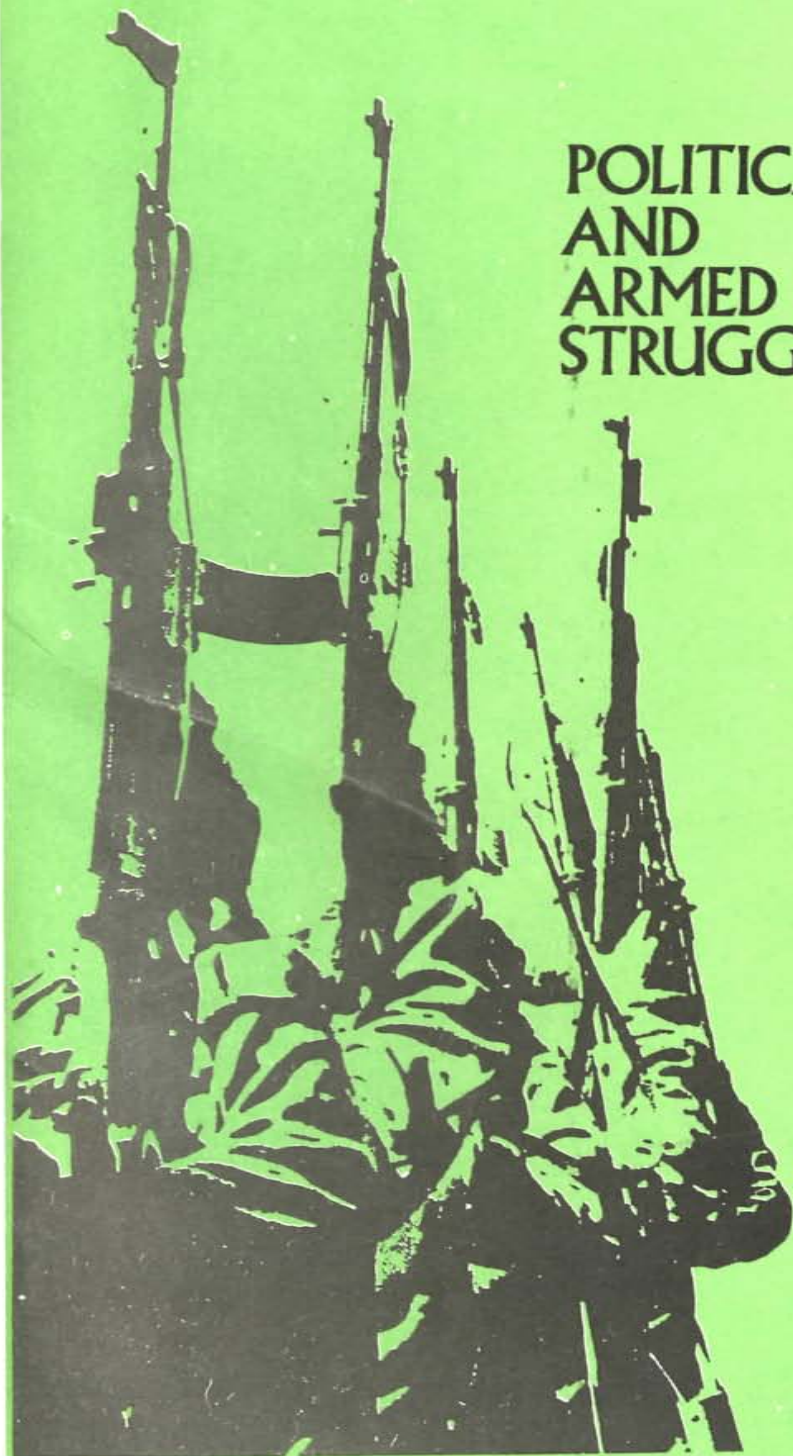


**POLITICAL
AND
ARMED
STRUGGLE**



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THE PALESTINE NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT FATEH

POLITICAL STRUGGLE

Upon the establishment of the Zionist settler-state of Israel in May 1948, the Palestinian and other Arab masses pinned their hopes for liberation on the Arab political regimes and the regular Arab armies.

Since the Arab states' dedication to the Palestine cause was always cyclical, these hopes used to center at different intervals around this or that country to lead the rest of the Arab states in the battle for liberation. But inasmuch as the coups d'etat staged in many of the Arab states after the creation of Israel in 1948 expressed the resentment of the Arab peoples against their governments, they also confirmed the adherence of the Arab masses to the classical solution of regime changes.

In turn, the Palestinian masses in the various Arab countries shared in effectuating these changes. The Palestinian struggle thus focused on the Arab countries to create therein the regimes susceptible to build strong regular armies and to import modern armaments liable to inflict defeat on the enemy's armed forces.

TWO FACTS

This trend in the struggle for the liberation of Palestine revealed two facts:

1) That the liberation battle against the Zionist invasion is a battle against great forces allied to Zionism and capable, under all conditions, to maintain Israel's military supremacy. The Arab nation, and the Palestinian people included, cannot wage a successful regular battle against Israel and her allies because this nation comprises a great number of underdeveloped countries which require a long time before they could industrialize themselves and unite their forces in such a way as to confront the enemy in a regular battle. Moreover, imperialism and its allied Arab reactionaries have the potential to obstruct the desired change in Arab society for a time substantial enough as to enable Israel to bolster its existence and realize its ambitions. In the course of the long struggle waged by the Arab nation, the need to identify the respective roles of all hostile forces became apparent. Simultaneously, the Arab struggle had to realize which of these hostile forces was more damaging and restraining so as to concentrate on the main enemy, isolate him and engage him. That is why it became necessary to wage a battle with arms which the enemy could not overcome and to wipe out the hostile forces one after the other, in the light of the people's ability.

2) That in his long struggle to achieve his ambitions in our homeland, the Zionist enemy was able to recruit material and human forces which exceed by far his ability to recruit regular armies. He was able to mobilize the Jewish masses of the world to wage a battle with diversified means. The role of his regular troops was never more than that of a spear head which he directed to achieve his aims. It became difficult for the Arab forces to achieve victory simp-

ly by preparing the efficient armies susceptible to defeat the enemy militarily although this was impossible for the reasons mentioned earlier.

