issues, including the nature of the class and social struggles in society.

We now come to an important question which has, I know, many interpretations. We believe in the unity of the national, class and social struggles during the stages of liberation and national unity, and we do not differentiate between these two stages. I would say that the liberation of the Arab man, that is, his freedom from all bonds—from class exploitation, class oppression, from patronage—is completely synonymous with the requirements of national liberation and the liberation war. How can a Syrian, an Iraqi, or an Egyptian peasant take part in this war if he is not armed with awareness and knowledge, if he does not feel that this nation is his own and offers him a minimum level of subsistence, enlightenment, dignity and modern life? How can a class-oppressed group, even in a majority, be equipped to participate in the liberation war?

And here we touch on a crucial issue. The Arab liberation movement must understand that the freedom of man from class exploitation and oppression is a prerequisite of the demands made of him, his steadfastness and readiness to mobilize on a national level for the liberation war. The Palestinian resistance, or the movement of the Palestinian people, must grasp the importance of the freedom of the Arab masses, who are the basic determining factor in this war. Of course, this does not mean that the national and petit bourgeois classes are to be cast aside. It *does* mean, in particular, that the leadership be given to the revolutionary elements that are critically committed to the revolution and to the working masses who form its foundation, its axis, its instrument and its goal.

— *Within the scheme which identifies the national and social struggles, what is the special role of the Palestinians?*

— Such a role takes many forms. The first is that the Palestinian people, being most affected by Zionist injustice and experiencing the national, human and material damage, must naturally, logically and automatically resist the occupation. It is natural for a people under occupation to resist more fiercely than those outside the occupied land. It is also to be expected that those in neighboring countries will resist more than those on the periphery of the Arab world, thousands of miles from Palestine. This is a matter of simple logic, obvious to anyone.

Then there is the necessity to set a prominent example. The Palestinian people must accept the responsibility of initiative and sacrifice; example is always a potent force. Furthermore, the real human destruction resulting from the occupation makes the question of liberation and martyrdom a daily affair for those

living under occupation or in camps. Foreign aggression and occupation extend into all areas of life and cannot be ignored. For the individual, in other words, liberation becomes a regular way of life. These circumstances do not apply to the people of the Maghreb, and it follows that the initiative and the responsibilities should be taken by the everyday victims of the aggression.

There is also the international aspect and world opinion. The world fully understands the resort to organized resistance by the oppressed and exploited in the occupied land. An occupied people reply with resistance. Emphasizing this aspect, therefore, and focussing on this premise of resistance serves the Palestinian cause because it defines the extent and outcome of Zionist aggression.

— *Do you think that there are specific duties demanded of the resistance movement in relation to the situation in Jordan?*

— I do not believe that Jordan is a country separate from Palestine. Jordan is Palestine in its fullest meaning. In other words, there is one land and nothing divides East and West Jordan except the boundaries set up by conspiring colonialism. To assist the world Zionist movement, colonialism created a tiny state called *Sharq al-Urdun* (East Jordan). It enthroned Prince Abdullah* as ruler after securing his promise, through [T.E.] Lawrence, to accept the British and Zionist policies in Palestine and the French policies in Syria. That is why East Jordan is a foreign entity; it was never a state. Colonialism established it as a barrier between the Arabs of Syria and of Palestine. It was also envisaged as a reservoir to absorb the Arab masses turned out of Palestine, who would be controlled after their dispersion in accordance with the Zionist-British plan.

The real issue is the struggle against the artificial Jordanian entity and against reactionary Jordanianism. This struggle is at the heart of that to liberate Palestine. We all know that the present regime is an extension of the institution led by Prince Abdullah since the establishment of East Jordan. The only development that will liberate Jordan is its integration into a union aimed at liberation, for as long as Jordan continues to represent an artificial entity it will be subjected to foreign influence. The special responsibility of the resistance in East Jordan reflects this reality as well as the fact that the majority of its inhabitants are Palestinian. Therefore there is complete identity between the movement of the Jordanian masses for liberation and self-rule, and the main concern of the Jordanian people as a whole—the liberation of Palestine.

The national factor in the liberation of Palestine is integral with the nature and progress of the Jordanian national movement and its social and internal struggles. And being at the heart of this national movement, the resistance must take the initiative in creating a truly Jordanian front with clear-cut goals and a detailed program for realizing national rule in Jordan and altering its present conspiratorial

* Later King Abdullah, assassinated in 1951.

role to that of a base, a foundation and a prop for the resistance movement. This cannot be realized except through mobilizing the Jordanian masses, unifying their struggle, raising their living conditions, achieving their self-rule and bringing them together with the people of the neighboring regions in an Arab national unity. There is no doubt that the events of September 1970* and the Jerash massacre** were decisive in formulating the attitude within the resistance which favors revolution.

— *This attitude includes the rejection of the view that Israel is the concern of fedayeen action, while the question of the Jordanian regime is one for the Jordanian national movement.*

— I did not differentiate between directing efforts toward Palestine or toward liberating the Arab masses from all the obstacles in the way of self-determination and self-rule. If this is generally true, it is particularly so in Jordan. I believe that the natural first product of seeking the liberation of Palestine is the collapse of the worn-out regimes and institutions surrounding that country, and which are themselves in conspiracy against liberation. Confronting the stronger enemy—Israel—necessitates facing up to and overcoming these less important obstacles which are designed as the first line of defence for the Zionist borders. Thus, tackling the Jordanian regime does not automatically call a halt to action for the liberation of Palestine. The resistance must continue, for its persistence in the occupied territories and the unceasing mobilization of all national forces will give it the power to fight the obstacles on the borders of Israel.

I call upon the Palestinian resistance to mobilize and prepare a state of militancy for the masses in the West Bank, in Gaza and in the 1948-occupied land. The resistance must offer them a continuing revolution in an effective and realistic manner, by means of a new strategy and genuine unity within a potent revolutionary program. At the same time it must concentrate on mobilizing the Arab forces and people in the neighboring regions, especially in Jordan, to protect the resistance and prevent any conspiracies against it. The struggle is the same one; the issues are identical; and it is erroneous to make a distinction between them. Who confronts? Who acts? The issue is the same.

— *Do you agree with the opinion that the relations which the resistance movement established with the Arab regimes made it a captive of the policies of those regimes?*

— Despite its heroism and initiative in carrying arms and resisting Zionist occupation, the major movement within the resistance accepted, implicitly, and to a certain extent explicitly, its limitation by Arab circumstances when it decided

* When the Jordanian army engaged in an all-out attack against the Palestinian resistance movement in Jordan.

** When the Jordanian army attacked the remaining Palestinian guerrillas in the hills around Jerash.

that its mission concerned the Palestinian people alone. Willingly and shortsightedly, it abandoned its greatest asset, the Arab masses; and in so doing, it allowed those regimes which we know are very jealous of their privileges to strike at and control the Arab people. It is the movement of the masses, and not the avowedly good intentions of the regimes toward the goal of liberation, that restrains those regimes from striking at the resistance. Thus we may say that this error enabled the governments to dictate their conditions and to interfere in various ways with the progress of the resistance, its policies, principles and action. The slogan of non-interference in the Arab situation automatically permitted the Arab situation to interfere with the resistance movement.

