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### THE POPULAR FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF PALESTINE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

and the world liberation movement on the other.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

\* See Chapter I, page 19.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

\* The Central executive body of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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