EMERGENCE OF FATEH

These two facts, in addition to other less important ones, frustrated Arab aspirations for the liberation of Palestine. It became impedent on the Arab nation to benefit from the experience and to opt for the genuine alternative which is compatible with reality and the conditions of the Palestinian people and other Arab peoples and which also expresses their determination to achieve complete liberation.

Fateh's avant-garde embarked on this revolutionary path, believing in the masses as the only force capable of achieving victory and advocating a revolutionary war in which these masses would participate to achieve their aims.

LIBERATION WAR

The revolutionary war which Fateh advocates has clear political objectives and a well known means of struggle.

The objectives of this war are to liberate the people of Palestine, to restore their homeland to them and to establish a legitimate political authority in the liberated country emanating from the will of the Palestinian masses and fulfilling their aspirations. The means is a popular liberation war with full participation of the masses.

Such liberation war entails a political struggle

and an armed struggle which go hand in hand with the participation of these masses. It must be clearly understood that the political struggle and the armed struggle are two concomitant and complementary means to achieve the objectives of this revolutionary war and that their separation or the renunciation of either one of them poses a threat to the success of this popular war.

If we were to take military struggle alone and proceeded to recruit the people in armed units, believing that this alone is sufficient, our struggle would be doomed to failure. All the military forces we can recruit will remain, under all conditions, unfitted to confront a regular military force. And as long as they remain isolated from the masses, armed forces cannot be evaluated except in numbers, equipment and technological ability. This kind of revolutionary forces cannot under any condition face the existing challenge.

If we were to take political struggle alone, meaning the mobilization, education, organization and leadership of the masses, we would also realize that the enemy cannot be possibly forced to retreat except by the annihilation of his military forces. The organized but unarmed masses cannot possibly play this role. The enemy will maintain his positions by armed power and will remain capable of striking against these defenseless masses. That is why political struggle without armed struggle will remain impotent and incapable of achieving the aims of the revolution.

It is evident therefore that political and armed struggle are concomitant and that the negligence of

one or the other is tantamount to turning our revolutionary war into an adventure.

NEED FOR POLITICAL STRUGGLE

With this always in mind, let us enumerate the reasons why political struggle is important in our revolutionary war:

1) The revolutionary we are engaged in implies that we do not believe that regular war is the means liable to achieve our aims. Revolutionary war is a negation of the bourgeois-understanding of war — namely the need to establish a power balance with the enemy's military forces as a basic condition for victory. Our understanding of revolutionary war is to wage a struggle simultaneously involving the armed forces of the people and the wide masses having faith in the aims of this war. Participation of the masses in the struggle side by side with their armed forces renders many of the enemy weapons ineffective, makes the enemy lose his ability to use the modern means of warfare and forces him to confront all kinds of weapons — some of which are modern and some of which may be primitive. Such participation also prevents the enemy from setting up fixed front-lines where he could concentrate his military troops and organize them as suits him best.

2) By developing and educating the masses, political struggle becomes a safeguard for the line of the revolution and prevents armed struggle from deviating from its aim. It also creates large forces capable of directing the armed struggle in such a way as to keep it in harmony with the tactics and strategy of the revolutionary war and to prevent it

from getting involved in a regular war which the enemy will continue to seek.

3) The impact of political struggle on the people is such that it enables them to supply the armed forces with its needs in fighters who are aware of the aims of this struggle and are capable of enduring all the difficulties it might encounter. The elements who join the armed struggle enjoy added firmness, steadfastness, endurance and willingness to sacrifice if they possess the revolutionary awareness and struggle experience. Moreover, the mobilized masses can offer to the armed forces supplies and arms as well as all their experiences and potentials. The masses proved in many revolutionary wars in the world that they are capable of discovering and inventing ways and means as well as arms which could be primitive at times but which are greatly effective in inflicting heavy losses on the enemy.

4) The revolutionary war we are waging falls on a vast territory which our armed forces cannot protect. The enemy, on the other hand, can direct his strikes against far-fledged areas so that we cannot consider having front-lines for confrontation. The enemy also occupies a vast territory and his troops subdue a large part of our people. Through its struggle, this part of our people can prevent the enemy from setting up secure front-lines. The absence of such enemy front-lines is extremely important because it affects his ability to launch military operations compatible with the nature of his army and the formation of his men.

5) Our enemy has been waging a political bat-

tle for a long time now along with his military battles. He has political bases strongly entrenched all over the world, including the Arab World. He is capable of activating these political bases with harmony and effectiveness to support his military aggression. We cannot confront these political bases, set up by the enemy, militarily. We have to engage them in a rough political struggle so as to isolate them, cripple them and prevent them from supporting aggression against us.

AIMS OF POLITICAL STRUGGLE

Now that we have demonstrated our need for political struggle, let us turn to its objectives.

The main aims and objectives of the political struggle are:

1) To mobilize the masses for their participation in the revolution. This mobilization of the masses has to pass through different stages although at no one point will the masses have the same standard of readiness and preparedness to participate in the revolution. The mass mobilization stages are as follows:

a) Initiation of the masses to the aims of the revolution, to its basic line of thought and to its political and social outlook. Such initiation does not necessarily entail the adoption of a fixed dogma nor does it imply that it is not exposed to development as we proceed along the path of liberation. The masses will be established by the revolution and to grasp, as much as possible, the motives which led to the emergence of the revolution and the need for the masses to sacrifice without limitation.

