



POPULAR FRONT FOR THE  
LIBERATION OF PALESTINE

"HANDS OFF  
THE  
MILITIA!"

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« The richest source of power to wage war lies in the masses of the people ».

Mao Tse-Tung

« On Protracted War »

Selected Works, Vol. II, p. 186.

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The resistance movement started long before the defeat of 1967. It never found the suitable circumstances necessary for its rapid growth either inside or outside the occupied territory. The reasons for this were:

1. The occupied area of 1948 was small and densely populated with Israelis.

2. The proportion of the Arab inhabitants inside this area was small in comparison to the large Israeli population. These factors prevented the establishment of different forms of guerrilla activities other than the formation of underground bases.

3. The maintenance of external guerrilla bases (underground or otherwise) in the surrounding Arab countries was extremely difficult and risky. These countries were speaking loudly about liberation and beating the drums of war (strictly for local consumption). It was even more difficult in the West Bank, because the Jordanian authorities had disarmed the people and deprived them of training; suppressed any militant or semi-militant activity; and

they even outlawed any form of reconnaissance to the occupied territories.

Then came the June 1967 defeat, shifting the conditions in favor of the resistance movement in several important ways: the occupied area became larger; the number of Arabs in the occupied territory increased; huge numbers of heroic Gaza Strip inhabitants (who were well trained and armed long before the occupation) had joined the movement; the people of the Hebron mountain region (who are known for their endurance and familiarity with guerrilla warfare) also joined the movement. Furthermore, the people of all the other areas had joined the movement as a vast moral and physical reserve force. This shift also affected the surrounding Arab countries, which for quite sometime during the war, acted as if they were disarmed while the enemy was expanding. A cease fire, which was in effect everywhere, silenced all guns except those of the resistance movement, which stood facing the enemy. In the

midst of defeat, on one hand, and with the active challenge on the other, the resistance movement proved to be the only dynamic and largely effective Arab movement in the region. It gained vast popular support (Palestine and Arab) which helped it grow remarkably inside and outside the occupied territory. It also found a suitable opportunity to create its bases on the surrounding Arab land, especially on Jordanian soil. The majority of Palestinian masses who immigrated in 1967 from the West Bank and Gaza Strip now inhabit Jordan, adding thousands and thousands of impoverished people to the camp's populace). The process of forming the guerrilla bases in Jordan had suffered partial difficulties and obstacles imposed by the defeated army which was retreating from the West Bank accompanied by sections of the Royal Guard and of the Bedouins. Obstacles were also imposed by police forces who originally were not involved in the battle. In spite of their fears of the growth, and expanding influence of the resistance move-

ment among the people, the Jordanian authorities did not have the power, physically or morally, to comfort the commando's power and influence. At the time they could not present any concrete excuse to deprive the commandos of dealing heavy blows to the enemy who had captured the West Bank and Jerusalem, and had destroyed the pride and moral of the Jordanian military. Hence, the Jordanian authorities had no alternative but to go along with the resistance on a short, compulsory honeymoon. In the midst of this atmosphere, a lot of slogans, such as «The army is the shield of the resistance » and « We are all commandos », etc., were perpetuated.

The trick was relatively successful with some of the commando groups and the ideology of unprincipled coexistence found fertile soil in which to grow. Those who perpetuated this liberal ideology also began speaking of the concept of Arab national brotherhood as being a weapon against the Zionist enemy. The more progressive groups

among the commandos were aware of the trick and the true nature of such a joining of all forces and the benefits to be gained by those people from this. These progressive groups had learned, through experience with the Jordanian government, how to expose the true nature of this regime, and the intentions of the classes that benefit from it. They were also enabled to estimate the time period that the regime could be expected to silently tolerate the rising revolutionary tide. The progressive groups could also foresee and observe how the reactionary Jordanian government was fortifying and rearming itself to protect the throne, not the masses. After these groups had firmly established their guerilla bases and strengthened their ties with the vast population, they realized the necessity for protecting themselves from expected stabs in the back. This could only be done by arming the people who are the origin of their power, the source of their inspiration and the real shield of the commandos against the claws and fangs of the reac-

tionary regime. This is how the militia came into being as a potential force which would stand firm, protecting the revolution. So it became to the Jordanian authorities like the sword of Democles.

