

HARVEST - FIGHT - BUILD - READ

A History of the
Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine



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1) THE FOUNDATION

The DFLP was founded on February 22, 1969 as a leftist independent organization, and as one of the major organizations of the Palestinian resistance movement, during the period encompassing one of the major defeats of the Arab Nationalist Project, the June 1967 war. In this period, the depth of the crisis within the national movement in general, and the Jordanian Palestinian arena in particular, reached a level that involved both program and leadership simultaneously in terms of class, ideology and politics. Awareness of the massive proportions of the crisis, and the dilemma which it produced, formed the basis for the gathering of large sectors of militants from various parties. This resulted in a political consensus to turn leftward, and to adopt a national program of a democratic and revolutionary nature, under a new social and ideological banner.

These sectors had, at the time, limited options. Neither Fatah, representing the national bourgeoisie and with its national stance and historical initiative to begin the armed struggle, nor the traditional Communists, who suffered throughout their historical process due to the complexity of understanding the various problems relating to the particularities of the Palestinian national question,

possessed the ability for political initiative. Both failed to grasp the specific historical moment. Both were unable to conceive the correct position of armed struggle in the resurrection of Palestinian national identity, or the renaissance of the national Palestinian movement after the June 1967 war.

Due to these interwoven factors, the formulation of a revolutionary party representing both a new kind of Palestinian national identity and encompassing an Arab affiliation was anticipated. This party would involve itself in the national armed resistance movement, while presenting a democratic, radical solution to the Palestinian question that included adopting a labour class ideology, and struggling to confirm its vanguard in the National Palestinian Revolution and the Arab National Liberation Movement. This objective was the motivation and incentive for the birth of the DFLP, which was inextricably linked to the changes that took place in the Arab Nationalists Movement in its branches at the start of the 1960's, and the ideological political conflict that occurred at branch level (especially after June 1967). This eventually culminated in the different branches establishing independent party frameworks within their own countries, including the Palestinian branch that had been striving since December 11, 1967 under the banner of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).

At its foundation, the DFLP declared itself a united leftist front, calling for the establishment of a Democratic revolutionary alliance. On this basis, the leftist and democratic sectors of different tendencies, which did not previously belong to a specific organization, were gathered under one umbrella. The DFLP also attracted groups that were scattered throughout the various classes of both the national democratic movement and the youth movement. Within this framework, two leftist organizations joined after just two months of the foundation of the DFLP: "The Leftist Revolutionary Palestinian League" and "The Popular Organization for the Liberation of Palestine." Later, in 1972, sectors of the revolutionary Popular Front joined as well.

Since the foundation of the DFLP, Nayef Hawatemeh has held the position of Secretary General. But other leaders coming from

different organizational and military backgrounds have also played a role in the establishment of the Front since its early days. The Front worked under the name "The Democratic Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine" until 1975, when it officially adopted the name "The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine".

From the start, the Front had a clear political and ideological position as well as a clear concept of its practical struggle, both of which became enriched within the context of the national process that was taking place. Those principles which are most important and worth mentioning are: first, the close relationship of the concept of stages within the Palestinian movement as a national liberation movement with specific characteristics; and second, the close relationship between this political orientation and organizational solutions which move towards the specific objectives of mobilizing the forces and strengthening national unity.



2) THE TRANSITIONAL PROGRAM

The defeat suffered by the Palestinian Resistance Movement in September 1970 and in the following battles, led to the elimination of its open existence in Jordan and motivated within the ranks of the DFLP a complete, open and critical review of its own policy as well as of the general policy of resistance in Jordan. The DFLP faced the deep and complicated realities of the Palestinian Jordanian relationship, in particular the regional division within Jordanian society. The roots of this division are based on the unique position Jordan occupies within the map of imperialist interests in the region, and the role it plays in its confiscation of the Palestinian peoples' right to self determination and their independent expression of their national identity.

This critical review marked the beginning of the stage of the formation of the program that embraced the "right of return, right of self determination, and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967, with Jerusalem as its capital." This is the transitional program (also known as the program of stages), which in reality represented the reformulation of Palestinian political thinking, which at that time had concentrated around the two fold contradiction between "resistance" and "accords", as well as between "armed struggle" and "peaceful solutions."