b) Political education of the masses through clarification of the Revolution's precepts and identification of the role of all internal and external forces in the world which, by nature, are allied to the enemy and stand ready to join his aggression and to exert all their potentials in defending him. By the same token, there are strong forces and many peoples who stand by the side of the revolution and are prepared to share, in variant degrees, in supporting the revolution and in bolstering the struggle of the masses. Knowledge of the role of the liberation forces in the world is an important factor in determining the fate of the revolution. The masses should know their allies as well as those of their enemy. Internally, Palestinian and Arab societies are torn by various allegiances and comprise different classes. But in each, there are revolutionary forces capable of taking up arms and of sacrificing. There are forces that are less prepared to do so as well as neutral ones which do not feel the need to make any sacrifices. Simultaneously, there are counter-revolutionary forces which either display their hostility outright or try to conceal it for as long period as possible. All this should be known to the masses so that they can act accordingly in the interest of the revolution. At the present moment, for instance, the masses face up to a number of projects and solutions which are accompanied by intimidations and inducements. The masses that are politically motivated cannot be lured by such suspicious schemes and submissive solutions. They are capable of unveiling plots against the revolution and against our armed struggle for liberation.

c) Organization of the masses to become able,

through their various organizations, to move at the right time in the right direction. Organized masses are alone capable of sacrificing and of adhering fully to the line of the revolution. Support which does not come from organized masses cannot be trusted or considered a reliable force in the ranks of the revolution.

d) The organized masses cannot be led except through some kind of pyramidal organization which requires enlightened cadres on all levels. These cadres, in turn, need training and experience to establish strong bonds between the masses and the leadership of the revolution.

2) To set-up a unified command which would assume leadership of the masses along with leadership of the armed struggle to ensure full coordination among all forces in the interest of the revolution.

3) To stage recurrent mass uprisings with the intention of:

a) Enlightening the masses and increasing their adherence to the revolution.

b) Protecting the armed forces from crack-downs and plots attempted by some Arab regimes. The experiences undergone by the revolution in Jordan and Lebanon provide evident proof of the ability of the masses to protect the revolution with their bodies and voices rather than their arms — particularly that we are on Arab land and that the armies entrusted with the task of nipping the revolution are Arab armies. Armed clashes with these

armies will raise intricate obstacles for the revolution. As far as the masses in occupied territory are concerned, they are also capable of protecting armed struggle and of crippling the enemy by striking against his rear supply lines.

c) Protecting the legitimate rights granted by the enemy to our Palestinian masses in occupied territory or by the Arab regimes in the respective host countries. These rights need alert masses to protect them.

d) Securing new mass gains which, regardless how meager, boost the adherence and support of the masses to the revolution. The revolution cannot achieve all its aims at once. The masses should, through these uprisals, grab their one after the other.

4) To exploit contradictions in the enemy ranks. The enemy army comprises men of the Jewish faith who do not belong to one race and who do not have the same motivations. By coming into contact with the enemy forces, the masses mobilized through political struggle can discover their contradictions, capitalize on them and even win over elements to work on our side. The enemy army also comprises non-Jewish forces, some of which are Arab, which should also be handled and won over to strengthen the revolution. As for the Arab armies, they include nationalistic elements and it is the task of the mobilized masses to establish relations with them so as to transform them into a shield for the protection of the revolution and the masses against the schemes and plots of the regimes.

5) To select the qualified and efficient elem-

ents for the formation of the popular militia whose task would be to protect the masses against reprisals. In their political struggle, the masses are exposed to counter attacks by the enemies of the revolution. The steadfastness of the masses is greatly affected by their ability to protect themselves. The militia is a defensive organization intended to protect the masses. It is not part of the masses engaged in the political struggle.

6) To foil and counter the psychological warfare launched by the enemy.

7) To foil espionage attempts and to unveil agents and saboteurs. The masses engaged in the political struggle can simultaneously protect supply lines and the armed bases and report to the armed forces and the revolutionary command a lot of information about the enemy troops, their movements and armaments.

8) To secure the ability of the revolution to keep-up the struggle. Our revolution cannot for instance continue to depend on contributions from the Arab masses, particularly that most of the Arab governments which now allow us to raise such contributions have political stand which do not conform with those of the revolution and its long-term objectives. Contributions which are raised publicly today are exposed to being cut-off with the slightest change in political conditions. The revolution needs a lot of funds, supplies and equipment and its dependence on contributions liable to be cut off endangers the revolution. The aim of the political struggle should be to mobilize the organized masses in such a way as to be able to reconcile between the

need to maintain their fighting ability and their ability to work and produce so as to make resources available for the revolution. The ability of the masses to secure these resources through their productivity is a safeguard for the revolution against pressure from the Arab governments...

9) To muster the support and participation of the liberation forces in the world, particularly in the Arab countries, the Socialist camp and the Third World. To achieve victory the Palestinian masses need to wage a political struggle on the Arab and international levels.

10) To create the feeling among the masses that they must rely on themselves. All the forces of the world can play a role in supporting the revolution but the Palestinian masses alone have endured the aggression and should be able to remain always in the avant-garde of the struggle against the enemy. Support from abroad cannot be relied upon fully because it is always liable to be cut off by a change in political conditions... The launching of our revolution in 1965 expressed, to a great extent, our indomitable faith in this principle of self-reliance.

11) To boost the attachment of the masses to their homeland through revivification of national culture and heritage, local customs and the history of the struggle... etc.

12) To increase the ability and aptitude of the masses to use all possible means to defend the homeland.

MEANS OF POLITICAL STRUGGLE

After this exposition about the need for political struggle and its aims and objectives, let us turn to see through what means these aims can be attained.

The means of political struggle are:

1) The setting up of popular organizations. These actually constitute the basic means for achieving the aims of political struggle. They can be initiated as follows:

a) The broad popular organizations capable of «absorbing» most elements of the population because, by nature, they do not reflect political or revolutionary inclinations in their structure. Good examples of such broad popular organizations are the federations of workers, peasants, students and women as well as the social and sports organizations.

b) Organizations with slight and specific political orientation such as the youth organizations, the partisan committees, the fund raising committees, and the committees to care for the families of the Fedayeen...

c) The revolutionary organizations or «cadres» which constitute the backbone of the revolution. Their absence or weakness disrupts the chain of communications between the revolutionary command and the masses and deprives political struggle of one of its most vital links. Cadres constitute the front-line leadership of the masses. They must be disciplined and should be highly qualified, mature and steadfast. The revolution can lead all kinds of popular organizations once it succeeds in building an efficient cadre.