This takes us back to the questions of what is meant by the conspiracy and who will liberate the occupied land. We say that when the resistance ceased to assert the national role of the Arab masses it handed these masses over to their governments, thus giving the latter strength to strike the resistance. Whenever a regime swerves from the Palestine case, whenever it deceives or conspires against it, we hear a lot of talk all to one effect: "What business do we have with the Arabs?" This is nothing but an extension of the manner in which the traditional leadership understands the role of the Arabs as far as the Palestine question is concerned.

But not all Arabs are the same. They are of two kinds: those of reaction, submission and privilege; and the Arab masses who form the backbone of any historic movement for the liberation of land, resources, production, economy, human relations, and so on. Confusing these two types is in itself submission to the logic of the ruling class and to compromising regimes. The resistance overlooked the importance of establishing direct relations with the Arab masses. The governments supply the resistance with funds so that it will not have contacts with the people. The governments give broadcasting facilities so that it will not set up educational links with the people. When the resistance accepted the governments as patrons of the people, it also accepted them as its own patrons. The resistance denied itself its main weapon against the governments; its relations with them were, as a result, not at all correct.

The resistance allowed its step-by-step approach to overrule the historical nature of the task. One may ask, because some Arab regimes have tentacles inside the resistance: What can we do? Such and such a state lets the resistance breathe—do we fight it or do we not? Yet the issue must not be discussed in this manner, but from a basic understanding of the present conflict, the nature of the forces involved, the significance of these forces and their role in liberation. This is where the problem is defined in its fullest dimensions. In other words, any analysis of where our mistakes lay and in what we have succeeded with the Arab states should be based on this principle. Had the concepts been precise, the vision and the strategy revolutionary and clear, unity among the elements of the revolution would have been possible and the groups would have become either extensions of the revolution on the one hand, or ineffective institutions on the other.

— *Since our discussion has concentrated on the political position of the resistance, what then is the specific and practicable way to attain this position through which we may truly realize Palestinian national unity? Bear in mind that there are those who claim that the problem does not lie in specifying the political stand on the Palestine question or the means of liberation, but in taking administrative steps to establish this unity.*

— I think this problem goes deep; it involves bringing together the understanding and strategic vision of the struggle with the means of mobilizing forces and operating in accordance with a political program. A secondary problem exists and sometimes makes itself felt—the problem of group and organizational fanaticism, which I believe has decreased to a great extent in the wake of recent events. It has been shown that the leadership was not on equal terms with the struggle and that no single organization actually included all the supporters of its particular point of view. Many organizations have also proved to contain members whose opinions are closer to another group than their own. After September it became clear that the organizations did not represent a harmonious ideological unity; organizational fanaticism therefore decreased. Differences of viewpoint exist and the member can no longer be totally committed to his group.

The entire rank and file felt that the leadership was unequal to the struggle; they saw no advantage in fanaticism to the extent of destroying national unity purely for the sake of this or that leader. Although I would identify the basic problem as one of reaching agreement to work through an approved, unified strategy, I believe that its roots go deeper and involve the mother movement, that of Arab liberation. If the Arab national movement were integrated into a broad-based, popular national front with a clear and democratic program for national liberation, then the resistance would fit into a framework which would allow it to solve most of its problems reasonably quickly; and this framework would be revolutionary in deed as well as word.

The fundamental approach to answering this question is to work seriously toward a solution of the larger problem. But this does not release us from striving honestly and sincerely to sway the leadership and all concerned, through the organizations and other means, into establishing real unity—rather than a misleading synthesis that is quick to disintegrate. There is no doubt that the unity of the Palestinian resistance on sincere and revolutionary grounds would tear down the walls of separatism and put an end to the senseless fighting within the Arab liberation movement. It would be the beginning of unity for the movement.

— *We move on now to another topic—the present situation. What are the fundamental duties which the resistance movement must perform and for which it must struggle?*

— The resistance movement faces many issues; some of them concern the general framework of action. We have spoken of this in terms of strategic understanding

of the Palestine question and the way to approach it—in other words, the relation of the resistance to the Arab liberation movement and the Arab masses.

But there are many other problems which the resistance must tackle. The first involves its structure and plan of action. The resistance must unite its forces under one program, one direction, one vision, and one plan of action which would revolutionize conditions in the occupied land. This is the first issue; the other concerns the adoption of a clear and decisive stand on the situation in Jordan. All this should start out from a united and effective approach to the relationship with the Arab masses and the Arab liberation movement, injecting revolution into the whole area. Any success on the part of the resistance will remain isolated if it is not accompanied by Arab success. Gaza is an example. Instead of being a source of inspiration, exhorting the national conscience and urging its forces toward unity, steadfastness and confrontation, Gaza became the exception—both isolated and besieged. It has no sufficient effect on the situation as a whole.

— *Does taking a decisive stand on the Jordanian regime entail a rejection of the idea of coexistence with that regime? If so, what is the appropriate action to take?*

— Coexistence with the [Jordanian] regime was not a matter for the resistance to decide alone. In fact, the regime settled the issue from the very first day of its establishment. Thus in 1965, it determined to destroy the seeds of the revolution; and later it was moved to liquidate the vanguards of the resistance movement before the latter could enlarge its influence—even before the occurrence of what were described as “faulty practices”: numerous offices, automobiles, infractions of regulations.

To the Jordanian regime, this is an issue concerning its very existence. When, in such circumstances, the resistance leadership raises the question of coexistence it merely betrays its misinterpretation of past and present events in the region and of the struggle itself. The Jordanian regime sentenced the resistance movement to death, for it finds the sheer notion of the movement hostile. However much the resistance were to coordinate with, “coexist” with, or pander to the regime, it would not be accepted. The regime would give it no trust and would, indeed, prefer to destroy the whole idea of a resistance movement. It tried to take advantage of the limitations and regionalism of the resistance in order to bring the movement under its own control, ultimately to be used against the true concept of resistance.

Methods of dealing with the Jordanian regime were discussed in the context of understanding the Arab liberation movement in general and Jordan in particular. Confrontation begins with dependence on the masses, their organization, mobilization and unity behind a clear program, and with putting the priorities before them adequately—always clarifying the present situation and apprising them of their responsibilities to protect the resistance in the occupied land and to play an

effective part in Arab fronts. We will be unable to counter the Jordanian regime without the support of the masses, without informing them of their duties, without abandoning all manifestations of regional Palestinian fanaticism, and without putting the issue in its true context—the context of the Arab masses. When we have bound the struggle for Palestine to that for improving human and social conditions in Jordan, and when we can mobilize and organize on this basis, then we shall have opened the way for the elimination of the regime which obstructs the duties of the resistance.