Although it came as a general plan in this context, the call of the DFLP for the Palestine National Council, in its ninth session (July 1971), to set up a safe, liberated support base in the occupied territories, was intended to maintain the continuity of the Palestinian revolution until it achieved its goals. The work of the first General National Conference of the Front (November 1971) deepened discussions around this topic. The Fourth meeting of the Central Committee (August 1973) formulated the elements of the transitional program, and confirmed it officially, through a document entitled "Ten themes about the general guidelines of the transitional program in the occupied lands and Jordan." It should also be noted that this program presented, for the first time, the idea of the popular uprising

(Intifada), regarding it as the most distinctive form of a war of the people, possible within the special conditions of the Palestinian struggle.

These themes became even more tangible in the declaration issued by the October 1973 meeting of the extended Central Committee, immediately after the October War, which led to partial improvements in the Arab balance of power in relation to Israel. As well, the November 1973 call, issued by the Front in the occupied territories, was equally concrete. In its twelfth session (June 1974), the Palestine National Council confirmed the transitional program under the title: "The Ten Points Program," which after the fourteenth session (January 1979) became the program which had Palestinian national consensus, for a decade and a half, until the signing of the Oslo Agreement (September 13, 1993).



3) NATIONAL UNITY

Since its inception the DFLP has given importance to being one of the main pillars in the first national coalition, which unified guerrilla activities under the banner and leadership of "the armed struggle ", as well as in the membership of the PLO National Council and its Executive Committee established in September 1969. Moreover, in this session the DFLP presented "a plan to achieve the unity of Palestinian national forces and groups, in the Unified National Liberation Front". Also, the difficult circumstances resulting from the events of September 1970 led the DFLP to realize the necessity of promoting a new blueprint for the unity of the national movement, built upon all components of this movement in a more organized and consolidated manner, and based on proportional representation. This blueprint to build a "Unified National Liberation Front" was articulated within a project presented by the DFLP at the ninth session of the Palestine National Council (July 1971), and later, within a complete political and organizational project for achieving national unity in the framework of a unified democratic front, at the tenth session of the Palestine National Council (April 1972).

The experience of the DFLP in maintaining its ideological, political and organizational independence while simultaneously promoting national unity, affirms the vital role of the Palestinian Left within the heart of the Palestinian National Movement. Thus, this Left did not become independent and isolate itself, but instead incorporated itself within national unity as a true revolutionary actor taking part within the framework of this unity, and as a militant vanguard adhering to a correct political stance. Through it, the national slogan and the tasks of the stages of the struggle, respond to the unanimous interests of all Palestinian people.

The central importance of the question of national unity, within the thinking and practices of the DFLP, not only appeared during the first years of open struggle in Jordan (1970) as well as during the revolutionary experience in the refugee camps in Lebanon and Syria until the Israeli invasion 1982, but also during the period of severe divisions. These divisions appeared within the Palestinian political

arena after the Israeli war, after regional conflicts that attempted to influence decisions of the PLO, and attempts by the dominant PLO leadership to find points of agreement with proposals presented at the start of the 1980's, especially the Reagan Plan (September 1982).

The DFLP adopted a decisive position against the Palestinian split throughout the years 1983-1987, playing a vanguard role in the Democratic Alliance which signed the agreement of Yemen (Aden) Algeria, June 28, 1984 and July 9, 1984, with leaders of Fatah's Central Committee. Although this agreement did not succeed in achieving reunification, or in preventing the domination of the official wing of the PLO to unilaterally call for the seventeenth session of the Palestinian National Council in Amman on November 7, 1984, it did set up a base from which to regain unity later, within the framework of the unifying council in Algeria (the eighteenth session, April 1987).

The DFLP rejected the political results of the Amman Council and the resulting organizational structures, and firmly opposed attempts to refute its legality, fearing and attempting to preclude the dangers of a deep and irreversible schism within the PLO.

The Oslo Agreement, which destroyed the framework of the political alliance of the PLO, was the second trial that confronted national unity. The DFLP presented a number of initiatives within the existing political context, consistently maintaining its policy of unification. Most of these initiatives concentrated on the need to have an all inclusive national dialogue to regain national consensus about current issues and permanent status negotiations (2/97, 5/97, 5/98, 4/99, 2/2000) "despite its (the National Movement) changing interrelationships after implementation of the Oslo agreements, in relation to the tasks of the democratic, political and social struggle". These initiatives took into consideration the fact that the essential aspect of the Palestinian National Movement is that it continues to promote the task of national liberation while committing itself to maintaining national unity within the framework of the PLO. The actual separation between the "Palestinian Authority" and the opposition does not essentially abolish this fact, although it may at times be distinguished by certain particularities.

