

## KHALID AL-HASSAN

### FATEH

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

\* The Jordan valley north of the Dead Sea.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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