2) The use of legitimate means to undertake political and revolutionary activity. Such activity through recognized legitimate rights facilitated the task of the Resistance in many Arab countries in contacting the masses to enlighten them and involve them in the work.

3) Foiling liquidation attempts and averting plots to involve the revolution in side-battles.

4) The creation of the proper atmosphere for armed struggle in supporting it and advocating it. This should feature:

a) The selection of qualified candidates for participation in the armed struggle. Political organizations should be the only link between the masses and the armed struggle.

b) The transformation of political bases into bases for the accommodation and protection of elements of the armed forces (such as in the Aghwar in Jordan and in South Lebanon.)

c) The setting up of popular militia in the political bases and centers of mass concentration.

5) The establishment of a wide national front to encompass all the national forces that have faith in the phased aims of the revolution.

6) The continuous elucidation of the revolution's policy and line of action. In fact, clarity in the revolution's political aims is basic factor in bolstering political struggle. It should be made clear, for instance, that our aim to establish a unitary, democratic, non-sectarian state in Palestine is not a poli-

tical project suggested to the Zionist usurpers but a precept of struggle implying the liquidation of the Zionist entity and all the institutions it built on our land.

7) The gradual escalation of the masses' involvement in the struggle until their complete merger in the revolution.

8) Encouragement of the masses to extend services to each others.

9) Exclusion from the revolution's ranks of all bad elements so that revolutionaries may continue to be, in the eyes of the masses, an example of patriotism, good character, modesty and discipline.

ARMED STRUGGLE

A people's war (or a war of the revolutionary masses) is the end result of a combination of two types of struggle — armed struggle and political struggle. Should these be separated or should one be practiced at the expense of the other, the people's war would lose its meaning and be rendered incapable of achieving victory. An armed struggle which fails to convince its executors of the validity of its premises is bound to be short lived. And a political struggle which limits itself to mobilizing, educating and guiding the people is bound to come up against the simple truth that only the defeat of the enemy's military forces can achieve the cessation of the enemy's aggression.

To understand the strategy of a people's war, a study of its three stages is imperative.

A study of all past people's wars which ended in victory reveals that a people's war, any people's war, invariably passes through three stages: strategic defense stage, the strategic balance stage, and the stage of strategic counter-attack.

We feel, however, that it would be useful, considering the current conditions of the Palestinian Revolution, to regard the people's war as a war of two stages, the first being the stage of avoiding decisive battles, the second the stage of decisive battles.

The effects, positive or negative, of a decisive battle, although not necessarily precipitous in nature, are usually longlasting and are felt in military strategy — perhaps in overall strategy. For this reason, decisive battles can not be waged by guerilla bands but must rely on a mobile strategic military force, called Popular Army Units, whose strength or weakness is decided in the light of its victory or defeat in a decisive battle, and hence in the war.

Taking this fact as a premise, we can confidently say that the function of strategy in a people's war is to search for ways and means which enable the revolutionary vanguard of a given people to build a popular army out of a people whose workers and farmers have grown lean waiting for their livelihood, have lost faith in the future and the possibility of change, have turned for comfort to the past and are being constantly subjected to the ruthlessness of a colonial oppressor.

The factors involved in the mechanism of such popular war strategy are aptly summarised by Giap's statement that «our war, from the military viewpoint, has established that an illarmed popular army fighting for a just cause can, through the use of the appropriate tactics and strategy, assemble the circumstances necessary for victory over a modern army belonging to aggressive imperialism.»

STAGE OF AVOIDING DECISIVE BATTLES

The stage of avoiding decisive battles can be called the stage of birth, growth and the sinking of roots. Its success means that the defeat of the enemy has become a matter of time only. This stage is

launched with the understanding that «we are weak and the enemy is strong.» At its inception, the balance between us and the enemy can be described as maximum weakness against maximum strength. The objective of this stage, then, is self-development and expansion to allow a defeated people to change the balance of power in its favor. Since the initiative is taken by the weak, it is imperative that this stage be conducted with intelligence as to result in tipping the balance of power in our favor.

Waging war with intelligence means utilizing the strategy and tactics which would serve the desired purpose of carrying us from weakness to strength, from lack of arms to an abundance of arms, from land deprivation to land possession. What is required, then are the tactics which enable the weak to confront the strong, and these are beyond doubt the tactics of the war of partisans which consists in using the combined points of strength in the weak side against the strong side's points of weakness, avoiding a confrontation of forces, and taking advantage of the time element to sap the energy of the invading forces through small operations (i.e. operations of exhaustion and annihilation), while simultaneously gathering the potentials of the people and creating the necessary political and military institutions. This process, in short, is aimed at exhausting and wiping out the enemy while preserving and developing oneself. These are the tactics of the war of partisans, or guerilla warfare, which must be applied if the stage of balance of power with the enemy is to be reached: a rising balance for us, a sinking balance for him.

The stage of avoiding decisive battles is characterized by:

1. A strategy of long-range defensive war on internal fronts.
2. The tactics of a lightning offensive war on the external fronts (guerilla warfare).
3. Its objective is self-development exhaustion of the enemy and creation of the pyramid of the people's army (partisan forces — local forces, centralized mobile strategic forces).
4. Direction of the major strike: finding a safe base and ending the phase of dispersement and vagrancy.
5. Enemy's tactics: siege and annihilation operations by land coupled with concentrated air raids.

A careful study of strategy and tactics reveal that what is required is long-term strategy and short-term tactics and that we must resort to swiftly-decided battles within the framework of long-term strategy. The purpose of the swift decision is to prevent the enemy from drawing in more of forces than ours through his ability to send reinforcements. The purpose of long-term strategy is to gain time to build up our forces, realize the aim of the first stage and accelerate changes in international postures. Revolutionary forces cannot attain adulthood at birth but must be content to grow gradually.