4) THE LINK BETWEEN THE POLITICAL LINE AND THE ORGANIZATIONAL LINE

The DFLP crystallized an organizational work strategy at the same time that it developed its political strategy based on its interim program. This ensured the basis for mobilizing the forces of the Palestinian people. Within this context, the DFLP, along with its political initiatives that strengthened the national movement, contributed to various significant actions in the struggle.

A consistent feature in the DFLP's general policy is that there is an intimate relationship between the political line in each national circumstance and the organizational solutions that ensure, to the greatest degree, a national coalition among the various political and social forces. This link enables an efficient undertaking of the immediate tasks, and demonstrates the profound relationship between the actual situation and the people's movement.

The military operations that the DFLP waged (1974-1979) under the banner of the interim program presented a clear model of the correct relationship between armed struggle and political objectives. This occurred at a time when it was necessary to unify the people and their political forces behind this program in order to confront the unjust campaigns to which its vanguard and militants were exposed. At the same time, the organization did not lose sight of the main direction of the struggle and the need for direct military combat with Israel during the civil war in Lebanon, and the various confrontations within the region as well as confrontations against the different proposed American plans.

The DFLP's call for the formulation of a unified leadership for the popular uprising (Intifada) in the first weeks after its outbreak on December 9, 1987, and its initiative to formulate the aims and the missions of the uprising in Communiqué No.2 (January 10, 1988), is evidence of the DFLP's ability to understand public opinion and influence its development by proposing concrete tasks that respond to the people's actual situation, allowing them to best use their energies and abilities to accelerate the national struggle.

5) GOING BEYOND THE IMPASSE OF THE OSLO AGREEMENT

The Oslo Agreements, which considered the occupied Palestinian territories to be "disputable territories," led to partial redeployment of the Israeli army in this zone. The Agreements also led to the formation of an Autonomous Palestinian Authority that included a legislative structure with limited powers (The Palestinian Council) and an executive structure (ministries and other institutions) with internal and civil faculties over a part of the occupied Palestinian territories. In addition, the Agreements allowed for the continuation of settlement activity, expansion, and a continuation of the illegal occupation. It also allowed for 'civil' administration under Israeli military rule, complete Israeli control over much of Palestinian land, water and air space, and complete domination over the Palestinian economy.

The Oslo Agreements consist of two stages, transitional and permanent. The first stage involves ending the power of internationally recognized resolutions, which placed the Palestinian situation within a long and tedious process of negotiation, as well as within a chain of partial agreements that were not carried out by Israel. As a result, applying the Oslo Agreements meant the continuation of occupation, settlement building and expansion, and the further repression and confiscation of Palestinian national rights. The Agreements did not offer an adequate solution to the objective contradiction of interests between the Palestinian people and the occupying powers. On the contrary, they increased the contradiction. This contradiction was the main factor that instigated the eruption of the Great Palestinian Uprising (the Intifada of 1987-1993). The continuation of these contradictions perpetuates the possibility that the Intifada will occur again and again.

The crystallization of the Palestinian position to confront the dangers of this situation, in both the present and the future, regarding national rights, must rely upon regaining national consensus. It must also activate the mass movement to confront Israeli policy as a fait accompli against Palestinians, through the application of force and the repression of occupation. The

international community supports national rights of Palestinians. These rights are also supported by a Declaration of Independence by the Palestinian people themselves, which includes the exercise of Palestinian sovereignty over the land area internationally acknowledged and acclaimed as Palestine (this includes the West Bank, Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip). The Palestinian position must call upon the Israeli government to hold negotiations which establish a permanent and balanced peace, on the basis of the application of U.N. Security Council Resolutions Nos. 242 and 338, which stipulate the exchange of land for peace, and a just solution for the problem of refugees and displaced persons through the implementation of U.N. Resolutions Nos. 194 and 237.

These negotiations should be held within the context of a suitable international framework. On the one hand, this framework must facilitate the recuperation of coordination between Palestinians and Arab nations regarding negotiations with Israel. On the other hand, the framework must ensure international supervision of the peace process, replacing the unilateral approach typically used by Washington with a dynamic participation of the United Nations along with other active coalitions and countries, especially the European Union, Russia and China in addition to U.S. authorities.

To ensure success of the above mentioned process requires the reconstruction of Palestinian unity so as to guarantee the underlying principles of resistance. This will enable Palestinians to face possible continuing Israeli aggression, as well as ensure the ongoing support of the Arab world and the international community. This requires a unified strategy of resistance based upon a total popular mobilization for confronting Israeli violence, as well as revitalizing the Intifada through the development of new forms of resistance.



