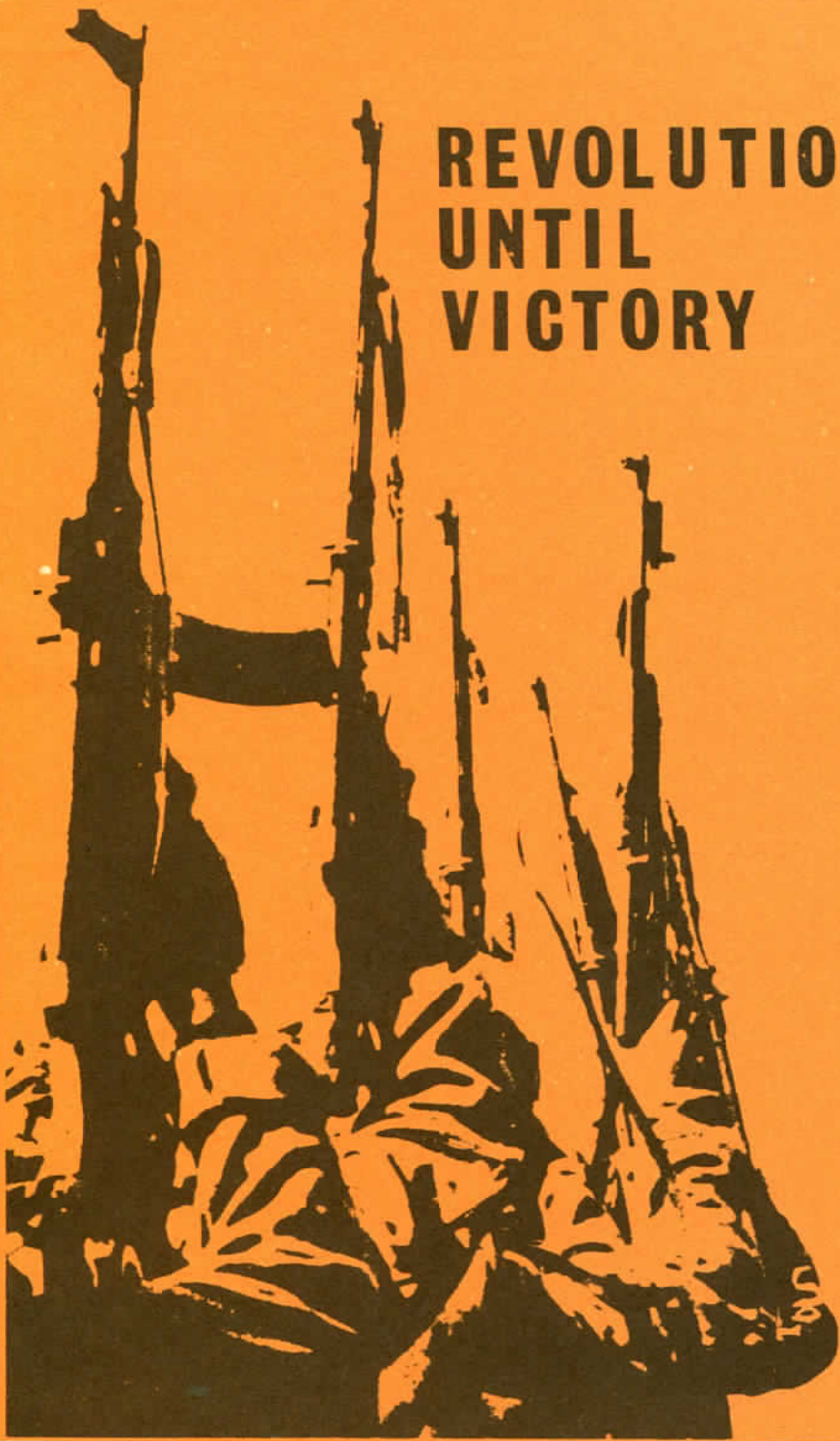


**REVOLUTION
UNTIL
VICTORY**

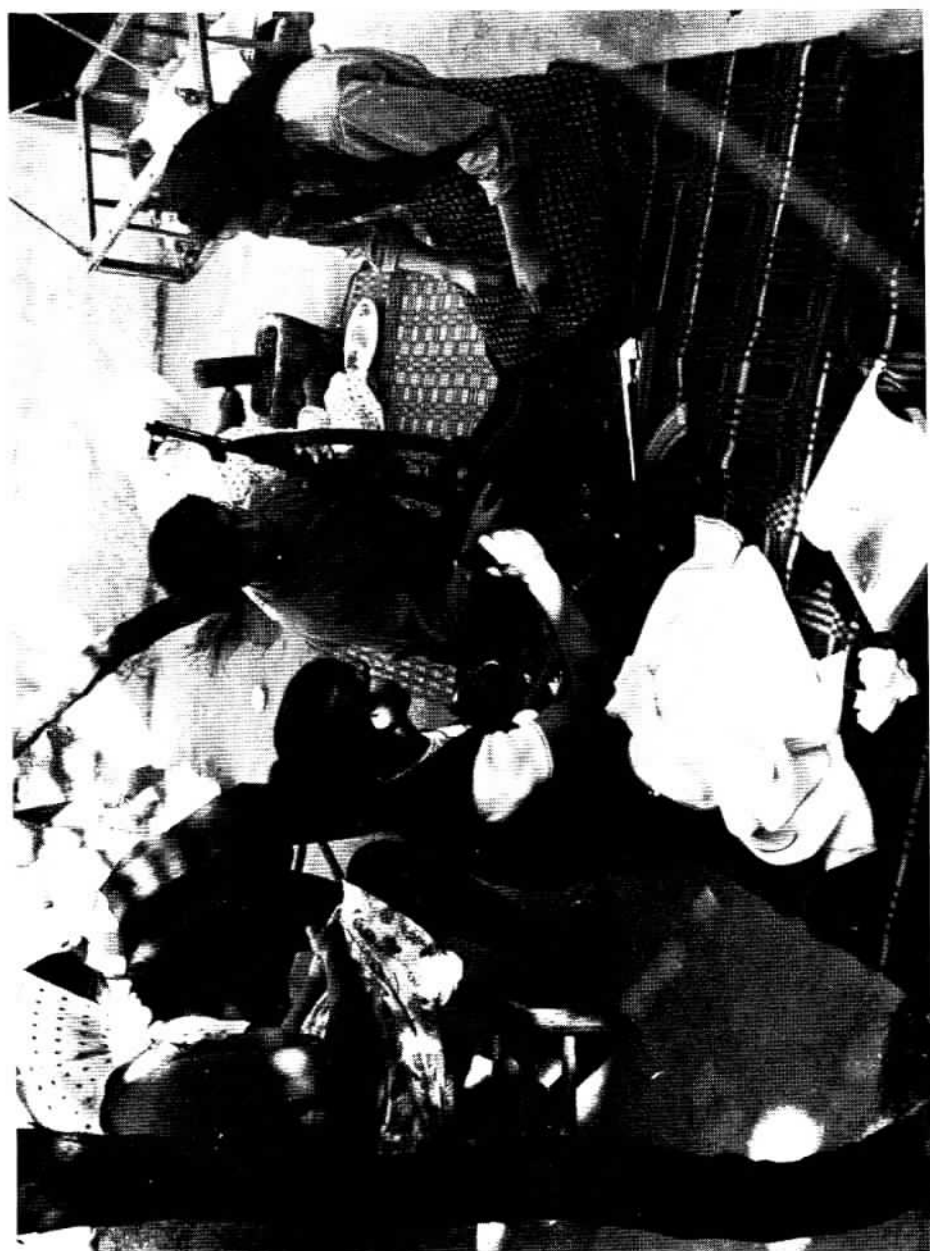












REVOLUTION UNTIL VICTORY

THE PALESTINE NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT, FATEH



It is impossible to speak of the Palestine National Liberation Movement, Fateh, without at least a brief excursion into history to untangle the snarled and knotted threads of the Palestine problem.

Despite Zionist political myths that, through constant repetition, have acquired the status of facts, our cause in Palestine is squarely based on justice, legality and principle. This case does not need to be shouted, but six basic facts need to be reiterated:

1. The argument from 4000-year-old Biblical prophecies upon which the whole Zionist ideological edifice is based is no title-deed for a political state in the present.

2. The Balfour Declaration in 1917 and the grant in 1922 by the Council of the League of Nations of a mandate to the British Government to administer Palestine were vile and unjust documents that prevented the Palestinians from the exercise of full and effective sovereignty. The Balfour Declaration, which the Zionists have utilized almost as a document of title for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, never possessed any juridical value. At no time did the British Government as the author of such declaration possess any right of sovereignty over Palestine, whether on the date on which the Balfour Declaration was made or at any time thereafter, which could have enabled it to recognize any rights in favour of the Jewish people in or over Palestine. Much more important than the Balfour Declaration are the words which Arthur James Balfour confided in secret to his cabinet two years after the Declaration:

"In Palestine we do not propose to go through the form of consulting the wishes of the present inhabitants of the country... The four Great Powers are committed to Zionism... In my opinion that is right. What I have never been able to understand is how it can be harmonized with the declaration, the Covenant, or the instructions to the Commission of Enquiry... In short, so far as Palestine is concerned, the Powers have made no statement of fact which is not admittedly wrong and no declaration of policy which, at least in the letter, they have not always intended to violate."

