

## Palestine: Middle East battle trench



**J**UNE 1967 will be recorded by the Arab historians as the month of definitions. Palestine was the first to fully define its position, after 20 years of being the continual object of deceptions and demagoguery.

Shortly after the close of the armed conflict of that date the first definition became apparent and by the beginning of 1969, it had taken shape.

Since the first Arab-Israeli War in 1948 the Palestinians have lived in the midst of a nightmare that seemed to be followed by a terrible awakening. They were harassed by politicians and international legal and welfare organizations which repeatedly told them they were pariahs without rights of any kind and that because of being

refugees they were destined to be beggars. Entire groups of Palestinians began to adjust their thinking to being "beggars" supported by the neighboring Arab countries where they were jammed in camps. Their lives and those of their children would have led them to a humiliating extinction through hunger and disease.

June was a month of resurrection for the Palestinian feeling of national dignity. Old and decrepit demagogues who for many years had controlled the Palestinian organizations to maintain their uselessness were tossed on the garbage pile.

In December 1967 there was a glimmering of a very positive tendency among the Palestinian groups — that is, a serious interest in achieving unity, without distinction of ideological creeds.

In a pamphlet published by the Israeli intelligence service, emphasis was placed on the statement that before the June war there had been approximately 70 Palestinian "terrorist" organizations, a figure — aside from the fact that it is somewhat exaggerated — which minimized the force arrayed against the Zionist occupier.

### ARMED STRUGGLE AS THE ONLY PATH TO LIBERATION REJECTION OF ALL POLITICAL SOLUTION

Before June, in many cases the armed struggle was managed exclusively for political ends and spurious objectives. But the third disillusionment in 20 years caused an irreversible change. The military confrontation





acquired an existence of its own. The means of actions coincided with the objectives: the destruction of the State of Israel as a power structure at the service of Zionism and imperialism; the establishment in Palestine of a multiracial and multireligious state; and peaceful coexistence between autonomous Jewish and Arab groups.

The importance placed on armed action in achieving these aims led to a subsequent coordination of military strategy, and following that, forced the formation a month later of a Command for Palestinian Armed Struggle.

The organizational process and the structuring of these organizations, far from obstructing the military impetus, contributed to increasing it. The

actions were no longer limited to the territories occupied after June 1967. They were extended to include regions occupied in '48 and '56.

This military impetus received its programmatic content in a meeting of the Palestine National Council held in Cairo: "To carry the total people's war to the very heart of the occupied territories."

The thesis is clear. Not only to harass the aggressor with infiltration operations from neighboring Arab territories and, once the assigned military mission is carried out, to return to the point of departure, but also to move to a higher state: the creation of permanent resistance bases in the occupied territories themselves.



The Palestinian vanguard thus assimilated old and worthwhile experiences: the immediate need to unite the Palestine torrent which by meandering along, would never manage to accumulate enough forces to face Israel and any other forces in the Arab world that "persisted in restricting or liquidating the organization."

The provocations, persecutions, and repeated rehearsals for extermination to which the Palestinian movement had been subjected in Lebanon are proof of this battle on two fronts.

During the Lebanese crisis in October, the Palestinian commandos were forced to fight both punitive Israeli incursions and detachments of the Lebanese security forces which tried

to evict them from their camps in the South of the country.

This situation led the Voice of Al Assifa, a radio program broadcast by Al Fatah from Cairo, to state that "the Lebanese army is linked to British and US intelligence services against the Palestine revolution."

It is worthwhile noting that the most recent attacks of the Lebanese Army against the Palestinian guerrillas took place one week after spokesmen for the US State Department expressed a marked interest in and "preoccupation" for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon.

Washington's attitude surely signifies its gratefulness for what spokesmen of the White House themselves





have called Lebanon's "reasonable position" toward the West. It can also be said that a large part of Lebanon's "reasonable position" is defined by its repressive actions against the Palestinian camps.

Independently of the repeated pressure the United States has been putting on Beirut's rulers in past years, in the midst of the aggressive actions of the Lebanese troops against the Palestinian guerrillas recently, it was known that units of the Sixth Fleet were ready to land in Lebanon. Later it was said that Washington postponed the operation at the last minute.

Ribih Salah, a representative of the Palestine Movement in Algiers, analyzed the plot in these terms: "The present crisis is a rehearsal to find out if the Palestine revolution can stand that blow. If we do not put up any resistance the next step will be Jordan."

The events that took place last October in Lebanon confirmed the important role continuously played by the reactionary Arab regimes — which, along with Israel, are outstanding instruments of US imperialism — toward the Palestine revolution and the progressive Arab regimes at the present time.

The harassment at the front and insecurity in the rearguard demonstrate that the Palestine cause is not only a real challenge to Israel but also that the moral compulsion of its instructive example is an element which is radicalizing the Arab masses who are also subjected to oppressive Arab regimes.

If indeed much has happened in these two and one-half years since the June war, the best place to find the qualitative changes operating in the area is in the irreversible development of the Palestine liberation struggle.

On other fronts, in the mountains of Golan, all along the Suez Canal and in Cisjordan, since the end of the June 1967 war the confrontations have continued with few interruptions. The Palestine underground current which is undermining the Zionist pillars of the State of Israel is, at the same time, feeding the revolutionary consciousness of the Arab peoples in the surrounding areas.