Another point to be noted in the development of this military stage is that whereas its strategy is one of a defensive war, its tactics are those of an of-

fensive one. This contradiction is necessary, however, for the realization of long-term strategy. For if we were to adopt the tactics of a long-term defensive war, we would be moving in the direction of catastrophe and inevitable suffocation. While it is true that defense and offense are two basic aspects of fighting, it is also true that offense is the basis of the relationship between defense and offense. It is offense which achieves the ends of war, namely the annihilation of the enemy and self-preservation and development. The weak party which has mustered its forces, cannot but launch swiftly-decided or lightning attacks taking into account the golden rules of the guerilla warfare stage — if the enemy advances, withdraw; if he tires, hit him; if he settles, harrass him; and if he retreats chase him. All this should be done in keeping with the numerical framework: strategically, we pit one against ten and, tactically, we pit ten against one. All this must be done also within the basic rules of safety — constant motion, constant digging and varying camouflage. The purpose of applying the two above said principles is to determine the aim of this stage, which is the establishment of the popular army in its three major forces:

1. The partisans force, the major aim of which is to wage a war of exhaustion through its scattered elements and its decentralization and a war of partial annihilation through its lightning strikes.
2. Local forces, the aim of which would be to exhaust and immobilize large forces and to become able to strike at the enemy wherever he enters. These are forces of immobilization and strategic defense (not negative defense).

3. The mobile strategic force: the major force, with centralized leadership, capable of waging annihilating battles in one given direction in such a way as to achieve major strategic victories.

The beginning of guerilla warfare marks the beginning of the creation of the fighting forces, or self-development, and herein lies the basis of differentiation between effective and arbitrary guerilla warfare. Herein lies also the difference between the commando squads attached to regular armies and guerilla units. The task of the former is to achieve a specific, and purely military goal, and there the mission ends. The activities of the latter (i.e. guerilla units) are of revolutionary significance as seen in their initial concentration on winning the people over and undertaking operations beamed more toward the people than against the enemy (armed propaganda). In fact, the recruitment of more guerillas and the increase of the number of guerilla units in all regions is one of the tasks of guerilla war leaders.

While it does not necessarily result in the construction of a house, a cornerstone must be laid if a house is to be built.

Similarly, guerilla warfare, although it represents one step in a thousand-mile journey, is the beginning of something big. It means that the revolution has moved from the drawing board to the jobsite.

We are bound, however, to miss the aim of the stage of avoiding decisive battles, which consists in creating a popular military force capable of crippling the enemy's military machine through the use

of the strategy and tactics described above, if we lose sight of the direction of the major strike — namely, the establishment of a secure base.

A secure base, as we see it is characterized by the following:

1. ITS DEFINITION: A place in which the revolutionaries have complete authority and control.

2. ITS SPECIFICATIONS:

a. It should be in contact with enemy grounds to enable the revolutionaries to undertake armed action; to, so to speak, baptize them in fire; and to allow them to learn about war in an atmosphere of war.

b. It should be in the midst of the people directly connected with the revolution.

c. It should be so located as to enable the revolutionaries to resist the siege and annihilation operations of the enemy. In other words, the security factor should be ensured for the secure base.

3. ITS AIM:

Shortening the war by speeding up the building of the popular armed forces' pyramid.

STAGE OF DECISIVE BATTLES

Evidently victory or defeat in war are the function of two factors, the first being the basic objective material factor or the military and topographical conditions of the warring parties. The second factor is the subjective factor or the ability to keep the

objective subordinate to the subjective in the conduct of the war. This stage differs from its predecessor in the abundant presence of the organized objectivity factor along with the development of the subjective factor as a result of the experience gained by leaders and soldiers through the practice of guerilla warfare and constant baptism by fire. Since war is no more than a contest of strength, this stage is identical to its predecessor in its strategic principles which the weak party of the first stage is now able to use in a better and more extensive way — particularly those which relate to initiative, feasibility, and planning. Enemy conditions, in other words, have become infested with negatives which constitute positives for us. Strategic balance is thus attained by means of the following achievements:

1. Forcing enemy forces into a defensive posture, scattering them and pinning them to their positions.

2. Spreading the revolution in such a way as to enable it to strike at the enemy at any point it wishes.

3. Making it difficult for the enemy to compensate for his heavy losses in experienced human fighting elements by striking at his fighting elite.

4. Rendering the enemy incapable of working in accordance with rules and means which serve an effective strategy.

5. Gradually destroying the morale of the enemy forces, paralyzing their will to fight, breaking the spirit of their military leaders and portraying impotence of the latter to the people.

6. Winning over world public opinion and working for an actual or potential revolt by the enemy's people against the enemy's army and government.

All these developments will enable the people's army to move on from the stage which focuses on exhausting the enemy to the enemy-annihilation stage, which stage is characterized by the following:

- a. ITS STRATEGY.

A long-range defensive war on the internal lines.

- b. ITS TACTICS:

A swiftly-decided offensive war on the external lines (guerilla war — regular popular war).

- c. ITS AIM:

Destroying the enemy by annihilating his best forces.

- d. DIRECTION OF ITS MAJOR STRIKE:

Establishing control over strategic positions, holding same and striking the enemy's major forces.

Since the tactics are identical, it may seem at first glance that there is no difference between the two stages. Although it is true that we have kept tactics and strategy constant, it is also true that we have intensified both, in degree and in form. For whereas in the first stage guerilla warfare characterized the war and the swiftly-decided battles along the external lines, guerilla warfare in the second stage assumes a complementary role, acting as support for the regular war — a war of motion and posi-

tions — which constitutes the main characteristic of attacks in the second stage.

Annihilation of the enemy requires guerilla warfare of a higher standard — a regular popular war. But it is of the utmost importance during the transition to the stage of decisive battles to constantly intensify guerilla warfare and maintain and increase its pressure for swifter exhaustion of enemy forces.

Regular popular war consists in activating, in succession and as circumstances require, the three forces formed during the first stage. This underscores the importance of activating the centralized mobile strategic force for a war of motion, and the necessity of achieving total centralization of leadership to make possible the planning necessary for a mobile war. With such centralization, the war acquires aspects of a regular war, and without it the war would remain one of partisan (or guerilla) nature.

What makes the centralized forces ideal is the fact that they are of guerilla origin and can therefore, depending on changes in the balance of power, either be centralized and driven in one direction or be distributed into local forces and guerilla units. Since the classical army has no such close connection with the people, it has no such advantage. In addition, the popular army can, due to its origin, fight with or without modern weapons.