— *All the groups of the resistance have rejected political settlement on principle, but we may still discuss the duty to eradicate any tendency toward such a settlement. Do you think that, in its present state, the resistance can fulfill this duty? And if the settlement is achieved, how do you envisage the position of the resistance on the Arab and international levels?*

— I do not believe that the resistance alone can bring about the failure of political settlement, or even of conspiracy by any one of the Arab states; for the only power capable of defeating great conspiracies is the unity of the Arab masses. Only this force can handle a confrontation. The Palestinian resistance can encourage the masses and call upon them to face up to their responsibilities through intensifying the struggle, through unity, and through showing a militant example of a small state, under the most difficult conditions, defying the Zionist state with all its power, as it does in Gaza. In its continuing struggle and great sacrifice, Gaza condemns any Arab submission; for their conditions, the paucity of their means, their total isolation, did not stop the few poor people of Gaza from resisting the entire force of the Zionist state.

In opposing political settlement, therefore, the first step for the resistance is to unite and escalate its activity, to acquire stable foundations and wider dimensions, and to understand the role of the Arab masses and the Arab liberation movement. Resisting political settlement means neither more nor less than creating proper conditions for the Arab resistance. The issue is not one of words alone; it is an objective matter which demands that the way be continually made clear for the confrontation.

To take the second part of the question: I believe that political settlement and all that it entails—submission to the will of the colonialists and to the influence of the Zionist state—would render all national forces, not only the Palestinian resistance, under direct Zionist control. It would also make it very difficult to express any militant views in any Arab state. We would once more be subject to straightforward colonialist rule. In this case, expressing a nationalist opinion would be punishable heroism. What about the resistance? Conditions in the Arab world would be completely hostile to the concept of resistance, to all who performed acts of resistance, and to all who lent it their support. Political settlement involves taking a stand not only on Israel, but on the Arab masses and their nation-

alism as well. In other words, anyone who wishes to participate in a submissive solution by the same token agrees to suppress, crush and defeat nationalist sentiments.

— *At present there are various attempts to have Palestinian elements take part in political settlement. The call for a Palestinian state, and the activity of certain mayors in occupied territory who point to the necessity for electing representatives of the Palestinian people and those who will speak in their name under occupation—these are examples. How should the resistance movement react to these attempts?*

The ideal way to confront all these dubious activities lies in greater coherence, developing political forces and mobilizing the masses toward Palestine, for it is logically impossible for submissive and seditious appeals to be made in the shadow of a strong, growing and potent resistance. The appearance of these seditious trends is nothing but a symptom of the lessening influence of the resistance, its failure to attain its basic goals in this period, to develop its capabilities, or to remain close to the masses. The first prerequisites in facing up to these attempts are attention to conditions for strengthening the resistance, internally and among the masses, and regrouping its forces around a militant stance. The second condition, impossible to realize properly before the first, is the creation of a revolutionary court to try, in absentia, those who put forward the treachery, and to carry out sentence. The revolution cannot behave as such unless it *is* a revolution. It cannot do away with treason unless there is a substitute; that substitute is revolutionary nationalism and a resistance which knows what it wants and how to achieve it.

— *Because of your close relations with it, I would like to ask you some questions on the Arab Liberation Front. First, what is the real relationship between the Front and the regime in Iraq?*

— The relationship between the Front and the Iraqi regime is determined by the former's contacts with the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party. There is no relationship outside this framework. The Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party was the prime mover in creating the Arab Liberation Front. Owing to its popular, militant nature, the Party called for the Front before it came to power in Iraq. Of course, the establishment of a regime in which the Party is a major element helps to supply the Front with its material needs, thus leading to a relationship of mutual support. And I would stress once again that there are no relations outside this framework.

— *Don't the partisan loyalties and the moral weight of the regime in Iraq affect the independence of the Front's stand at times when it is necessary to take up a position which may cause conflict between purely Palestinian requirements and the needs of Iraq as a state?*

— The independence of the Arab Liberation Front stems both from its structure and its goals. To the extent that it remains faithful to the concepts of liberation and popular armed struggle, so it stays independent. No force can sway the Front from its goals, and all contradictions of them are rejected from the beginning, regardless of the consequences. As for the possibility of discrepancy between the facilities in the Iraqi region and hopes of national liberation, there is a continual struggle within the Front which interacts with the Party's efforts to develop Iraqi resources and set them to serve the struggle. No one can deny that there is a gap between the capabilities of any one Arab region and the burden of realizing the national aims and struggle. But a militant movement aims to direct and develop available facilities to help meet the needs and aspirations of the coming struggle.

— *Many comments have been heard on the position of the Arab Liberation Front in the September 1970 struggle. It was said that the Front's leadership was not equal to its responsibilities. To what extent are such assertions true?*

— Many rumors sprung from the events of September and several were proved false. We must therefore guard against believing everything that is said in this connection. The Arab Liberation Front participated in the struggle, as did the other fedayeen organizations; it resisted the fierce attack of the Jordanian regime; and its fedayeen and popular organization fought as courageously as the other members of the fedayeen movement. Some of the leaders of the Front came from Arab regions outside Jordan and it was not as easy for them to move about in September as it was for other organizations which, being Jordanian, knew the country and had contacts inside it. They were able to tell a government soldier, for example, "I live in Jabal al-Lubeida", and that would protect them from imprisonment; whereas the authorities were detaining and questioning any Syrian or Iraqi.

In September it happened that the Front's General Secretary, Dr. Zaid Haider, was outside the region on resistance business. When the events of that month began, a large section of the Front's Palestinian and non-Palestinian leadership returned from outside Jordan and played as large a part as they could in leading the resistance in those regions still under its control. Thus we can see that rumors of shortcomings in the leadership of the Front overlook the truth.

But it is true to say that the leadership in general was unable to act effectively during the struggle because of the difficulties of movement in Jordan. Except for a few persons, mostly from Fateh, there was no one in the leadership who had connections with the bases, or who could make contact with and guide the masses through the struggle. When the battles took place, then, the leadership lost its capacity to lead; the few exceptions to this occurred when several leaders happened to be geographically close to each other. So, to say that all leaders everywhere were able to do their job is incorrect; and this applies to some elements in the leadership of the Arab Liberation Front.

— *The Front created the slogan, "The nationalist content of the struggle", and based its strategy on this principle. In its official documents it has presented the issue as if it can be resolved through the creation of a body containing militants from more than one region. But the primary aspect of the nationalist content of the battle is a national struggle in every Arab region aiming to develop that region's economic, political and military potential to be directed toward liberation. How do you explain that?*

— I disagree with the terms of your question in two particulars. First of all, the ALF does not believe that the nationalist content of the struggle implies an organization containing militants from more than one Arab state. We have never presented the issue in this fashion at all. And if the issue is not clear, we can clarify it. Secondly, I disagree with your statement that "the primary aspect of the nationalist content of the battle is a national struggle in every Arab region aiming to develop that region's economic, political and military potential to be directed toward liberation".