6) THE ORGANIZATION AND ITS KEY CONFERENCES

Local organizations are represented in branch organizations, which in turn are represented in regional organizations. All of these different levels are oriented by the general political position as articulated by the central leadership of the DFLP. From this political position is derived a unified plan of action. In this framework, the regional organizations have wide latitude of independence in their work plans, with respect to the special and actual needs and realities of each Palestinian gathering.

The DFLP's central leadership is comprised of:

- a) The General National Congress is the highest political and legislative authority elected by local organizations and organizational structures at higher levels. The Congress is held once every five years.
- b) The General National Conference is also elected, and called upon at certain times when necessity warrants. The Conference has the same authority as the General Congress, but within the limits of its brief agenda.
- c) The Central Committee is the primary political and organizational leadership elected by the General Congress. This election is held between two Congresses. The Central Committee meets four times per year.
- d) The Political Bureau is the highest executive body of the Central Committee, and elected from among its members.
- e) The Committees of Party Supervision, headed by a central supervisory committee, have the task of verifying the correct application of internal statutes, as well as guaranteeing the rights of members and organizational structures at different levels, including that of the central leadership. The mass democratic and professional organizations represent independent groups, with specific programs and internal regulations, and committee structures that are elected

during their periodic congresses. The DFLP considers these organizations as a framework from which its supporters are organized, as well as one of the major organizational forms of the democratic revolutionary alliance. This alliance, which includes sectors of various social forces, mobilizes their abilities within the context of the national and social struggle.

The DFLP has held seven General National Congresses and Conferences.

1) The Founding Congress (the First General Congress) was held in August 1970, during which the first Central Committee was elected. This Congress issued the political program, the general program, and the internal provisional statutes.

2) The First General National Conference, which met in November 1971, issued internal statutes, which were proclaimed in 1972. The Conference also elected the second Central Committee, which adopted the interim program at its fourth session in August 1973, and which also adopted the political program and internal statutes in 1975, which affirmed the independence and distinct character of the DFLP organization in Jordan (Majed). This independence enabled the Majed organization, in 1978, to draw up its own political program and internal statutes in relation to the national democratic struggle in Jordan.

3) The Second General National Congress was held in May 1981. This Congress issued a theoretical, political and organizational report, reviewed the documents of the political program and the internal statutes, and elected the third Central Committee.

4) The Second General National Conference, held in July 1991, elected the fourth Central Committee. It also made basic amendments to the internal statutes, in light of the completion of the work of the DFLP organization in Jordan (Majed) and the establishment of the independent Jordanian People's Democratic Party (Hashd). This party reformulated its relationship with the DFLP, within the context of the work they have in common.

The Conference also analyzed a report that was specifically prepared to attempt to ascertain the root causes of the internal crisis within the DFLP, to draw out the lessons learned from this crisis, and to deepen the democratic process within the party.

5) The Third General National Congress, convened in September/October 1994, elected the Fifth Central Committee and approved a new formula for the political program, for the internal statutes, and for the political report about "The new tasks after the Oslo agreement". They also approved the theoretical themes about "The crises of the left in a changing era".

6) The Third General National Conference, held in January 1998, elected the sixth Central Committee and approved a complete political review of the Oslo agreements and the terms of an alternative national program.

7) The Fourth General National Congress, which was held in April/May 1998, approved a political report and presented a comprehensive national initiative dealing with: "Spreading the sovereignty of the Palestinian State over all of the Palestinian territory occupied in the aggression of 1967".



NAYEF HAWATMEH, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE DEMOCRATIC FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF PALESTINE

Hawatmeh: the Politician

Before the age of 16, Nayef Hawatmeh joined the Arab Nationalists Movement (ANM) which arose as the immediate reaction to Arab defeat and Palestinian catastrophe.

Before turning 19, he had already assumed full organizational responsibility in the leadership of the ANM in Jordan and the West Bank, following the April 1957 coup in Amman against the national government of Suleiman Al-Nabulsi.

In February 1959, it was necessary for him to go underground after the ANM became persecuted in Jordan. He therefore disappeared from the public view for quite some time. During that period, the first death sentence against Hawatmeh was ordered in Jordan, while several of his brothers were jailed and served long prison terms.

Due to later events—heading an armed march from the Syrian city of Homs—Hawatmeh secretly entered and passed through Damascus onto Tripoli, in North Lebanon. There he contributed to the 1958 revolution as the leader of a large group of cadre and militants of the movement. They were opposed to the then Lebanese President Camille Chamoun's intention to bring American troops into the region and to the plan designed by the US President Dwight Eisenhower for Lebanon.