THEORY AND APPLICATION

Our revolution has over the past four years arrested attention through the victories it has been able to achieve in spite of the adverse circumstances

which were described in a statement made in early 1969 by one of our Cuban comrades, who said, «Fateh's Assifa fighter is the legendary guerilla fighter. He fights on a limited area, without forests, in adverse topographical surroundings and an extremely intricate political environment.»

Our evaluation of our military achievements must be made on the basis that we are still in the stage of avoiding decisive battles. The yardstick for negatives and positives should be the measure of success we have achieved in self-development and in the fulfilment of the six conditions for strategic balance.

For maximum clarity, let us review our phased activities from June 1967 to date.

A. The phase of undoing the political effect of the Israeli military victory from August 28, 1967, till the end of 1967:

Toward the end of June, while Dayan was stating that every time there was a knock at his door he expected an Arab delegate to walk in and sign a peace treaty, an Arab official was telling a delegation representing our movement: «If you do not act and at least start some fires, we cannot possibly go on.»

No one can ever rid us of the shame that the enemy was able to lift the curfew on the West Bank only a few weeks after the June defeat. Likewise, History will record that our movement was the only one which saw in the June defeat the beginning of the great victory.

On August 28, 1967, Fateh decided to start early

armed action on the West Bank with the intent of undoing the effect of the Israeli victory.

A defeated people is at a disadvantage. For the vanquished to face up to his enemy politically and militarily, for him to exert pressure on international and hostile powers, he must without delay extricate himself from his circumstances, which are disadvantageous to him and advantageous to the enemy, and create circumstances which suit him and are detrimental to the enemy.

Early action was also aimed at preventing the enemy from pushing through a house-cleaning operation to bring the entire nation to its knees. A start-off under unbalanced internal conditions to confront an unprepared enemy is far better than a start-off to confront a prepared enemy with better prepared conditions.

We, in Fateh, believe that the core of revolutionary action is that we be constantly committed, regardless of circumstances, difficulties and sacrifices. And to be committed to an idea, it is less important for that idea to ferment and develop within us than it is for it to reveal itself and for us to embody it through our actions.

Despite all circumstances, our forces sprang into action under the leadership of Abu Ammar brandishing the slogans — «Do not be afraid: wrap your fists around the burning coal» and «The homeland or death.» The aim was to make ourselves heard to the world and to introduce the Palestinian element through the practice of armed propaganda.

Action which is beamed more at the people and

the world than at the enemy must include action in the cities, attacks on enemy patrols in the villages, and the public execution of agents, traitors and collaborators.

Operations such as these are adventurous, suicidal in nature, and the results of the first four months (after August 28, 1967) were cheering and painful at the same time. At the cost of 46 men, half of them belonging to the leadership cadres, we carried out 79 operations inside Palestine, with the following material effects:

1. Killing and wounding about 318 Zionists, including nine officers.
 2. Attacks on 13 kibbutzim.
 3. Public execution of five traitors.
 4. Blowing up of two military trains.
 5. Destruction of 44 vehicles.
 6. Exploding the large arms depot near Acre and the bazooka shelling of the suburbs of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.
 7. Downing of three helicopters.
 8. Attacks on strategic installations (electricity, water, etc.)
- B. The secure base:

We succeeded during these last four months of 1967 in recapturing the attention of the world, and our operations began to inject the feeling of victory into the Arab people.

The experience of those months convinced us that we must content ourselves with our achievements until that date and turn our attention to ending the dispersment and vagrancy stage without further delay. In fact, such method of fighting could never be of a long-range strategy nature. Self-development could not be attained with the attrition which the dispersed and vagrant people were subjected to as a result of their inability to swiftly regain their bases. It thus became necessary to launch the struggle for a secure base.

Where should the secure base be? The question led us to utilize the advantage which no other revolution in the world enjoyed: that our war is a war of a people in a nation whose land has not been totally occupied, making it possible to turn the unoccupied areas into a secure base.

Thus the Aghwar were chosen as the grounds for overt action (secure base) and the West Bank as the battlefield.

Any man who has a work system can undertake strategic work and map out the phased tasks and the direction of the major strike. This explains why 1968 was a year of debate over the revolution from within and without. Many, at the time, made the serious mistake of linking the Palestinian nature of the revolution to the area which imperialism called Palestine.

We, in Fateh, view Palestine in terms of national, not geographic, dimensions. While we insist that it would be a mistake to allow Arab nationalism to expropriate the Palestinian identity (and in so

doing freeze the largest mutinous section of the Arab people), we also stress that it is clear that the plan to destroy Zionism, indeed the main lines of any strategy of revolution, depends on the measure of clarity with which we can answer the following question:

How can we exploit the demographic and topographic status of the Arab people, at least those who figure in the Zionist expansionist designs, to launch a popular war based on the enlightened, organized and armed masses?

The above said premises reveal the ideological principles and the clarity of vision with which our movement entered the battle of al-Karameh — the battle to acquire a secure base, the first decisive battle ever waged by the Palestinian Revolution and the second time that Fateh sacrificed all for the sake of all.

By the sunset of Thursday, March 21, 1968, and by the dawn of Friday March 22, 1968, the Palestinian Revolution had embarked on the self-development and root-sinking stage — the stage in which Palestinian feet were planted in the land for the first time in 20 years.

C. The Bitter Honey Factor:

The acquisition of a secure base can be considered the theoretical, though not the chronological, half-way mark along the path of the armed popular revolution.

A revolution which calls a halt in the middle of the road condemns itself to death. Dogged persistence

always comes at a high price. For there is a definite link between the measure of sacrifice and the available potential, each being inversely proportionate to the other.

The potentials which were available to our fighting forces early in 1968 were scarce indeed when seen against the responsibilities which were laid on the shoulders of the movement. The difficulties were posed not so much by a dearth of finances and arms as by the problem of pulling together a large number of alert and trained fighters and the problem of extracting from them the cadre capable of creating circumstances which encourage the toleration of the trials and tribulations which the revolution was bound to be subjected to. The emergence of such creative cadre takes time, and time is a rare commodity in the history of modern revolutions.