We believe that the issue is larger than that. It has two sides: the first concerns what you are speaking of, that is, the national struggle in each region to develop its circumstances and channel them along the path of liberation. The second side of the issue is participation in the special struggle for Palestine. It is not sufficient for the Maghreb and Tunisian masses to struggle in their respective countries alone. Of course, their struggle is a necessary one, but it should go hand in hand with the special struggle for Palestine and the search for unification which is inseparable from the Palestine cause as its focal point. The interaction of these struggles and their simultaneous progress along specified lines constitute the basic aspect of the national content of the struggle. We do not understand the national content of the struggle as representing a combatant organization of a few hundred individuals from different regions; this is merely a manifestation of the national content, not its essence, which is the transformation of Arab circumstances and the identification of the process of liberation with continuous armed struggle for Palestine. This is why we differ from other groups in holding to the interpretation you mentioned. We link national struggle to those for unification and, through arms, for Palestine. We could go into more detail, but this is essentially our concept of the nationalistic content of the struggle.

— *In the light of this clarification, do you consider that the Front fully explained this concept—of the nationalist content of the struggle—in its booklets and other publications?*

— I do not claim perfection in the Front's explanation of its ideas. But the fundamental statement is clear; in fact, it goes deeper than your question implies. In this statement, an understanding of the national quality of the struggle was bound up with various other issues, among which were the unification struggle, the social and popular struggles, the unfettering of the forces capable of liberation, and so on. Although the answer to your question is that the issue was not totally

clear, there was sufficient clarity to define the direction of the Front. Of course, it requires more discussion and explanation. But I believe that the Arab Liberation Front raised a basic issue which was effective in developing the comprehension of the resistance movement as a whole, in terms of the national content of the struggle and its relationship to the Arab masses.

— *On the basis of the slogan of the national content of the struggle, the Arab Liberation Front refused to take part in the Palestine National Councils and in the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization because both represent regionalist institutions. Do you think that the national content of the struggle contradicts the struggle within each region? Is the national content of the struggle represented, for example, by a national council or executive committee including Arabs from all regions?*

— The source of our reservations over the Palestine Liberation Organization [PLO] and participation in National Councils is not only our opposition to the regionalist schemes of the struggle. The Front believes that there is such a thing as regional struggle and that the national elements in each region must take part in the national regional struggle. Our doubts lie elsewhere.

The first reason for reservation is related to the Palestine Liberation Organization itself. In the eyes of the Front the PLO was historically the child of the [Arab] summit meetings [1964]. The first summit conference was convened to consider the failure to counter the diversion of the Jordan waters. To foil the enemy's plans, the conference took several conciliatory steps; these included the counter-diversion project and the foundation of the PLO as some kind of pre-emptive strike at the revolutionary restlessness prevailing among the Palestinian people. It was another Arab regime added to those already in existence, and it was designed to patronize the Palestinian struggle, to prevent it from developing into armed struggle. This is how the Front interprets the motives of those regimes which unanimously approved the establishment of the PLO. We all know that unanimity only occurs by obedience to the principle, "march at the pace of the weakest", and in this case our weakest is well known: it follows the colonialist line, not to revolutionize the situation and not to participate in the struggle for liberation.

Our reservations, then, stem from our principles. Their second source concerns the makeup of the Arab Liberation Front leadership. The Front added a national dimension to the resistance and most of its leaders are not Palestinian. Because of the structure of the PLO, Arab militants were forbidden to take part in the National Councils. The Palestine National Council is a hierarchical body and not a council of the revolution; it was therefore open to the non-revolutionary Palestinian and closed to the revolutionary Arab.

Our reservation stemmed from a desire to alter the structure of the organization into a revolutionary pattern expressing the movement toward Palestine rather than the parliamentary and geographical representation of the Palestinian people.

The revolution regards its commitment to Palestine as militant, not geographic. The intellectual and militant practices of many individuals were denied and many were not allowed to attend the Palestine National Council because they were born ten miles from the mandatory borders of Palestine. That is why our reservations are not over the regional struggle—for this is an accepted struggle provided it has a national direction and a critical relationship with the focal issue: the issue of Palestine.

— *After September, the Front agreed to take part in the ninth National Council and in the Executive Committee. In a public statement, it announced that it would struggle from within to convince everyone of the nationalist content of the struggle. But we believe that this explanation fails to answer the question and demands clarification. First, belief in the nationalist content of the struggle is basically a duty of the Arab national forces, not only those of the Palestinians. Second, why did the Front not undertake this campaign of persuasion from the very start? Third, the extension of the Front into Iraq required the creation of regionalist institutions on all levels, given the present Arab circumstances. Why did the Front accept this in Iraq and reject it in the Palestinian arena?*

— As I have said, we do not object to militant regionalist bodies that work through regional conflicts to the benefit of liberation and mobilization for the struggle. There are many reasons for our participation in the National Councils after September. The interaction of the Front's struggle with that of other organizations gave birth to new convictions, including one that the Front should not be absent from activities and institutions in which other militant organizations took part. And it agreed to participate through its Palestinian members. The participation of the Front is linked to the struggle to revolutionize the organization as well as to persuade the people of the nationalist content of the struggle.

Then there are circumstances that continued after September, among which is that the fedayeen movement has become more convinced of the nationalist content of the struggle while the Front is better persuaded of the necessity to take part in the Palestinian regionalist struggle owing to the affinity of views. There is a third aspect—an extremely important one. The Front believed it necessary to revolutionize the PLO from the inside by actual participation in the organization.

In any case, these are all viewpoints which could be developed with practice and according to the dictates of circumstance and the welfare of the revolutionary struggle.

APPENDIX

THE POLITICAL PROGRAM OF THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION (January 1973)

Prologue

Throughout its glorious struggle for liberation, democracy and unity, our Arab people has been persistently subject to conspiracies from the colonialist and imperialist forces and their lackey local reactionaries. These colonialist and imperialist forces see in our Arab homeland ample opportunity for imperialist plunder of its unlimited natural resources. They regard it, also, as an important strategic take-off point, owing to its unique central position amidst the three continents of Asia, Africa and Europe, and to its control over vital air and sea routes, especially the Mediterranean Sea, the Suez Canal, the Red Sea, the Arabian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. They also view it as a center of gravity for whoever dominates it in international politics.

In their invasion of our Arab homeland, the colonialist and imperialist powers feared that the rising patriotic and national struggle would stand in the way of their schemes. Neither were they confident of the ability of their local reactionary mainstays to hold out against the rising national tide. Hence, using the world Zionist movement, they plotted the usurpation of Palestine, intending to create therein a colonialist racist entity which would constitute both an outpost for the protection of colonialist and Zionist domination over our Arab homeland and a heavy club to be raised by world imperialism in the face of the ever-growing Arab struggle for liberation.

In collusion with the reactionary forces which ruled the whole area—except Syria where a nationalist regime existed—the colonialist and imperialist forces succeeded in planting the colonialist Zionist entity in Palestine arbitrarily and forcibly. They also succeeded in uprooting the Palestinians from their land. The Palestinian Arab people, however, did not submit. On the basis of its right to defend its homeland and its existence, and in view of the responsibility it bears as a forward defense line against the imperialist-Zionist assault on the Arab nation, the Palestinian Arab people, for thirty years, put up a heroic and relentless struggle. In each of its revolutionary uprisings, which culminated in the 1936 and 1947 revolts, the reactionary and lackey forces played a role in undermining the Pales-

tinian struggle and bolstering the position of its enemies and the enemies of the Arab nation.

