

The Palestinian Working Strategy and the PFLP's Role

In September 1986, an opinion poll was conducted in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip by the Palestinian daily *Al Fajr*, the US daily *Newsday* and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. This poll was taken after nearly twenty years of consistent Zionist attempts to eliminate the Palestinian national identity and the PLO as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, or at least to create reactionary substitute leaderships. Nonetheless, this poll showed that 93.5% of the Palestinians believe that the PLO is their sole, legitimate representative. Moreover, 77.9% preferred the establishment of a democratic Palestinian state in all of Palestine as the permanent solution to the Palestinian problem.

Since the start of the Palestinian revolution, the occupied land has been a top priority. It has been the subject of a significant portion of the debate in the Palestinian arena throughout the past two decades. The PFLP, from the time of its inception, has had a distinctive viewpoint on this issue. The PFLP's view originated from its understanding of the relationship between the struggle inside and outside occupied Palestine, and between the Palestinian and Arab national dimension of the struggle. The Front's view is also based on its understanding of the need for supportive operational bases for the revolution, and the issue of stages in the Palestinian struggle. The following article examines how this viewpoint was outlined, practiced and developed.

THE GOAL: LIBERATING THE HOMELAND

From the moment that the land of Palestine was occupied, the main goal of the Palestinian struggle was clearly identified as liberating all of Palestine. This goal was clearly stated in the Palestinian National Charter which was adopted by the first session of the PNC, held in Jerusalem in May 1964. Ever since, liberating Palestine has been the main obsession of every patriotic Palestinian. This goal became the basis for the many forms of resistance that spread in the refugee camps and among the Palestinians living under occupation. It became even clearer in the course of the conflict between the Palestinian masses and the Zionist enemy. Realizing the nature of the conflict, the Zionists expend the full strength of their military machine in an open war against the Palestinian revolution outside occupied Palestine, aiming to eliminate its operational bases.

The 1967 occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, in addition to Egypt's Sinai and Syria's Golan Heights, gave the conflict new dimensions and forms. The occupation troops, with their military might and technological superiority, faced the masses in the newly occupied territories. On one hand, the Israelis viewed these territories as a new market that would eventually import nearly 90% of its needs from 'Israel', while providing a cheap labor force. On the other hand, they found themselves at war with the masses of the occupied territories, who have refused to relinquish their national identity and

declared goal, thus linking up with the struggle of the Palestinian masses elsewhere. An overview of Zionist policy is in order here to show the environment in which the Palestinian resistance operates in occupied Palestine.

ZIONIST OCCUPATION POLICY

Realizing that the balance of forces was to their favor, the Zionists pursued a policy of creating facts, exploiting the Palestinian masses and land, while forcibly curbing their struggle. This policy assumed a variety of forms.; A few months after the 1967 war, the Israeli occupation authorities raised the slogan of «open bridges». This was engineered by the then war minister, Moshe Dayan, due to his awareness that the future would bring more confrontation. By opening the two bridges, Damia and Allenby, that connect the West Bank to Jordan, the Zionists sought to find a way of releasing some of the pressure on the Palestinians, to avoid the situation reaching a breaking point.

In their thrust to create facts, the occupation authorities embarked on a broad campaign of establishing settlements. To this end, they employed all means of repression, as well as the laws of the British Mandate and Ottoman rule, to confiscate Palestinian land. Settlements were built so as to surround Palestinian towns, cutting them off from each other.

Meanwhile, the occupation authorities waged vicious campaigns against Palestinian nationalists and political forces. Nearly 300,000 Palestinians have been jailed since the 1967 occupation. Added to this was the deportation of activists, to empty the occupied territories of effective elements. Palestinians were also expelled indirectly on a regular basis by virtue of economic restraints. Moreover, the Zionists sought to distort the Palestinian people's character by banning or destroying elements of their national heritage and culture, while stealing other elements and labeling these as Israeli.

The occupation authorities focused their efforts on impeding the natural development of the Palestinian economy. Industrial development was hindered and subjected to Israeli economic interests. Generally, industry in the 1967 occupied territories has been restricted to producing light consumer goods, leaving the economic base weak and making the Palestinian consumer dependent on Israeli production. Meanwhile, the Israelis opened their own economic institutions to Palestinian manual laborers. Nearly 120,000 Palestinians have worked in Israeli enterprises, in the worst conditions and at substandard wages, not to mention the racist atmosphere.

As a result of Zionist land confiscation, the Palestinian agricultural sector has deteriorated drastically. Out of nearly 70,000 peasants working in this field in 1967, there are now less than 38,000. The occupation authorities have enacted other measures to force the Palestinian peasant off his land. He was forbidden to expand his cultivation, to drill for water or to grow the crops of his choice. If he was forced to stop farming