Thus, 1968 was a year in which the ability of the revolution to maintain itself, reap the fruits of al-Karamah victory in terms of self-development and preventing the enemy from achieving any strategic victories was put to trial.

The year 1968 was marked mainly by the birth and development of the centralized strategic force, which is the cornerstone for building the popular Palestinian army.

The Aghwar all along the East Bank of the Jordan River teemed with thousands of young men whose only resemblance to a fighter had once been their khaki uniforms. The revolution was able in addition to meet the requirements of such a centralized force — supply and transport units, a central

operations room, medical services, training units, wire and wireless communications units, etc. All this was achieved in the midst of napalm raids, while the revolutionaries were being baptized by fire and learning about war through war itself.

Revolution is a creative thing. Those who study the factors which enabled Fateh to remain the guiding and pace-setting movement in the area over the past two years will note that the objective, material factors were equally available to many of the other forces, and that the decisive factor which kept Fateh at the helm of the Palestinian Revolution was the creativity of its revolutionary vanguard, manifested in their ability to make of themselves both the knife and the victim, to enter the battle to create everything out of nothing. All these traits embodied in the ability to struggle against impossible odds were the decisive factor in maintaining Fateh's hold over leadership of the Palestinian Revolution.

The major guideline of military work during the stage of avoiding decisive battles is self development and enemy-annihilation. If we apply the six yardsticks of strategic balance we note the following achievements:

1. Forcing enemy forces out of the offensive and into the defensive:

Stemming the initiative of the invading forces was the first thing which had to be done and the responsibility of doing it fell on the shoulders of the revolution and the Jordanian army. The revolution succeeded, through the battle of al-Karamah and the considerable losses it inflicted on the enemy, in

temporarily stemming the initiative of the enemy. The speed with which secure bases were established and a barrier of fighters set up all along the borders forced Israel to replace its continued initiative with continued inertia along the West Bank of the Jordan River.

2. Crippling enemy tactics:

The problem faced by Fateh strategists is that, contrary to what happens in classical war, the implementation tools in the popular revolution are born, develop and crystallize in the course of the revolution itself. This means that in a people's war there is a slow escalation from tactics to strategy, whereas in classical war the movement is downward, from strategy to tactics.

The strategists of a people's war are therefore forced during the stage of avoiding decisive battles to tailor their strategic plans to fit the given tactics and psychological environment, leaving the initiative to the enemy. The past two years can for this reason be considered years of the struggle of tactics.

The enemy's move from the offensive to the defensive had forced him to abandon work on the external lines and concentrate on the internal lines — a negative position from which the enemy has tried to extricate himself through compensation for the prodigious cost of constant fixture along the entire length of the border by adopting a variety of tactics aimed at confining his confrontation with us to the Jordan River. This the enemy attempted to do for the purpose of securing internal peace and high morale on the one hand and, on the other pulling the teeth of the popular army which he had failed to abort at al-

Karameh, shaking said army's faith in its effectiveness and making it feel as if it were kicking against the pricks. Thus, the enemy created a security belt along the length of the border. In the north, the belt took the form of mine fields, mined barbed wire and electronic audio-visual devices. In the central area (i.e. that of the West Bank) aware of the danger of contact between the Arabs of the east and west banks, the enemy setup a human barrier. In the south, a combination of both types of security measures was adopted. To give his security belt a psychological impact, the enemy meanwhile concentrated on air raids, bombing human concentrations with napalm.

The struggle over the past two years has been one of defense-offense for Israel, with the accent on air raids in the offensive operations. For us, however, the struggle has been one of offense-defense. In fact, Fateh strategists applied the «circular saw» tactics to overcome the enemy's security belt.

The circular saw tactics had two major objectives, the first being to allow newly-recruited forces to learn fighting by practicing it, the second being to neutralize the effect of the planes and provide effective protection through constant motion of the forces.

Experience has taught us that one spy is enough to destroy scores of security networks and that constant motion coupled with constant digging constitute the best possible security network.

Each of the two parties was and still is attempting to force the other into a defensive position and

cripple his offensive operations.

Initially, the enemy tried to hold us to the East Bank by sending across small armed units to blow up houses and plant mines, in the hope that we would busy ourselves with defensive operations scattering our forces and abandoning the idea of crossing over to the west Bank. We foiled these tactics, however, by boosting our crossings and convincing the enemy of the fruitlessness of his tactics, which, indeed, were abandoned soon after.

On our part, to make the nailing down more burdensome for the enemy, we created protection problems for him. The aim, in other words, was to increase the number of spots which the enemy had to protect. Our fighters left no inlet unused, thus nailing down several enemy brigades along the border. This helped correct the balance of power between enemy and Arab forces.

When the enemy realized his failure to set up an impregnable barrier, he allocated forces for what he called «hot pursuit». These were meant to foil our tactics of «patrols in depth», which consisted in sending guerilla units from the East Bank to strike at strategic targets deep in enemy territory, reaching as far as Tel Aviv, Beersheba and Gaza.

«Hot pursuit» relies on pulling together human forces and an intensity of fire a hundred times that of their prey, to surround and wipe out patrols which succeed in penetrating the security belt.

Initially, the enemy scored several successes. Our fighters fought valiantly, but the balance was in favor of the enemy. We quickly grasped the enemy's

strategic intent and applied counter tactics, based on accepting such confrontations when they occurred but in spots of our fighters' own choosing — in spots where the topography is suitable for defense and preservation and on condition that the strugglers be provided with a doubled fire intensity.

This practice of ours is reminiscent of the mosquito which killed the elephant. Considering their small numbers, it was easy for our fighters to disappear in suitable topography, and the sheer size of the enemy made it inevitable that our fighters, with their concentrated hail of fire, should inflict on him highly disproportionate losses. The result of this type of confrontation was extremely satisfactory — so satisfactory, in fact, that it triggered a long debate in the Israeli press in which Dayan was accused of walking into a trap set up by Fateh, which was quite prepared to sacrifice an entire patrol as long as the ratio of losses was one to three or one to five in Fateh's favor.