This was the situation on January 1, 1965, when the vanguard of our Palestinian people initiated the contemporary armed national revolution against the Zionist entity, which exists on Palestinian soil through aggression and the force of arms, and which has never desisted from using violence to expel our people and to finalize the realization of its schemes for the usurpation of the whole of our land. In this revolution, which erupted on that glorious first day of 1965, the vanguard of our people embodied the noble revolutionary traditions of our people and of our Arab nation. They also raised anew the flag of the struggle for liberation against imperialism and Zionism, the flag in whose defense tens of thousands of martyrs have fallen everywhere in the Arab homeland.

This vanguard (with it the Palestinian people, the Arab masses and the free of the world) believed that armed struggle is the correct, the inevitable and the main method of liberating Palestine. For such an antagonistic contradiction with the Zionist enemy cannot be resolved except through revolutionary violence.

When the Palestinian revolutionary vanguard resorted to armed struggle, it aroused the Palestinian and Arab masses, filling them with the will to fight. This led to a violent transformation of Arab realities in the direction of insistence upon rejecting the defeat and determination to take the offensive against the Zionist enemy and to defeat the American imperialist plots. Consequently, Jordan became a base for armed struggle and a take-off point for both the escalation of armed struggle and its protection on Palestinian soil. In addition, extended battle fronts were opened against the enemy which included the Suez Canal and the whole of the Palestinian frontier with Transjordan, Lebanon and Syria. Armed popular resistance was escalated in the West Bank and in the Palestinian territory occupied prior to June 1967. The Gaza Strip witnessed heroic deeds of armed struggle to the point where semi-liberated neighbourhoods in Gaza itself were created.

The Palestinian revolution moved from one victory to another and grew quickly, in spite of all the imperialist and Zionist plots and notwithstanding all difficulties. It was able to emerge victorious from all the battles in which it confronted imperialist conspiracies and counter-revolutionary forces in Jordan and Lebanon from November 1968 up to June 1970. The Zionist enemy, too, failed in the extermination campaigns which it conducted against the bases of the revolution. The revolution was able to turn these campaigns of the enemy into victories, as witnessed at Al-Karameh and Al-'Arkoub.

However, the revolution began to face an extremely difficult situation due to the American initiatives and the plans they spawned (such as the Rogers Plan). These initiatives were accompanied by large scale encirclement of the revolution

and the spread of the spirit of defeatism. This situation provided the counter-revolutionary forces in Jordan with a valuable opportunity to exploit some of the negative features that characterized the course of the revolution in order to implement the American-Zionist-Hashemite schemes. These schemes aimed at administering a harsh blow to the Palestinian revolution as a preliminary step towards its elimination and towards the liquidation of the Palestine problem. The Palestinian revolution and the Palestinian-Jordanian masses fought gloriously in Jordan in September 1970, in defense of the principle of armed struggle and for the Palestinian and Arab cause. Their battle shall forever remain an epic of incredible heroism and historic resistance under the harshest of conditions. But in July 1971, the lackey Jordanian regime eliminated the public presence of the Palestinian revolution in Jordan and began to follow policies which carried the threat of (a) an official capitulation to the enemy concerning the West Bank and Jerusalem, (b) the liquidation of the unity of the Palestinian presence, (c) the encouragement of dissension among the ranks of the Palestinian people and of divisions between Palestinian and Jordanian, between soldier and *fidai*, (d) the conversion of the East Bank into a buffer favoring the Zionist entity and into a military, political and economic sphere of influence for Israel, which means transforming it into an American, West German and British backyard where imperialist influence dominates, (e) the repression, pillage and impoverishment of the Jordanian masses, the suppression of their democratic freedoms, in addition to the wrecking of the national economy. It is no secret that the American schemes aim at rebuilding the Jordanian army so it can be directed against Syria and Iraq also. These circumstances presented the Zionist enemy with the golden opportunity for making its occupation more secure by concentrating its efforts on trying to wipe out the armed resistance in the Gaza Strip and pacify the situation in the occupied territories. Thus the Gaza Strip was subjected to the harshest forms of repression and population expulsions; while in the West Bank local municipal elections were imposed to create favorable conditions for the occupation, divide the Palestinian people and attempt at promoting phony political leaders to substitute for the Palestinian revolutionary leadership. This went simultaneously with King Hussein's plan for the establishment of a so-called United Arab Kingdom with goals identical to those of the Zionist plot.

On the other hand, American imperialism intensified its assault according to a broad plan to securely contain and liquidate both the Palestinian revolution and the Arab liberation movement. For this purpose, American imperialism resorted to numerous manoeuvres and plots under such signboards as the so-called American initiatives, peace proposals, interim settlements and United Nations Security Council resolutions. In this they were abetted by active defeatist forces, bound by strong economic and political ties to the imperialists.

The blow that was administered to the Palestinian revolution in Amman in mid-1971, the intensification of the American and Zionist imperialist assault

against the Palestinian revolution and the Palestinian masses in the occupied territories and outside, and finally the growing deterioration in the official Arab situation in favor of capitulation, have all continued to generate a crisis for the Palestinian revolution and the Palestinian and Arab masses. This general crisis has, on the one hand, captivated the whole Arab nation throughout the greater Arab homeland and, on the other, produced a series of conspiratorial schemes aiming at the liquidation of the Palestinian revolution, of the Palestinian people's unified national existence and of its patriotic cause. These conspiracies have taken such forms as the Allon Plan, the proposed Palestinian state on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, annexation, judaization, as well as the absorption and assimilation of the Palestinians in the societies where they live in the diaspora.

In this atmosphere of crisis, we find our Palestinian Arab people moving with firmness and determination to defend its armed revolution, its unified national existence and its right to liberate its entire homeland. Our people will allow neither the liquidation of its just cause, nor of its revolution, both of which constitute a central point from which militancy and revolution radiate onto an area over which the imperialists and the Zionists want to extend their full domination.

We also find the constituency of the revolution, its fighters and its mass organizations pushing forcefully and decisively in the direction of national unity, the intensification of armed struggle against the Zionist enemy, the liberation of Jordan, the construction of an Arab front to participate in the struggle with the Palestinian revolution and the establishment of close ties with the world liberation movement and the progressive anti-imperialist forces in the world.

The strong orientation towards national unity among the ranks of the Palestinian revolution does not in itself mean success in overcoming the crisis, but it means creating the necessary conditions for such a step.

Escalating the armed struggle against the Zionist enemy, mobilizing the masses and organizing them, stimulating the various forms of armed and non-armed mass struggle (military, political, economic and cultural), all lead to recapturing the initiative and assuming the offensive, in readiness for overcoming the crisis.