In spite of this, the Jordanian regime did not move to crush the movement before it got out of hand. Many took this to be a proof of wisdom on the part of the part of the regime, of a genuine desire to avoid Arab bloodshed, and of an intention to prepare instead for the decisive battle with the Zionist enemy. Those with the bourgeois mentality of brotherhood and compromise were satisfied by tickling themselves with this dream. These are the ones who failed to see the total material and moral emptiness hidden behind this so-called wisdom. The PFLP and other progressive groups understood that the enemy (the regime) would not eat from the dish of revenge before it got cold and that the current preparations inside the army among the loyal classes and clans were defi-

nitely not in preparation for a liberation war. Consequently, the back stabbing was coming for sure and the reactionary regime was only waiting for the right time. Thus PFLP and other progressive groups strengthened their ties with the people, widened their militia bases, and intensified training and arming of the militia so that they would be prepared to carry their responsibility of facing the enemy. (They proved their ability to carry this responsibility in September.

The Jordanian army was rearmed; the loyalties of certain people were paid for; and the contradictions exploded with the help of the liquidationists who had been prepared both morally and financially. These preparations being completed, the first target that the army moved against was the residential areas and the refugee camps where the real strength of the resistance existed — where the militia was. When the fighting stopped, the primary demand of the lackey's authorities was that



the commandos should get out of the cities, knowing very well that there were no commandos in the cities. They pushed this demand as an excuse to rid themselves of the militia before escalating the struggle against the resistance outside the cities. This stand of the Jordanian authorities is compatible and homogenous with the ideological and class structure of the regime. After all, all oligarchies and exploiting ruling classes have always and everywhere been opposed to the idea of forming militia which is the starting point of people's control and freedom. The history of revolutions assures us that the existence of the militia is a fundamental phenomenon of the people's democratic rule serving the masses. And every «Brumaire» of every revolution starts by dealing a blow to the militia (the armed masses). It's true, then, that the Jordanian oligarchic reactionary regime was in harmony with its role, and therefore, the resistance had to harmoniously stand by its historical role whose banner it carried. It had to resist the sus-

picious plan and not give up its shield (the militia) and be trapped.

More than one Plekhanov stood repeating « we should not have fought». These were the people who were shocked by the partial success of the authorities and forgot — or may be they never knew — two principal revolutionary rules: one recognizes the inability of the militia to stand in defense for a long period of time against forces superior in number, arms, and experience; the other recognizes the inevitability of the ebb and flow in the course of any long term revolution. The shock was so great that they accepted many concessions, the main one being the disarmament of the militia in a way that would change the partial tactical successes of the authorities to strategic ones. These concessions would also change the nature of the resistance from a political and military force existing everywhere, welded together with the oppressed masses wherever they may be, into a semi-military force isolated in the countryside. This

would also change the strategic distribution of the resistance. Instead of it being a net spread out all over the country with the attention of the fighting units of the commandos being focused on the struggle against the Israeli enemy and with its militia groups standing ready to strangle any attempt to deal a blow to these fighting units, the resistance became a point in space, moving to deal a blow to the Israeli enemy without knowing when it would be hit from the rear. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) rejected all such concessions because it wanted the hands of the fighting units to remain unchained in order to be able to operate inside the occupied territory and because it knew that their freedom of activity was extremely dependent upon the militia existence to crush the intentions of the counter-revolutionaries. The Front refused to surrender the arms of the militia because it refuses to be a partner in pushing the resistance toward a graveyard.

Surely this refusal was not accidental and did not arise out of a desire to take an individualistic stand (as some are claiming). Instead, it sprang from a thorough scientific analysis of the nature of the situation — an analysis of the revolutionary maturity among the ranks of the masses, the nature of the Jordanian system and its internal contradictions, the contradiction between the Jordanian system as a whole and the existence of the resistance, the residential and class structure of the East Bank of the Jordan River, and a good number of other social, political and military elements. This rejection was a fundamental stand based on a clear vision of the tangible circumstances, precise aims, and a complete evaluation of the balance of all forces, not just of the military. The PFLP had built the militia units (the Red Guards) and prepared them politicaly and militarily because it refuse to be just a semi-military fighting organization isolated from the masses. It will never allow anyone whoever he is to prevent it from exer-



cizing its historic role as one of the vanguards leading the masses to their overall revolution and as a spearhead directed at all enemies of the people, regardless of who these enemies might be.