Revolutions whose fighters are politically motivated are left unscathed by defeats, whereas victories affect them deeply. One victory is enough to make the fighters of a popular revolution forget several defeats. This Dayan knows, and it is for this reason that he is trying to deprive the revolution of the slightest victory. That he has failed in this shown by the outcome of the following confrontations

BATTLE	COMMANDO STRENGTH	ENEMY STRENGTH	OUR CASUALTIES	ENEMY CASUALTIES	ENEMY OFFICERS KILLED
Auja I	48	two battalions	7 dead	65	Brig. Armin Rahib Lt. Jad Manilla
Auja II	26	one battalion	5 dead and 2 wounded taken prisoners	45	two
Tobas	22	one battalion	3 dead and 4 wounded taken prisoners	48	Col. Moshe Sham - bel Two majors
Wadi Karantal	35	two battalions	6 dead 2 wounded and 4 taken prisoners	about 75	Two
Jabaris	17	one battalion	5 dead	about 24	Two captains

The ineffectiveness of «hot pursuit» was reflected in additional concentration on the security belt. We countered this concentration by forming special task units capable of breaking through these barriers. The attack launched by our forces through 28 inlets in the barrier carries a message for the Israeli Operations Room: that it is possible for the Popular Palestinian Army forces to leap into Upper and Lower Galilee and that technology cannot defeat the human element. Coming days will prove our people's ability to deal with these barriers, but it is not in our interest to talk about this in detail now, for it is not over yet and has not become part of history, to be discussed freely.

3. Lebanon — a new strategic dimension (siege of Galilee):

Among the revolution's most important strategic achievements recently is the establishment in depth of the revolution's presence in northern Upper Galilee, Galilee is the heart of Palestine and Israel's Achilles' heel. In it are the state's water and power sources. All the heavy industries are centralized there. Its topographical nature is ideal, for in it are the mountains which, as an extension of the mountains of Lebanon, are covered with trees (the friends and protectors of the fighter) and penetrate deep into the area. In addition to that, 40 per cent of Galilee's population are Arab; natural water barriers do not exist there; non-human barriers are difficult to set up there due to the population density in the area.

The Israelis had been expecting this step. The air raid on Beirut Airport was considered unjustified by many at the time, but it represented an early at-

tempt on Dayan's part to terrorize Lebanon into preventing the revolution from establishing its presence in South Lebanon. But that raid served as our tool to gain the support of the Lebanese people: Dayan's path to Beirut International Airport was our path to South Lebanon. The Israelis forgot that the honor and dignity of a people have priority over hunger and pain and that there is no pain as intolerable to a people as the pain emanating from an attack on their national existence and national feelings.

4. Armed revolutionary organization (the true defense wall):

The strategic value of geographic depth is doubled when the human element is introduced. Human strategic depth represents one of the biggest possible strategic advantages which we should exploit in our war.

In area, we have gained much since al-Karameh battle. This is reflected in the emergence of armed popular organization, which has allowed us to plan and act in the knowledge that whereas the enemy can cross the river, it is no longer possible for him to leave the inhabited areas alive. The Israelis would be doing us the greatest strategic favor if they decided to meet us on our own grounds. An Arab fights his best battles on his land. Had the people of the West Bank been armed, the June War would have taken a different turn.

In time, the thickness of the defensive wall will increase and the Israel's will begin to face the big dilemma: their inability to coexist and their inability

to deter. This is one of the major justifications for the major justifications for the minimization of the importance of the lack of balance in material power.

By standing on its own feet, armed revolutionary organization meant the birth of the local forces east of the river, which forces should be the twin brother of the local forces west of the river, so that both can flank the forces centralized in the Aghwar.

Combatting the Israeli war machinery and imperialism can be achieved at the hands of the Arab nation's only power — namely, manpower. This can be done by transforming this capacity into a revolutionary reservoir armed with political awareness to defeat imperialist technological superiority and foil the blitzkrieg strategy and the strategy of long-term wars. That is the strategic aim behind revolutionary organization.

Spreading the revolution in all areas is one of the vital requirements of a people's war. The explosions in Haifa, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Hebron, Beit Sahour, etc. bear witness to the extent to which armed revolutionary organization has spread west of the river.

5. Steps toward the mobile war (the Green Belt, al-Himmah and the Good Earth operations):

Centralization of the centralized strategic forces does not mean to gather them in one spot but to enable them to work together under centralized command. This requires the ability to fight at the respective levels of a squadron, battalion, brigade, division and army.

Securing the proper number of men and arms

for a squadron does not mean the creation of one. A squadron is formed when it becomes certain that it can fight as one unit to achieve varying ends. Some officers, for instance, can lead one hundred fighters well and accomplish the mission, but would lead five hundred men straight to catastrophe on an identical mission.

The development of the fighters' and leaders' personalities the raising of their standards to the level of bigger responsibilities can only be achieved through practice.

The significance of the «Green Belt», «Good Earth», «Bayonets of Fateh», «al-Himmah», «Farhan As-Saadi» and «Beit Sahour» operations lies in the fact they represent the birth of the platoons and squadrons capable of carrying out the missions of platoons and squadrons. This represents the beginning of the formation of the popular tools required by the mobile war. When these tools are completed, the big achievement will start west of the river to complement the achievements on the East Bank. Then will the big leap come.

* * *

Events have proved that Fateh's takeoff in 1965 was not an offspring of nervous tension and fruitless mutiny. Events have also proved that all that we, of Fateh, needed to do was correct our steps without changing our direction, and that our biggest military achievement was in convincing the people of the necessity to struggle. Our people have left behind them the idea of blitzkrieg war and are now organiz-

ing their popular leaderships and crystallizing their intellectual and political conditions to confront the Israelis and, behind them, the Americans, who in fighting us are not after a guarantee of the Jews' right to live but the exploitation of the entire Arab region — which can never be achieved before the Israelis bring the Arabs to their knees.

In the Aghwar, our Arab nation fought out nothing but victorious battles. It is the guns of the Aghwar that will bring the Israelis to their knees. The contrary will never happen.

