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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, medieval 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 Fatch, 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, Fatch 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.