For the Palestinian revolution and for the cause of the liberation of Palestine, Jordan stands out as something special in comparison to any other Arab country. The Palestinians form a majority in Jordan; this majority has national rights there in addition to its other general rights. It constitutes a principal segment of the Palestinian people without which it is pointless to discuss armed struggle against the enemy. In addition, its struggle has been linked to that of the Transjordanian people and organically linked with contemporary history, especially during the past 25 years. Furthermore the Transjordanian borders with the Zionist enemy are the longest and the closest to its transportation network and to its

military, economic and demographic strategic points. From here arise the dangers of the collusion of King Hussein's regime with imperialism and Zionism. This collusion has produced the massacres perpetrated against the Palestinian revolution, the prohibition of its presence in Jordan, the opposition of any activity against either the Zionist enemy or imperialism, and finally the transformation of Jordan into a protective military buffer for the Zionist entity and a route via which Zionist policies and influence in all fields could penetrate. These facts have made the liberation of Jordan (toppling the lackey regime) a decisive factor in overcoming the crisis and a strategic necessity in the process of liberating Palestine.

The creation of an Arab front to participate in the struggle with the Palestinian revolution rests basically upon the belief that no success for our cause is possible except within the framework of a general victory for the national, patriotic and liberating struggle of our Arab nation. This belief will contribute to the protection of the Palestinian revolution, will ensure the continuation and escalation of the armed struggle, will help also in the struggle to topple the lackey regime in Jordan and will generally aid in overcoming the crisis in question.

Strengthening the ties of solidarity and common struggle between the Palestinian revolution and the Arab militant forces on the one hand, and the world liberation movement and the progressive anti-imperialist forces throughout the world on the other, will contribute to the support of our revolutionary struggle and its intensification, as well as to the common struggle of all peoples against imperialism, Zionism, racism and reaction. This strengthening of ties is based on the belief that the Palestinian revolution and the Arab struggle constitute a part of the world struggle for liberation.

In these new and dangerous circumstances and in the face of the responsibilities which the Palestinian revolution bears, the Palestine Liberation Organization, with all its groups and forces, has agreed to an interim political program based on four principal strategic axes:

1. The continuation of the mobilization and organization of all our people's potentials, both within and without the homeland, for a protracted people's war in pursuit of total liberation, and the creation of a democratic state in accordance with the aspirations of the Arab nation for comprehensive unity and national liberation.

2. The tight linking of our people's struggle with that of our brothers the Jordanian people in a Jordanian-Palestinian liberation front to be entrusted (in addition to its tasks in Palestine) with the conduct of the struggle for the liberation of Jordan from the lackey reactionary royalist regime, which acts both to mask actual Zionist domination over the East Bank and to guard fiercely the said Zionist occupation of Palestine.

3. The linking of the Palestinian struggle with the overall Arab struggle *via*

a front of all the national and progressive forces hostile to imperialism, Zionism and neo-colonialism.

4. Solidarity with the world struggle against imperialism, Zionism and reaction, and for national liberation.

The Palestine Liberation Organization defines its tasks as follows:

First: On the Palestine Scene

1. To continue the struggle, particularly armed struggle, for the liberation of the entire Palestine national territory and for the establishment of a Palestinian democratic society which guarantees the right to work and to a decent life for all citizens so they can live in equality, justice and fraternity, a democratic society opposed to all forms of prejudice due to race, color or creed.

This society will guarantee the freedoms of thought, expression and assembly, freedom to demonstrate, strike and form national political and labor organizations, freedom of worship for all creeds; such that this democratic Palestinian society will constitute a part of the entire united Arab democratic society.

2. To militate against the compromising mentality and the plans it spawns which are either contrary to our people's cause of national liberation, or aim to liquidate this cause through "proposed Palestinian entities" or through *a Palestinian state on part of the Palestinian national soil*. Also to oppose these plans through armed struggle and political struggle of the masses connected to it.

3. To reinforce the bonds of national unity and joint struggle between our compatriots in the territory occupied in 1948 and those in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and beyond the occupied homeland.

4. To oppose the policy of clearing the occupied territory of its Arab inhabitants. To confront with violence the erection of colonies and the judaization of parts of the occupied homeland.

5. To mobilize the masses in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the entire occupied Palestinian land; also to arm them for the purpose of continuing the struggle and raising their militancy against Zionist settler-colonialism.

6. To direct attention to the organization of our masses in the occupied territory and help mass organizations oppose the Histadrut efforts at drawing Arab workers into its membership. To reinforce and support the Palestinian and Jordanian labor unions' endeavors in realizing the above aim. To oppose the attempts of Zionist political parties at establishing Arab branches in the occupied territory.

7. To support the peasant masses and develop the national economic and cultural institutions in the occupied homeland, in order to strengthen the attach-

ment of citizens there to the land and put an end to the process of emigration. In addition, to oppose the Zionist economic and cultural invasion.

8. To direct attention to the conditions of our citizens in the territory occupied in 1948. To support their struggle for the retention of their Arab national identity. To adopt their problems and help them participate in the struggle for liberation.

9. To direct attention to the welfare of the working masses of our people in the various parts of the Arab homeland by obtaining for them economic and legal rights equal to those of the citizens of Arab societies, considering that their productive potentials are invested in the service of these societies. Particular attention is to be paid to matters pertaining to their right to work, remunerations and compensations, to freedom of political and cultural Palestinian action, and freedom of travel and movement, all this within a framework preservative of the Palestinian identity.

10. To promote and develop the role of the Palestinian woman, socially, culturally and economically, in the national struggle and to seek her participation in all aspects of the struggle.

11. To direct attention to the conditions of our citizens in the camps; to seek to raise their level economically, socially and culturally; to train them in the administration of their own affairs.

12. To encourage workers on Arab farmland and in Arab concerns to remain steadfast in their positions; to undertake to guard them from the lures of employment in enemy projects; to encourage and develop local productivity so as to absorb workers employed by the enemy; to oppose enemy attempts at taking over national productive enterprises and ruining them.

13. To consider every collaborator, or person negligent of the historic natural right of the Palestinian people in their homeland, a target of the revolution, be it in his person or his possessions. So, too, every conspirator against any of our people's rights, primarily its right to oppose the occupation and its right to national independence.

14. To direct attention to our emigrant masses in foreign countries and to act to link them to their cause and to the Palestinian revolution.

15. The Palestine Liberation Organization shall use its official Arab relations for the protection of the Palestinian citizens' interests in the Arab homeland and for the expression of the Palestinian people's political will. (The Palestinian revolution shall continue to represent the legitimate political leadership of the Palestinian people and to be its sole spokesman in all fateful matters.) Hence the organs of leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization shall be formed from all the organizations of the armed Palestinian revolution, the organizations

of the Palestinian masses (trade-union and cultural organizations) and from patriotic groups and personalities who uphold armed struggle as a principal and fundamental means for the liberation of Palestine and are committed to the Palestinian National Charter.