At that stage, Hawatmeh formed a combat front alongside Lebanese Premier Rashid Karami and his party, the Arab Liberation Movement, and with the Baath parties of North Lebanon.

Subsequently—following the revolution of July 14, 1958, the stepping down of Chamoun, and reconciliation between conflicting

groups in Lebanon—Hawatmeh relocated to Baghdad, where he assumed all ANM responsibilities in Iraq.

Taking part of the struggle against the Iraqi dictatorship of Abdel-Karim Qassem, Hawatmeh was subjected to his first term in prison, for 14 months. He was imprisoned with several figures who would later play outstanding roles in the political life of Iraq, people such as Abdel-Salam Aref, Ahmad Hassan Al-Baker, Saleh Mahdí Ammash, Ali Saleh Al-Saadi, Abdel-Karim Farhan, Soubhi Abdel-Hamid, Abdel-Aziz Al-Akili, Abdel-Hadi Al-Rawi, Tahar Yehya and many other of the most outstanding future Iraqi military and political leaders.

He left the dictatorship's dungeons, along with those previously mentioned, on February 8, 1963 – after the first Baath party-led coup, in alliance with Abdel-Salam Arif.

It was published that the Al-Wahdah (Unity) newspaper of that time survived only 27 days and was closed down by the Baath régime.

Hawatmeh's second imprisonment occurred during the Baath Party's alliance with Arif, motivated by what Al-Wahdah had published and for the positions of ANM under Hawatmeh's leadership. He was later deported to Egypt and eventually to Lebanon.

Shortly after his deportation of Iraq another death sentence was ordered against him (See the books: "The Harvest of a Revolution: The Iraq Experience 1958-1964," by General Abdel-Karim Farhan, member of the Command Committee of the Revolution Officials and the Minister of Culture and Promotion; "My Experience in the Baath Party," by Hani Al-Fekaiki, member of the Iraqi Baath leadership; and "The Arab Nationalist Movement: Emergence, Development, Destination," by the Arab Center of Strategic Studies).

Within the modern Middle-East nationalist movement, Hawatmeh was considered one of the emerging leaders on the left, heading its democratic-revolutionary wing.

In Yemen he contributed to the fight for that country's liberation from British occupation and participated in drafting the program for the Fourth Conference in South Yemen held soon after independence was achieved. Related to this, he published the book "The Crisis of the South Yemen Revolution," in which he outlined a new revolutionary program in response to the struggle between left and right forces of the Nationalist Front then in power which had led the struggle against British colonialism. The book became required reading for the patriotic left of Yemen after it assumed power following the defeat of the right wing of the Nationalist Front and the army.

After the 1967 defeat—when the Palestinian revolution appeared as an answer to Israeli occupation and as a new alternative following the defeat of the Arab regimens—Hawatmeh went on to work in the conditions of heated struggle by nationalist movements throughout Palestine and Jordan.

In a August 1968 conference, that embraced the leftist-democratic and traditional right-wing currents in a coalition of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (the Palestinian-Jordanian section of Arab nationalists), Hawatmeh presented the Political and Organizational Report and the Report of Tasks and Action. Through those he was able to expand the role and power of the leftwing in the Arab Nationalist Movement.

With the Popular Front abandoning the decisions of that conference and appealing to various forms of force and violence, Hawatmeh declared the independence of the left current under the name of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) on February 22, 1969.

Following that moment, and under his leadership, the DFLP became a principal and fundamental detachment inside the

coalition of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), and a force behind the revolution and the Palestinian people. Hawatmeh carried out a fundamental contribution in the development of programs and the selection of the tasks of the revolution and of the PLO. Likewise, he played key roles in Palestinian national struggle, battles in defense of the revolution, within the PLO, and among the people, as much in the occupied lands, such as Jordan and in Lebanon during different stages, and—at the same time—in the Intifada and popular action against occupation and colonization.

In September 1970, the Jordanian government launched a total war against the Palestinian resistance and issued a special official statement for the capture “dead or alive” of Hawatmeh, offering a towering sum as a reward. That was the second death sentence ordered against him by Jordan.

