

decisive confrontation because of the enemy's superiority. They have, in addition, repeatedly tried to prevent the Palestinian people from practicing the strategy of protracted people's war against the Zionist enemy, under the pretext of preparing for a «comprehensive» war against the enemy, or avoiding involvement in a war without full preparation.

Thus it was not surprising that some views emerged in our circles, considering the two strategies mutually contradictory.

We have always been firm supporters of the strategy of protracted people's war for facing the imperialist-Zionist enemy which is superior in resources and weapons, as well as destructive capacity. We still call for the mobilization of all the capacities of the Palestinian and Arab peoples in the battle to counter the superiority of the enemy and steadily proceed towards realizing our people's rights. Yet we do not consider the strategy of protracted people's war contradictory to the strategy of classical warfare. On the contrary, the two may be complementary when there is a unity of political objectives and views, and when the proper foundations for a well-defined Palestinian-Arab nationalist front are crystallized.

The experience of the 1973 war provides good evidence. In this particular war, the self-confidence of the Arab soldier was restored. He proved to be distinctly capable of mastering modern weapons and waging battles, some of which were the greatest in recent military history against the Zionist enemy. If not for the incapable and collaborationist leadership of Sadat, the war would have been much different, not only in terms of the political results but also on the operational level, as has since become clear.

For all these reasons, the people's war strategy should by no means be put in contradiction to the classical war strategy. It is necessary to look at them as mutually complementary.

The sixth lesson lies in the dialectical relationship between strategy and tactics in the Palestinian political action.

It is not enough to define our strategic long-term objectives; nor is it enough to draw a structural map of the camp of friends and the enemy camp, although such things are most essential. We must also have a clear picture of the correct tactical steps which lead to the ultimate aims. Also needed is observation of all the contradictions and differences within the enemy camp, to make use of them in both our partial and comprehensive battles against this camp. It is essential to precisely observe the existing balance of forces, to be aware of what demands and goals are obtainable at each stage, and to formulate the suitable tactical slogans according to the existing balance of forces. It is also necessary to study the situation accurately in order to define the principal central link at every stage, to avoid being plunged into a heap of tasks which are not so important. Finally, it is necessary to conclude alliances according to all these considerations. This is an essential task without which we cannot successfully proceed towards our tactical or strategic objectives.

We don't exaggerate when we say that the official statement of the interim program of the PLO towards the end of 1979 played an important role in guiding the militant Palestinian movement and defining goals within the realm of the historically possible. This program expressed a higher level of ideological development.

The battle we are fighting now for the international conference should enrich our struggle with increasing numbers of allies and friends on the international level; it contributes to

our success in winning over ever increasing circles of world public opinion. These are just a few examples. There are scores of others which concretely show the fundamental importance of successful tactics in our political struggle, without being satisfied by general slogans.

Concerning the dialectical relationship between strategy and tactics, two erroneous tendencies have emerged among the Palestinians:

1. There is a pragmatic tendency expressing the national bourgeoisie's limitations and incapacity to shoulder the burdens of continuing the struggle. Their confidence in the possibility of obtaining the ultimate goals and rights of our people has been shaken. That is why the representatives of this tendency have often behaved impatiently and put current tactics above the ultimate long-term strategy. We also notice that some of them have shown an inclination to relinquish the long-term goals under the pressure of the existing circumstances. In the chaos of our daily struggle, while exercising political tactics, the most serious setback we may face is forgetting our strategic goals and consequently losing the compass which directs our progress and shows our people the way forward.

2. The other erroneous tendency is of a dogmatic nature which limits itself to repetition of big, strategic slogans and remains aloof from political tactics, while viewing the enemy front through rigid stereotypes without noticing any political nuances. The danger of this tendency lies in the fact that it leads to nihilism and sectarianism, removed from the real political movement; it leads its advocates to the margins of political life, rendering them incapable of effective action.

On the other hand, we see that the scientific approach, as experience has proved, should be based on:

(a) clear definition of the strategic goals of both the people and the revolution, and precise identification of the camps of the friends and the foes; (b) the role of the political leadership which has to define the interim tasks of the national struggle in the given conditions and balance of forces of the particular stage; (c) successful connection between tactical and strategic targets so that we have a chain of interconnected links, each leading to the next, rather than tactics that are alien to the strategy; and (d) practicing political tactics involves among other things seeing the minor differences which exist among the parties of the enemy camp, without ever forgetting that they are all integral parts of this camp.

These are some of the most outstanding features of the dialectical relationship between tactics and strategy as shown by our experience of the last forty years. Just as the enemy has managed to attain its goals, one after the other, to reach its present status, we have to complete our process of return, self-determination and establishing an independent Palestinian state through continuous and persistent struggle, without losing the compass that points towards our right to restore the whole of our homeland, and the ultimate goals of our people. At the same time we must be free of all seclusionism; we must abstain from compromising on vital issues or squandering our people's achievements.

The seventh lesson lies in the class question and the importance of a decisive political line in the confrontation.

While reviewing the forty-year process of continuous struggle against the Zionist entity implanted on our homeland, we