

Palestinian Left Unity

A Current Assessment

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

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

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

Strategic perspectives

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

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

Immediate purposes

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



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

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

The Joint Leadership

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