The PFLP clearly understands the limited abilities of the Red Guards, its role in preparing and mobilizing the masses and its various obligations and roles at every stage of the battle. It also knows very well that the Red Guards are subject to the largest part of repression in the cities when the counter-revolutionaries start their attack. The Front created the militia in the midst of the revolutionary atmosphere of the circumstances which developed after the June 1967 defeat and without which this creation would never have been possible. The PFLP insists on the existence of such a revolutionary force as long as a revolutionary atmosphere exists. The liquidation of the militia is the beginning of the liquidation of the revolution and the liquidation of the revolution means the end of the mi-

litia. How odd it is that we have the rules and laws of revolutions right in front of our eyes — and we don't even bother to look at them ! And yet we label ourselves REVOLUTIONARIES !! Since the matter is so clear, how would those who advocate the disarming of the resistance from its shield justify their position ? Although there are also differences in motives and aims, what are the justifications given by these advocates (among the authorities and the bourgeoisie and some also among the resistance) ? What is our answer to these justifications ?

**The First Justification:** They do not want to give the government any excuse for confronting the resistance — as if the oligarchic government, which is in contradiction with the resistance from the beginning, needs an excuse to clash with it. One look at history teaches us that neither the external forces of aggression (Imperialists) nor the internal apparatus of repression (lackey governments)

need excuses to begin their work. Their job rests upon a suitable moment for starting the attack, the balance of forces favorable for attack, the limitations of their ensuing aims, and the expected reaction of external (local and world) opinion. But the excuse itself is there at all times and at all places. Is it realistic for us to imagine that the authorities did not have any excuse, throughout 1969 and the first half of 1970, to deal a blow to the resistance ? The existence of two forces, diametrically opposed in aim and structure, in the same theatre forms the first impetus for any confrontation. The existence of these forces is present today and has always been. It has existed since the day the resistance picked up the first gun, since it built the first base, and since the day it conducted its first raid on the Israeli enemy who retaliated with a large scale operation against the Jordanian army and against the Arab villages on the East Bank ! The existence of this justification (not giving the government any excuse for confrontation) grows out of the

failure of many people to clearly see the switch of the Jordanian reactionaries from being probable Arab allies in the struggle against colonialist Israel to being a first degree enemy of the Arabs. The Jordanian reactionaries, by their aggressive stands had inverted the order of priorities of the enemies oppressing the Arab masses. It placed itself in the camp of the main enemy; furthermore, it placed itself in the front of this camp. These reactionaries (historically the conspirators against the people) deceived the national armed forces by dragging them into an anti-national and dangerous path. They also fed upon the regional loyalties in an attempt similar to those of the princes of the middle ages and became the most dangerous obstacle to the course of revolution.

Therefore, we see that the lackey regime does not search for excuses for wherever it looks and finds a starrng gun, a head held high and boiling blood prepared to flow on the soil of home, it finds those excuses in

front of it. The excuses necessary to secure the success of worldwide propaganda and political manœuvres are available and if not, the reactionaries will create them. Didn't Hitler and the chain of exploiters teach the reactionaries this lesson ? Didn't the thousands of Israeli aggressions, big and small teach us this fact ? It's true that there are those who are difficult to teach !

**The Second Justification:** There is more than one Svitchin attacking the militia today, but their arguments are more vulgar and less sincere than those of Svitchin. They claim, that the armed militia inside the cities creates a kind of chaos, fear and confusion and an atmosphere of aggression, etc. Why ? Why is it that the weapons in the hands of the Red Guards arouse a fear of these atrocities and why it is viewed as not when these weapons are in the hands of the police, army or any other armed organization ? If the «gentlemen » (!) the officers of the armed forces, are able to impose a strict upper hand which is based on

mechanical obedience, then our comrades, the cadres of the Red Guards, have the ability to insure an even stricter disciplinary obedience voluntarily. This is so because our obedience grows out of a deep consciousness of the gravity of our historical duty and an awareness of the role of the vanguard revolutionary class. If the soldiers of the armed forces are subject to the rules and regulations of their barracks, then the men of the Red Guards are subject to the rules of the party which constitutes their disciplinary, ideological and military school. If the troops of the armed forces are willing to maintain security, then our comrades in the militia are also conscious of maintaining security.

