

The Palestine National Council, meeting in Cairo behind closed doors since Sunday, temporarily interrupted the study of the plan for national unity presented by the leader of the Palestinian resistance, Mr. Arafat, because of profound disagreements which are said to have come up during the debates.

The leftist movements proposed several important modifications to the original plan, demanding in particular the disbanding of the Central Committee of the PLO and the formation of an executive committee which would be charged with selecting the members of a new National Council. The composition of this new "Parliament" is the object of lively discussions among the representatives of the commandos, and no agreement has yet been reached, each group wanting to assume the leadership of the Council.

Elsewhere the Palestinian Popular Congress, convoqued simultaneously in Cairo by the Palestine National Council, rejected in its final communique the idea of a Palestinian state in Transjordan and Gaza.

The Congress brought together both Palestinian and Jordanian personalities and called for national unity of the two banks of the Jordan, the establishment of a government favorable to the Palestinians in Jordan, and the creation of a popular national front.

Arafat's Plan

Mr. Yasser Arafat, president of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, presented to the Central Committee of the Palestinian resistance, meeting Saturday in Cairo, a plan of "national unity" with the objective of unifying the operations of all the Palestinian organizations. This plan comprises the following six general principles:

- 1) The PLO is the organ which brings together in one organization all the Palestinian revolutionary forces "to carry out the armed struggle to liberate the totality of Palestinian territory". This command must develop a unified general strategy in the various fields.
- 2) All commando organizations, all fighting forces, all federations and all independent personalities can participate in this "national unity" provided they respect the Palestinian national charter as well as the resolutions of the National Council.
- 3) The merger of these organizations is the highest level of unification that we seek, that we encourage, and for which we are struggling. Nevertheless, each organization has the right to maintain its internal self regulations provided that it disband all its other organs, which should merge with those of the PLO.
- 4) The National Council will work out the military, political and financial strategy that all the organizations agree to abide by.
- 5) A general command will be created which will

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An Interview with Hawatmeh

Of all the leaders of the Palestinian resistance meeting at the National Council in Cairo, Mr. Nayef Hawatmeh, leader of the Democratic Popular Front, is perhaps the only one about whom there is a consensus. While extolling the most radical ideological positions, he has always conformed, tactically, to the directives and discipline of the Central Committee, of which he is a member. While Mr. Hawatmeh is himself against the total merger proposed by Mr. Arafat, he is being called upon to arbitrate the dispute between Fateh and the Popular Front of George Habash over the unification of the military forces of the resistance.

He declared to us, "It is certain the tendency in the Arab countries and the rest of the world is in the direction of an overall negotiated settlement. The petit bourgeois and Arab reactionary regimes as well as the imperialists have joined hands to force the resistance to accept a compromise. There is no doubt that the Palestinian popular war has been affected by its setbacks in the field since last summer, coupled with the surrender of the Arab regimes.

"...Instead of revising its principal options in order to readapt them to the new realities of the region, the movement is seeking refuge in the idea of Palestinian national unity which is based on two diametrically opposed notions. The first would like to empty the revolution of its political character to the point of compromising its objectives, which is tantamount to surrendering the resistance to the right wing. That's exactly what President Sadat advocates when he talks of a single strategy encompassing the strategies

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of the Palestinians, the Syrians, Iraqis, etc., one that favors in the end the resolutions of the Security Council and the UN. The D.P.F. categorically rejects this choice.

"The second notion of 'national unity', which is our proposal, implies a readjustment of our previous alliances and the establishment of new relationships among the commando organizations on the order of a common front whose fundamental objectives would be (1) the political and formalized independence of each component force, and (2) the adoption of adequate measures to prevent the Palestinian people from participating in any compromise political solutions.

"All this requires the creation of a Jordanian-Palestinian national front which would struggle against Zionism and fight for the liberation of Transjordan. This implies as well that the resistance revise or rectify its relations with the Arab regimes and collaborate directly with the Arab liberation movements without passing through the intermediary of the established regimes. Now, this national union is today coming up against obstacles which can't be overcome in a few days: The greatest obstacle is the contradictory interpretations which each one of us wants to give to Palestinian national unity."

Between the Hammer and the Anvil

Considering the position taken by Fateh, the resolutions of Mr. Hawatmeh exclude straight off the creation of a unified general command of the resistance. Even the delegates of the Congress recognize this as a rejection of a general command.

Why then reject the creation of a Palestinian state?

"We must first specify," emphasizes the leader of the D.P.F., "that the idea of creating this state is an integral part of the political solution, and this asks the Palestinian people to renounce their historical and natural right to reclaim all of their land. Moreover, in this state which is being 'offered' to us we would find ourselves caught between the hammer of Jordanian reaction and the anvil of Zionist militarism."

You then choose armed struggle. Could you reconcile this with a peaceful solution?

"The solution which is proposed to us carries within it the seeds of the liquidation of the Palestinian cause since it is centered around the recognition of the state of Israel with secure and acknowledged borders. This compromises from the start the exercising of our right to reclaim our homeland through armed struggle, there being no other alternative. It is clear, therefore,

that there exists a glaring paradox between the proposed solution and the pursuit of popular armed struggle."

What do you expect from the National Council?

"No miracles. At best it would help to maintain a certain cohesion among the various organizations of the resistance movement so they can confront together their numerous detractors and prevent the Palestinian people from participating in a compromise political solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. But the Council meeting can also fail because of the two cross-currents--conservative and progressive--which exist inside the resistance movement, threatening to neutralize it. The resistance movement is a prisoner of its political and ideological contradictions and is being faced with the international political realities. Translated from Le Monde 3.4.71

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assume the responsibility of leading the Palestinian revolution.

6) The fundamental condition of unity of action is to abide by the decisions of this general command.

The plan presented by Mr. Arafat foresees the administrative structures of the PLO as including a National Council, a Central Committee, a Political Bureau, a military command of the revolution, a national fund, and other bodies. It divides the forces of the Palestinian revolution into three parts: regular troops, commandos, and militia.

The General Staff of the revolution will direct military activities and establish the necessary plans to this effect. It should reorganize the forces of the revolution for which a united fund is to be decided upon by a new National Council.

Translated from Le Monde 3.2.71

DAYAN ROCKS MARRIAGE CODE

In a move which threatens to break up Israel's coalition government, Defense Minister Moshe Dayan is reported to have proposed amending the nation's religious marriage code to allow illegitimate persons to wed.

This would be revolutionary in Israel, where the synagogue conducts all marriages. In Orthodox Jewish circles illegitimacy denotes a status as severe as ex-communication to a Roman Catholic.

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