Hawatmeh is considered by observers and specialists to be a charismatic personality, of great initiative, and someone who always offers practical and realistic solutions to new questions placed on the agenda of the Palestinian revolution and the people’s national movement. He was the first one to put before the PLO his realistic Transitional National Program, in 1973, and began the campaign within the Palestinian people, the PLO and the Democratic Front for that national program which – after years of struggle following his first presentation of that program – became the program of people, the revolution and the PLO; it has been ratified again and again in successive sessions of the Palestinian National Council (PNC) since June 1974. Hawatmeh has introduced a series of changes in contemporary political thought (See the books, “In Search of an Entity,” by Doctor Maher Al-Shariff; “The Development of Palestinian Political Thought,” by Faisal Al Hourani; “The Palestinian Entity” by Issa Al-Shoaibi; and “Memoirs,” by Khaled Al-Fahoum).

For his part, Hawatmeh was the first Palestinian leader that—in an open and clear manner—called for a solution based on United Nation’s resolutions and for political solutions and negotiations

with the Israelis by virtue of those resolutions and international law. In that sense, in April 1974 he raised the first call by a Palestinian leader to all Israelis from the pages of the Tel Aviv newspaper Yediot Ahronot, and other periodicals such as the US's The Washington Post, Belgium's Le Saur, France's Le Monde and the Lebanese Annahar. In those newspapers he called for the recognition of the rights of the Palestinian people to the return to their land, self-determination and independence.

“Come to turn swords together into plowshares,” he exhorted when proclaiming a balanced global peace based on the recognition to the right of Palestinian people to have an independent state with Jerusalem as its capital, self-determination and the solution of the refugee problem by virtue of UN resolution 194.

After the departure of Palestinian resistance from Beirut, in 1982, Hawatmeh played a central part in the defense of the coalition inside the PLO and in preserving its unity in the face of divisive and self-destructive interests within the two wings of Fatah and detachments the Rejection Front. The DFLP paid a high price for its position and had to withstand successive pressures from other regional forces.

The Palestinian leader did not cease his activity searching for solutions and programs that were adopted by the organs and institutions of the PLO, particularly resolutions adopted by the Palestinian National Council and the Declaration of Independence (in November 1988); decisions taken regarding the bases of the Political Arrangement in the PNC (in September 1991); alternatives to the Oslo Agreements and the step-by-step process. (See the books “Oslo and the Other Balanced Peace,” [1999]; and “Beyond Oslo: Palestine, Where To?,” [2000]).

Hawatmeh: In the Revolutionary Struggle

Nayef Hawatmeh, general secretary of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (FDLP), is one of the most outstanding

of the first generation of leaders of the contemporary Palestinian revolution and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO).

Born in November of 1938, his family is dispersed throughout Palestine, Jordan and Syria. Their roots go back to the Arab ghassasinah. (See “The Five Volume Encyclopedia of the Arab Tribes,” Volume One. Writings of Omar Rida Kahaleh).

He continued his pre-university studies in Amman at the Al-Hussein secondary school. He began his university studies at the University of Cairo Faculty of Medicine, but for political reasons ceased his studies at the university for 10 years. He then resumed his studies continuing in the Faculty of Philosophy and Psychology of the Arab University of Beirut. In Moscow, he completed his doctorate with his dissertation titled “Changing Directions of the Nationalist Movement: From a General Patriotic Movement to a Left Movement.”

Hawatmeh: the Intellectual

Hawatmeh, the intellectual and man, is greatly interested in the legacy of the Arab people and Islamic and European revolutionary history in their different stages of the cultural rebirth and development. He is also intrigued by the personality and great role assumed by the leader Gamal Abdel-Nasser following the national catastrophe of 1948.

Hawatmeh considers to Nasser to be the most outstanding and influential person of his lifetime – in Egypt, the Arab nation, as well as in numerous countries of the Third World (See the book, “Hawatmeh speaks,” 1996).

He works tirelessly for long hours dedicating all his energies to following the details of the course of the Palestinian and Arabic national movement.

His books and writings:

1. – “The Palestinian Resistance and the Arab Situation.” Beirut. 1964. Dar Al-Talia Publishers.
2. – “The Crisis of the Revolution in South Yemen.” Beirut. 1968. Dar Al-Talia Publishers.
3. – “Around the Crisis of the Palestinian Resistance Movement (Analysis and Forecasts).” Beirut. November 1969. Dar Al-Talia Publishers.
4. – “Dialogue Between the Democratic Front and the Egyptian Vanguard. (Lutfi Al-Khouly Converses with Hawatmeh).” November 1969.
5. – “The September Campaign and the Palestinian Resistance, Lessons and Results of Self-Criticism.” Beirut. November 1970. Dar Al-Talia Publishers.
6. – “The Provisional Revolutionary Government.” Central Information of the DFLP. Beirut. 1973.
7. – “After the October War, Working to Defeat Capitulation and the Snatching Away of the Right to Self-Determination.” Central Information of the DFLP. Beirut 1973.
8. – “The Current Tasks of the Revolution to Overthrow the Solution of Surrender and to Snatch the Right to Self-determination.” Central Information of the DFLP. Beirut. December 1974.
9. – “All Revolutionary and Patriotic Forces Unite.” Central Information of the DFLP. Beirut. 1974.
10. – "PLO: Between National Decision and Right-Wing Concessions". Central Information of the DFLP. Beirut. 1977.
11. – “Palestinian and Arab Events After Camp David". Central Information of the DFLP. Beirut. 1977.
12. – “Arabic and Palestinian Events, the Camp David Agreements: Realities and Tasks”. Central Information of the DFLP. Beirut. 1978.
13. – “Toward a Sharp Confrontation to the Camp David Agreements. Toward a Unified Position of the PLO.” Central Information of the DFLP. Beirut. 1979.
14. – “The Current Situation and the Tasks of the Movement of Arab Liberation and Progress.” Central Information of the DFLP. Beirut. July 1979.
15. – “The Current Situation and the Tasks of the Palestinian Revolution and the Arab Liberation Movement.” Central

Information of the DFLP. Beirut. July 1980.

16. – “The Tasks of the Palestinian Revolution Following the Invasion of Lebanon and the Battle of Beirut,” Central Information of the DFLP. December 1982.

17. – “What is to Be Done. The Aftermath of the Arab Summit in Amman.” Central Information of the DFLP. Beirut. 1981.

18. – “Questions of the Palestinian Revolution and the New Stage.” Central Information of the DFLP. 1983.

19. – “Dialogue with Nayef Hawatmeh, Around Burning Palestinian and Arab Questions.” Central Information of the DFLP. February 1985.

20. – “The Crisis of the PLO: Analysis and Criticism of the Roots and Solutions.” Central Information of the DFLP. 1986.

21. – “On Palestinian National Unity and a Way Out of the PLO Crisis.” Central Information of the DFLP. 1986.

22. – “Maintaining Unity, Alliances and the Tasks of the Fight to Winning the Victory of the Intifada.” Central Information of the DFLP. March 1988.

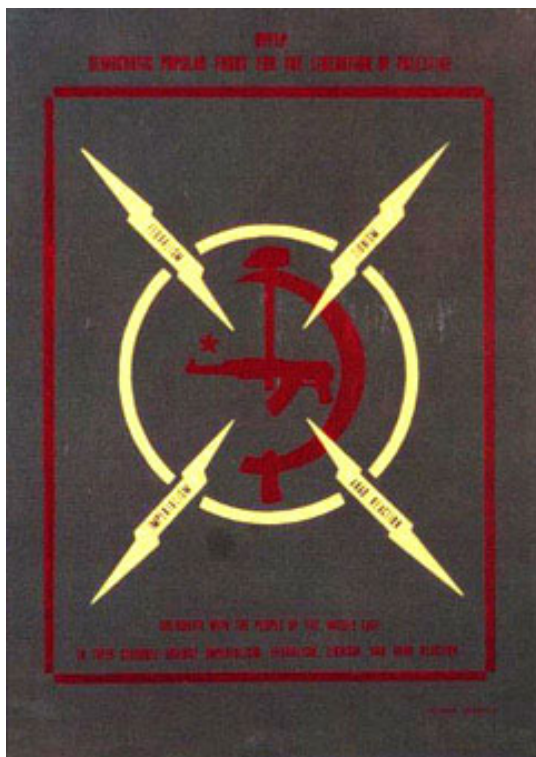
23. – “Nayef Hawatmeh Speaks...” 1996. Dar Al-Kateb Publishing (Damascus) and Al-Manahel (Beirut). Al-Jaleel Amman and Al-Massar, (Ramallah).

24. – "Oslo and the Other Balanced Peace". 1999. Dar Al-Ahali Publishing (Damascus) and Bissan (Beirut).

25. – “Beyond Oslo: Palestine, Where To?” 2000. Al-Ahali Publishing (Damascus), Bissan (Beirut), and Al-Jaleel (Ramallah).

26 – “The Intifada: The Arabic-Israeli Conflict, Where To?” 2001. Al-Dar Al-Wataniya Al-Jadidah.





Translation / Interpretation / Caption Text

(text at top)

DPFLP

Democratic Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine

(text on four yellow lightning bolts)

Imperialism

Zionism

Feudalism

Arab Reaction

(text at bottom)

Solidarity with the people of the Middle East in their struggle against imperialism, feudalism, Zionism, and Arab reaction.

Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine

Artist: Unattributed

Dimensions: 20" x 28"

Circa 1965

This poster was published by the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP), which collapsed over internal divisions in the late 1960's and re-emerged as two separate groups — the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP).

This graphic is a classic Marxist-Leninist training aid for teaching basic revolutionary principles. It interprets the Palestinian-Israeli conflict with straightforward graphics and a precise political vocabulary. The caption — “Solidarity with the people of the Middle East in their struggle against imperialism, feudalism, Zionism and Arab reaction” — ensconces the Palestinian struggle within the larger pan-Arab struggle as well as the international socialist movement.

Four forms of oppression: “imperialism,” “feudalism,” “Zionism,” and “Arab reaction”, threaten the central symbols of popular struggle—the hammer, sickle, red star and rifle—as equally powerful bolts of lightning.

Two forms of oppression, imperialism and Zionism, are external in origin. Fighting them requires that Palestinians unite to fend them off. The other two forms, feudalism and Arab reaction, are internal, the products of local histories.

Such overt and transparent self-criticism is rare in almost any organization. However, this poster reflects the belief of many Arab Marxists that the major problems facing their societies are long-standing and reversible only by popular resistance and mobilization.

According to this poster, all Arab societies struggle against the same oppressive forces. Palestine is not singled out for special treatment, and Zionism is portrayed as a negative force on all Arab societies.

With its sharp secular lines, references to vast historical forces and its rational depiction of the forces opposed to the forging of a new Palestinian society, this poster contrasts sharply with those from political factions that emerged only recently, such as Hamas, Hezbollah, and Islamic Jihad. Its scientific appeal to reason could not be more different from their inflamed appeal to emotion.

In the Palestinian poster oeuvre, Zionism is never confused with Judaism and this poster is no exception. Zionism is seen here as one of the four major counter-revolutionary forces. It is not depicted with a Star of David. This is very deliberate and was done to avoid suggesting support for a religious interpretation of the conflict, even though the popular fronts were well aware of the role religion and religious persecution played as motivators for Jewish colonization in Palestine.

As for feudalism and Arab reaction, these are core sources of political friction within and between the countries of the Middle East, but ones that long failed to be of much concern within the U.S. foreign policy apparatus. The U.S. has never had much interest in promoting democracy in the Middle East where the main order of business was, and is, stability as a pre-condition for access to oil and commercial markets for its industrial goods.

Feudalism in this context refers to the ancient powerlessness of the Arab working classes, both industrial and agricultural. Changing that dynamic by changing the attitudes of the working class about itself and its ruling elites has been a major element of the socialist-oriented Palestinian and pan-Arab fronts.

Arab reaction is defined here as the almost universally counter-revolutionary regimes supported by the U.S. and Israel including, for example, Egypt under Sadat, most Arab monarchies and even Saddam Hussein during the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988). Arab reaction is seen by the popular fronts to be one of the main barriers to all forms of revolutionary change, from freedom of travel to universal suffrage.

The dynamic between the governed and those who govern in the Arab world has received a great deal of new attention in the U.S. in the wake of the 2003 Gulf War, as it attempts to legitimate the process of “regime change” and backs into “nation-building” in post-war Iraq. The 2003 Gulf War was problematic for many Arab regimes because, among other reasons, they did not want to be part of a process that had as its primary aim the violent removal of an Arab head of state.

The world holds its breath while waiting to learn whether or not the U.S. government has any more success in changing the status quo in any of the Arab nations than the revolutionary forces within those countries has had after almost fifty years of effort.

It is interesting to note that more and more U.S. politicians, academics, journalists, pundits, and others who influence policy are calling for the U.S. to address exactly the issues depicted in this Palestinian poster, which was printed almost forty years ago.

The U.S. government seems to have learned, finally, that feudalism and Arab reaction are real, systemic problems and the Bush administration is desperately promoting its new “forward strategy” for democratization as the antidote. It has also learned that in the Middle East even the appearance of imperialism is, at best, incendiary. In response to this freshly acquired insight the U.S. has decided to remove all its military bases from Saudi Arabia. The only one of the four threats outlined long ago in this dated Palestinian poster that the U.S. has failed to face up to is Zionism. One can only wonder how many more years of chaos and strife will have to pass before an American administration comes to power with the courage to see Zionism for the destabilizing force that it is, both at home and abroad.

Source: <https://www.liberationgraphics.com/ppp/PDFLP.html>



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