

What is the PFLP?

The following is the entry on the PFLP as it appears in the pages of the second volume of «The Palestinian Encyclopedia (Al Mauwsou'a Al Falastinia).» This encyclopedia, a four-volume, 2500 page achievement, the first of its kind, was published in 1984, in Arabic. Work began on these volumes on 1974, as the result of an agreement between the PLO and the Arab Organization of Education, Science and Culture. The subject matter was compiled by a number of prominent national and progressive figures, researchers, specialists and historians. The encyclopedia is a Palestinian national statement covering a comprehensive range of details on Palestine - the people, the cause, geography, history, economy, etc. It is an objective document of facts which refute the Zionist misrepresentation about Palestine and the Palestinians.



Establishment and Organization

The formation of the PFLP is closely connected with the Arab defeat in the June war of 1967, and the organizational, political and theoretical lessons singled out and crystallized by this defeat. The foundation of the PFLP is also connected with the Arab National Movement (ANM), its Palestinian branch and struggle experience after the disaster of 1948. It is also connected with the lessons gained from this experience, which guided the ANM from the beginning of the sixties until it began preparations for armed struggle.

After the 1967 war, the Palestinian branch of the ANM strove to find a framework for a front which would encompass the various nationalist factions. Such a front was considered a major condition for victory, and the PLO, with its formal structure at that time, was not suited to fulfill this role. The result was the formation of the PFLP which, in addition to the ANM's Palestinian branch, included the Palestinian Liberation Front, the Heroes of Return organization, independents and a group of Nasserite Unificationist officers. The PFLP issued its first political communique on December 11, 1967. Due to differences of opinion on political issues, the Palestinian Liberation Front withdrew from this framework in October 1968, forming the PFLP-General Command.

In the light of the development undergone by the PLO, the PFLP later found it unnecessary to pursue the idea of forming a national front, because the PLO represented the broad framework for such a front. Objectively speaking, this development meant that the PFLP became a specific political organization, especially so after the Heroes of Return organization merged completely with the Palestinian branch of the ANM.

From then on began the process of transforming the PFLP into a Marxist-Leninist political organization. However, this process was faced with many obstacles and internal differences. A number of the members of the PFLP were of the opinion that it was impossible to transform a petit bourgeois organization into a Marxist-Leninist one. This difference of opinion led to the DFLP's split from the PFLP.

In February of 1969, the PFLP held a congress where the document «The Organizational and Political Strategy» was approved. This represented an important landmark on the path of the PFLP's aspiration to transform itself into a Marxist-Leninist organization. The PFLP founded a school in Jordan to build its party cadres and started *Al Hadaf* magazine; the editor was politbureau member Ghassan Kanafani. However, the transformation process was delayed due to the leadership's total involvement in efforts to escalate the PFLP's efficiency and military, political and mass activities against the Zionist enemy.

The third national congress of the PFLP was held in March of 1972. The document «Tasks of the New Stage» was approved as was an amended set of internal rules and regulations. These gave priority to the transformation process and the building of a revolutionary party on the political, organizational and ideological levels, based on conviction that the ability of a revolution to remain steadfast and continue, depends on the strength of the organization. In the new rules and regulations, the PFLP stipulated the primary principles of democratic centralism, collective leadership, the unity of the party, self-criticism, a revolutionary party's popularity among the masses, and that every politically conscious member is a militant, and every militant should be politically conscious. The internal rules and regulations also defined the conditions for member-