The difference here is, what security are you talking about ? Your police forces which want to protect and provide security for a handful of exploiters standing in the counter-revolutionary camp which are a holy, and untouchable apparatus. They must be reinforced with more and more trucks armed with 500mm guns. You bring back more

and more soldiers from the borders with the enemy, remove their military clothes and give them police uniforms in order to face the masses with their spears. The militia, the men of the proletarian Red Guards, who want to assure the security of the people and of the revolution are a dangerous apparatus which should be liquidated and disarmed. It's true that our dialogue is meaningless and that we don't speak the same language, our security is different from yours, our enemy is different from yours, the color of our «skin» is different from yours, the nature of our «blood» is different than the nature of yours. Even the vocabulary of our children who play with the empty bullet shells and pick up the fragments of the bombs of your USA imported guns from the thick mud of the streets and who are sinking in misery up to their eye-lashes, is different from the vocabulary of your children for whom you have to measure the temperature of their honey-sweetened milk every morning before they drink it !

**The Third Justification:** They say that since we are now camping in the mountains, since our future war will be directed toward the Israeli enemy, and since the main theater for guerrilla warfare is in the mountains, we can wage guerrilla warfare against the Jordanian authorities whenever they want to put obstacles in front of our efforts. Therefore, why do we need to keep the Red Guards in the cities ? In spite of the sincerity of those who advocate this justification in spite of the fact that some of our revolutionary comrades are among them, one should not hesitate to draw attention to the error in this justification. These are the advocates of focusing the revolution in the countryside and their ideas come from an attempt to apply the Cuban experience or the Chinese experience at some stages in a mechanical form. It is enough for us to take a close look at the conditions of the East Bank: the distribution of the inhabitants in the East Bank and the centralization of the majority of these inhabitants in the cities; the existence of the impoverished



masses (the aim of the revolution, its tool and its fuel) piled in the poor districts close to the districts of the comprador bourgeoisie or in the refugee camps neighboring the cities; the domination of the clanish tribal ties in the south and the sparsity of the population in the mountains or in the wilderness; the non-existence of rear support (borders) on which the guerrillas of the mountains may depend during fighting; the centralization of peasant aggregates or big villages which are loosely called cities just because they lie on the main roads; the poverty of the countryside in general and the sparsity of water and supply resources in particular; the passivity of the peasants caused by their historical fear of the authorities; the negligence of the resistance and the progressive parties to create a revolutionary atmosphere among them; the success of the reactionary authorities in taking advantage of the incorrect common opinion that the resistance is just a movement of Palestinians, thus feeding the sectarian al-

legiances in some of the regions; the capital (Amman) being the center of the authorities' political and economic forces for the entire country; etc. These circumstances in the East Bank prevent us from applying the Cuban experience. On the contrary, they assure the necessity of the existence of two revolutionary integrated forces able to operate together when necessary, and to cooperate closely to provide security for the coordinated rebellion against all who want to deal a blow to the revolution from the rear. This is with the condition that the primary force be from the fighting units operating in the countryside and the mountains, and that the secondary force be from the armed militia groupings in the cities. In this way, the fighting units in the mountains will not be operating separate and isolated from the masses or the sensitive positions of the authorities nor will the militia face the repressive forces alone in the cities except during the first period until the fighting units move in support of the militia with guerrilla war-

fare. Given the current circumstances, this is the most objective solution and it is the solution which is adopted by the Popular Front as opposed to the mechanical literal application of the experiences of other revolutions which is being adopted by some of our comrades and which was adopted by Che (one of the greatest contemporary revolutionaries) who paid for it with his life in the jungles of Bolivia.

**The Fourth Justification :** They say that the militia does not necessarily form a revolutionary force. They also say that the reactionary authorities also have militia which work at their service against the interests of the masses. THIS IS NONSENSE! and an old trick that no one buys any more. All the self-righteous governing classes are able to take advantage of the ideological, racial and clan contradictions. They are also able to benefit from the decaying sectarian mentality and from the financial and moral bribes made for the purpose of creating such «militia» organizations con-

taining a number of fascist volunteers such as sons of the governing classes and in addition, a number of deceived proletarians and half proletarians, and a large section of lumpen proletariat. As far as the nature of these associations is concerned, it makes no difference whether they are labelled « The Militia », « The Popular Militia », « The National or State Guards » or any other name. The name of a military or semi-military association will never change its structure or its role; the only guide to its nature is the direction of its spear heads. Since the spears of the National Guards are directed toward the chests of the masses, it is one of the counter-revolutionary forces.