Second: On the Jordanian-Palestinian Scene

The Jordanian-Palestinian national front is called upon to direct the struggle of the two peoples towards the following strategic aims:

(A) The establishment of a national democratic regime in Jordan which shall:

Create the appropriate atmosphere for the continuation of the struggle for the liberation of the whole of Palestine;

Guarantee the national sovereignty of both Jordanian and Palestinian peoples;

Guarantee the renewal of the union of the two banks on the correct basis of the complete national equality between the two peoples, so that the full historical national rights of the Palestinian people and the present national rights of the two peoples are safeguarded;

Ensure common national development economically, socially and culturally;

Strengthen the ties of brotherhood and equality between the two peoples by means of equal legal, constitutional, cultural and economic rights and by means of placing the human and economic resources of each people in the service of their common development.

(B) The consolidation of the struggles of both the Palestinian and Jordanian peoples with that of the Arab nation so as to:

Complete national liberation;

Oppose imperialist plans aiming at imposing solutions and conditions in the Arab homeland that mean surrender to the enemy;

Eradicate all forms of Zionist and imperialist presence (economic, military and cultural), as well as all the forces connected with them which act as mediators for neo-colonialism and its policies.

In order for this Jordanian-Palestinian national front to actually emerge on the Jordanian scene, and to grow and gain strength, all forms of day to day mass struggle must be immediately activated, so that the agitation of the masses for both their daily and general demands leads to the rise of an organized leadership and organizations expressive of the interests of the various segments of the masses, i.e. the kind of leadership and organizations that have been absent from the day-to-day fights of the masses over the past years.

The realization of the general goals of the Palestinian-Jordanian national front requires a long and hard struggle. Through day-to-day struggles and partial battles, the masses surmount all social obstacles of a parochial nature and fuse in common struggle showing their militant national features and exposing the lackey royalist regime. The royalist regime depends fundamentally upon the exploitation of tribal relations and upon the provocation of parochial fanaticism in order to hide its collaboration with Zionism and imperialism (also to divert the attention of the masses from their contradiction with the regime.) The Palestine Liberation Organization presents the program of action for Jordan to engage the militant organizations in Jordan in a serious fraternal debate with the purpose of building the Palestinian-Jordanian national front. This front must apply itself to the following tasks:

1. Mobilizing and organizing the masses for the establishment of a national democratic regime in Jordan which believes in the Palestinian revolution, supports it and provides the climate necessary for all modes of mass struggle.

2. Bringing the Jordanians to participate in the armed struggle against the Zionist enemy inasmuch as this is a patriotic and national goal as well as a necessity for the protection of the East Bank of Jordan.

3. Struggling:

- to establish the Palestinian revolution's freedom of action in and from Jordan and the formation of bases on its soil,

- to expose the conspiracies of the lackey regime and its falsehoods in this respect,

- to ensure mass protection of the fighters moving off westward beyond the river.

4. Acting to consolidate the national and anti-imperialist forces throughout the Arab homeland in one militant front and to deepen militant ties between the Palestinian-Jordanian national struggle and the world revolutionary forces.

Third: Relations with the Arab Revolutionary Forces

The Arab revolution is now passing through the phase of implementing the democratic national revolution which militates:

- (A) To realize complete political and economic independence and eradicate all forms of division and dependence upon colonialism and imperialism.

- (B) To liquidate all forms of imperialist presence such as political influence, military bases, economic investments, cultural institutions, and the defeat of all the local forces connected with it.

- (C) To liberate Palestine from the Zionist-imperialist entity which not only

usurped the Palestinian land and expelled its indigenous population, but has also proved to be, throughout its existence, a main imperialist tool for undermining the Arab revolution and protecting the imperialist presence in the area. The liberation of Palestine is not only a Palestinian patriotic duty. It is also a national necessity. The struggle for the realization of the Arab national democratic revolution will be neither unified nor deepened, nor will it broaden and succeed in achieving its purposes, except by liquidating the Zionist imperialist base which aims at its very foundations.

(D) To safeguard the freedom of the Arab masses so they can exercise their role in political life and constitute a solid basis for a firmly established democratic Arab unity.

(E) To place the material and human resources of the Arab nation at the service of economic, social and cultural development with the purpose of reinforcing political and economic independence, realizing Arab economic and cultural integration and eradicating all forms of backwardness and division.

The unity of the Palestinian revolution and the Palestinian-Jordanian national struggle constitutes an integral part of the Arab democratic national revolution and one of its main axes.

Hence, the task of the Palestinian revolution, and its leadership, and that of the Jordanian national front is:

To seek to join with all the militant Arab national democratic organizations wherever they exist;

To prepare, through struggle, a militant atmosphere conducive to the rise of such forces;

To open its ranks to Arab militants, for the struggle in the Palestinian arena against the imperialist Zionist enemy is a main strategic struggle of the entire Arab revolution.

The Arab progressive national forces must combine in an Arab national front with the following demands:

1. To reinforce the positive support of the Palestinian national revolution and of the Jordanian-Palestinian national democratic struggle.

2. To struggle against all liquidationist plans or interim settlements, not only because they consecrate Zionist usurpation and lead to the elimination of the Palestinian national cause, but also because they have proved to be preparations for imperialist and allied reactionary manoeuvres and conspiracies for tearing assunder the unity of the Arab national forces, for eradicating the Arab national revolution and for imposing complete imperialist domination over the area.

3. To struggle for the elimination of the present forms of imperialist presence in the Arab homeland (political influence, military bases, investments and cultural institutions and activities). To struggle against the domination of an imperialist economy over the Arab national economy. To struggle against the reactionary forces which propagandize for this domination and stimulate it. The continuation of American interests in the Arab homeland and their organic relations requires the confrontation and liquidation of these American-imperialist interests.

4. To encourage and support all institutions and activities which (a) seek to revive or protect the Arab national heritage; (b) diffuse national and revolutionary values and virtues; (c) undertake the task of opposing the Zionist-imperialist cultural invasion and the decadent and base values it propagates.

5. Solidarity with Arab patriotic and progressive militants against any persecution which touches their means of livelihood or touches them either physically, politically or intellectually.

Fourth: Relation with the Forces of Liberation in the World

The Palestinian national struggle and the Arab national democratic struggle are an integral part of the militant movement against imperialism and racism and for national liberation throughout the world. Mutual solidarity and support between the Arab national struggle and the world revolutionary struggle are a necessity and an objective condition for the success of our Arab struggle.

The Arab national and progressive forces base the ties of world solidarity on the following principles:

1. The Arab Palestinian national struggle is decisively and firmly on the side of the unity of all world revolutionary forces.

2. The contribution of the Arab national struggle towards resolving any disagreements within the world revolutionary movement consists in its effective and successful treatment of its own problems and the challenges which it faces.

3. The goals and methods of the Arab struggle, (which take account of the general rules of revolution which, in turn, are the gist of the experiences of the world national liberation movements) concern the Arab national and progressive forces. This does not mean neglect or disregard of the observations and advice of friends.