**The Fifth Justification:** Some of the comrades point out that the resistance and the whole region are passing through a stage of ebb tide in the revolution and hence it must, under the shadow of the circumstances, make flexible tactical retreats, among which is the disarming of the militia.



## HOLD IT !

Here, the Central Committee (of the Resistance Movement) must stand up and evaluate the status and nature of the situation. It, alone, is able to precisely calculate the ebb and flow and the extent of the tactical retreats. Only the Central Committee has the right to make such decisions and furthermore, it is its duty to do so.

But even if we are to suppose, for the sake of argument, that the evaluation of the comrades is correct, the extent of the tactical retreats during the tidal ebb of the revolution is a precisely calculated matter, and should not be extended, in time or place, beyond its planned tactical limits. Otherwise it will be turned into a defeat. Furthermore, the stage of the tidal ebb of the revolution itself demands, more than any other stage, the existence of a strongly armed militia inside the cities, so as to protect the overall revolutionary status by waging a fierce and firm battle of strategic retreat. We all know that to attack and to

carry out a vanguard operation necessitates tremendous daring and determination, but we also know that the rear to which the battle of retreat is assigned forms a commando force which must entertain an even more tremendous daring and even stronger determination.

**The sixth justification: The Jordanian authorities do not intend to withdraw the arms of the militia, but its collection and deposition in depots supervised by the Resistance Movement.**

The recurrence of this justification shows complete ignorance of the meaning of the Red Guards and its operational tactics in the cities. The importance of the existence of the Red Guards, its ability to stand firm in the face of the regime's repressive apparatus as well as its being a deterrent against it, all these are not only the result of the Red Guards material strength, but also a result of the inability of the repressive regime's forces to locate this force ahead of time, and in depriving the enemy

of knowing its operational mechanism at all places and all times.

It is certain that the withdrawal of the arms and depositing them in depots, makes it easier for the regime's forces to control these arms. This means depriving the militia from its weapons before putting it into the cage, and depriving it from the tactic of surprise — in time and place — if it intends to wage an offensive. By this it is endangering all its strength and subjecting it to a single surprise attack in case the royal troops decided to wage the offensive. This in short, means depriving the militia from the freedom of action.

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The resistance has had numerous showdowns with the authorities and the September showdown must teach us to be more cohesive with the masses, to carry the weapons with greater solemnity, to be more cautious than before, and to reinforce the

militia instead of depriving it of its arms, so that it won't be taken by surprise.

It is the duty of the leadership of the resistance to stand bravely before its historical role, to intensify the direction toward arming the militia, to create from the Proletarian Red Guards a whole army with no camps, living under the same conditions as the working class. At the same time it will protect the mountain fighting units. (The militia is not a substitute for the fighting units but is, instead, their second arm).

The Popular Front which refused and still refuses to surrender the arms of the Militia never forgets the saying of the revolutionary Jose Marti : « It is a crime to perpetuate a war which could be avoided in a country ». The Front realizes that it is not adequate to quote only this part of the saying of the Cuban revolutionary but also remembers the second part which states that it is also criminal «to stay away from an unavoidable war ».

The Chinese proletariat paid a great deal of blood in the first Shanghai uprising of October 1926 and in the second Shanghai uprising of February 1927 until they learned deep lessons by which they were enabled to win the victory of the third Shanghai uprising of March 1927. But the ignorance of the Party's leadership to the development and shift of the Kuomintang from the camp of the allies of the revolution against the imperialists and the super reactionaries to the camp of the counter-revolutionaries, pushed the leadership to issue orders to surrender the arms of the Red Guards to the army of Chiang Kai Shek. When this was done, the Kuomintang crushed the forces of the Red Guards and killed thousands of its best elements and cadres. But history did not allow this leadership to escape punishment. It was condemned by an emergency convention which was held by the Chinese Communist Party in August 1927 as being opportunist and revisionist and was deprived of any leadership position. So that the Jordanian regime and the

existence of the imperialist Israeli enemy which signed a cease fire treaty with Hussein will not deceive you, so that the Jordanian Kuomintang can not repeat the Shanghai tragedy, and so that history will not issue its cruel judgement on you, **GET RID OF THE ILLUSIONS OF THE BOURGEOISIE AND TAKE YOUR HANDS OFF THE MILITIA !**