GLOSSARY OF NAMES, PLACES AND EVENTS

Ajloun: a Jordanian city, north of Amman; the forests nearby were fedayeen strongholds. (See also *Jerash and Ajloun Events*)

Amman Agreement: signed in Amman on 13/10/1970 between the Jordanian Government and the Palestinian resistance movement. The agreement was prepared by the Higher Arab Committee as stipulated in the *Cairo Agreement*, and headed by al-Bahi al-Adgham, ex-prime minister of Tunisia. The articles of the agreement state, briefly, that the Jordanian Government guarantee freedom of commando action; this entails its protection and its right to popular and national mobilization within the laws of the state (taking into consideration the exemptions necessary for commando action).

Baq'a Camp: a camp for those Palestinian refugees who moved to East Jordan after the June 1967 war; it is north of and close to Amman.

Cairo Agreement: signed in Cairo between the Jordanian authorities and the Palestine resistance movement after the events of September 1970. The meeting of the Arab leaders who came to Cairo specially to discuss the situation in Jordan led to this agreement. Its most prominent article stipulated the withdrawal of the Jordanian army and the fedayeen from Amman, an end to military operations, and the formation of a Higher Arab Committee to prepare an agreement to be subscribed to by both groups, and which guaranteed the continuation of commando activities while respecting the sovereignty of the Jordanian state within the law (apart from exemptions necessary for commando action).

Central Committee: Accepting the United Command recommendation of 6/5/1970, the emergency Palestine National Council, meeting in Amman in August 1970, approved the formation of a Central Committee for the Palestine Liberation Organization in which all resistance groups were to participate. The Central Committee led the Palestinian struggle until July 1971, when a new Executive Committee for the Palestine Liberation Organization was elected.

Co-ordination Committees: established after the 10/2/1970 crisis in order to support the United Command and to embody its principles at all levels of resistance organization; they were made up of all the organizations in neighbourhood areas and of village and militia organizations.

Dera'a: a Syrian city on the Jordanian-Syrian border, close to Ramtha.

Events of 2/2/1968: the first crisis between the fedayeen and the Jordanian regime (the fedayeen were in the Ghor valley only). It was a result of the escalated Israeli retaliations on Jordan in that period. The regime tried to absorb the commando action and to stop it from using Jordanian land as a base for attacks on Israel; but its attempts were met by strong popular opposition leading to the regime's retreat.

Events of 4/11/1968: occurred in Amman between the fedayeen and the Jordanian Army and led to 30 deaths and 100 injured. The Jordanian Government brought about the armed confrontation by using, as an excuse, the attempt of demonstrators on Balfour Declaration Day (2/11/68) to enter the American Embassy and remove its flag.

Events of 10/2/1970: armed confrontations between the Jordanian army and the fedayeen in Amman; they resulted from the Jordanian Government's resolution to take procedures aimed at restricting the freedom of the resistance and at putting it under the rule of the Jordanian regime. These confrontations ended with the regime's withdrawal of the procedures.

Events of 9/6/1970: another confrontation between the fedayeen and the Jordanian regime, resulting in 400 dead and injured. These confrontations led to an agreement between both parties in which the Jordanian side committed itself to withdrawing the army from the cities, dissolving the special apparatus, and purging the state apparatus of elements hostile to the revolution.

Executive Committee: the highest executive authority of the Palestine Liberation Organization. The by-law states in article 13 that the Palestine National Council elects a chairman to the Executive Committee from its members. The Chairman is authorized to choose the committee members, totalling fifteen, including himself. But this article was amended in the Fourth Palestine National Council so that the Council now elects all the members of the Executive Committee.

Ghor (al-Ghour, al-Aghwar): a valley, lower than sea level, extending from al-Hula lake in the north to the Dead Sea in the south; the River Jordan passes through it. At the Dead Sea it is 390 meters below sea level; it connects Palestine to East Jordan.

Jebel al-Luwebedeh: one of the seven major hills in Amman.

Jerash: a Jordanian city, about 48 kilometers north of Amman, famous for its

ancient Roman ruins; was a major base for the fedayeen after they left Amman.

Jerash and Ajloun Events of July 1971 (The Jerash Battle): These battles occurred in July 1971 in north Jordan, the final stage of the savage military campaign undertaken by the Jordanian army in September 1970. The goal was the annihilation of the fedayeen bases. Through this confrontation, the fedayeen were pushed out of their mountain bases in the north-west sector of the country and their public presence in Jordan was terminated.

Jeddah Conference: held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia on 15/9/71 between the Palestinian resistance movement and the Jordanian regime through Egyptian-Saudi mediation. The purpose of the conference was to settle the dispute between the resistance movement and the Jordanian regime after the regime's massacres of September 1970 and July 1971. The conference was a failure.

Palestine Affairs: an intellectual periodical dealing with the Palestinian question and related matters. It is published in Arabic once a month by the Palestine Research Center. The first issue came out in March 1970. During the first year, *Palestine Affairs* appeared bi-monthly.

Palestine Liberation Army: The Palestine Liberation Organization by-laws stated, in Article 22, "the formation of special Palestinian units according to the military needs and the plan approved by the United Arab Command, in agreement and cooperation with the Arab states concerned." Consequently, these units were formed in 1965 in Egypt, Syria, and Iraq, and they were known by the following names: the *Ain Jalout* forces, the *Hiteen* forces, and the *Yarmuk* forces.

Palestine Liberation Army Crisis: A sharp dispute appeared within the Palestine Liberation Army in September 1971. It was the completion of an old dispute between the commander of the army, Brigadier General Abdel Razak al-Yahia and General Chief of Staff Haddad. On 1/4/1972, Brigadier-General al-Yahia was appointed Director-General of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Palestine National Council: The by-laws of the Palestine Liberation Organization state that the Palestine National Council is "the highest authority in the Palestine Liberation Organization and it determines the policies and plans of the organization." The first National Council was held in 1965. Its notable sessions are the following: the fourth session of July 1968 when the Palestinian resistance entered the Palestine Liberation Organization framework; the fifth session of February 1969 when the resistance became the majority in the Palestine Liberation Organization; the seventh session of May 1970 when the Central Committee for the Palestine Liberation Organization was formed; the eighth session at which Fateh presented a scheme for national unity; the ninth session in which all the

resistance groups participated and at which a new executive committee was elected.

Palestine Research Center: was established in February 1965. Its concern is the study and documentation of the Palestinian case. It has published more than 250 studies, some of them in more than one language.

Ramtha: a Jordanian city in the far north of Jordan on the borders with Syria.

Salt: a Jordanian city, north-west of Amman, on the hills overlooking the Jordan valley; was a stronghold for the fedayeen.

Second Emigration: the emigration of Palestinians from the West Bank to the East Bank of the River Jordan after the June war, 1967, when the Israelis occupied the West Bank. These refugees numbered about 300,000.

United Command: The resistance groups formed the United Command of the Palestinian Resistance Movement in order to confront the 10/2/1970 decree of the Jordanian Council of Ministers and the events following it. At the eighth council, the Executive Committee was authorized to dissolve the Central Committee at any time it saw fit.