The British Government was not in a position validly to grant any title or any rights to the Jews over Palestine because a donor cannot give away what does not belong to him. The grant by the League of Nations of a mandate to the British Government to administer Palestine did not deprive its people of their right of sovereignty. In his book, *La Théorie Générale des Mandats Internationaux*, Stoyanovsky stated unequivocally that the people of a mandated territory are not deprived of the right of sovereignty but are deprived only temporarily of its exercise.

3. The British Government's action of holding down at the point of the bayonet the indigenous Palestinian Arab population for 30 long years, while Zionists were given control of the country's resources and were pumped into Palestine from all parts of the world in order to produce an artificial, imported population of colonial settlers was a travesty of democratic practice.

4. The Arabs of Palestine who saw the character and even the face of their country slowly changed before their eyes whilst they battled and resisted with increasing desperation against the pitiless collusion of British imperialism and Zionist colonialism, lived under a unique and intolerable nightmare.

5. The partition decision of the United Nations was bulldozed through the General Assembly under the direct and personal partisan pressure of the President of the U.S. and cannot claim to be an honest reflection of the free will of the international community.

The partition resolution allotted 56% of the land to 33% of the population who legally owned only 6% of it. And to make the travesty even more comic, the Jewish state was to have 498,000 Jews and 497,000 Arabs: a difference of 1,000. The Arab state was to have 724,000 Arabs and 10,000 Jews.

6. The war of 1947-49 in which Israel proceeded to seize almost 30% over and above the area allotted to it by the Partition and which uprooted the healthy, progressive and homogeneous Christian and Moslem Palestinians, scattering them to the four winds, pulverizing their politi-

cal, economic, social and moral fabric, reducing most of them from the status of self-respecting human beings to that of paupers living on international charity or to that of second class citizens living under the yoke of occupation was the terrible and long dreaded climax of Zionist collusion with world imperialism.

The question has often been asked : "Why did the Arabs leave in 1948?" But the only question which could legitimately be asked is: "Why don't they go back?" If you can answer the second question, you would have answered the first.

It took many Palestinians not more than 10 years to learn that they cannot achieve justice through the dangerous game of Arab or international power politics and that they cannot trust the operators in a political casino like the United Nations.

With this firm conviction, a group of Palestinians chose as far back as 1958 to recapture the initiative in order to liberate Palestine, vindicate the supreme sacrifices of their past generations and realize the hopes and visions of living Palestinians.

DECOLONIZATION

On January 1, 1970, while the world was ushering in a new year and, with it, a new decade, the Palestinian Revolution was marking the fifth anniversary of its maiden commando operation heralding a popular war for the liberation of occupied Palestine.

Bringing the Palestinian Revolution to triumphant birth necessitated recourse to violence and armed struggle because national liberation, national renaissance, the restoration of nationhood to the people: whatever may be the headings used or the new formulas introduced, DECOLONIZATION IS ALWAYS A VIOLENT PHENOMENON.

The Palestine National Liberation Movement, Fateh, decided to launch the revolution after about six full years of preparations between 1958 and 1964, including the organization of underground cadres, secret indoor military training, the raising of a meager sum of about \$3,000, acquisition of old rusty weapons and scores of reconnaissance missions into occupied territory. The first clash ever between an Israeli patrol and Fateh freedom

fighters actually dates back to August 18, 1964. The Fateh commandos then were on such a reconnaissance mission and the clash occurred near Gesher, a kibbutz on the Jordan Valley almost midway between the Sea of Galilee and the town of Beisan.

MAIDEN OPERATION

The task of sparking off the war of liberation was entrusted to a total of an elite corps of 82 Assifa commandos who were divided into 10 squads that were assigned a total of six areas covering the whole of the territory under occupation since 1948.

The main target of Fateh's pioneering revolutionaries two and a half years before the June War of 1967 was the 2600 foot long Eilabun tunnel named after the neighboring Christian Arab village of Eilabun in Galilee near Tiberias and built as part of the Israeli scheme to divert the Jordan River waters.

Fateh's Assifa freedom fighters embarked on the revolution with all the determination and persistence of a long oppressed people.

On New Year's Eve (1964-65) an Assifa unit comprising four commandos who had set off on foot from a refugee camp located between Bethlehem and Hebron succeeded in blowing up the main water pump in Eitan, a moshav in the South near Kiryat-Gat. Six days later, 70 kilograms of TNT carried by 11 Fateh commandos ripped the main installations in the Eilabun tunnel.

FIRST STATEMENT

With this triumphant birth of the Palestinian Revolution through armed struggle at the onset of 1965 came a political statement which read in part:

"Sixteen years have elapsed while our people live detached from their cause which has been shelved at the United Nations as a problem of displaced refugees whereas the enemy plans, with all his means, on the local and international levels, for an extended stay on our homeland, ignoring the Heroic Palestinian.

"In the light of this distressing fact and because of the adverse effect of the lapse of time, the ASSIFA

forces (of Fateh) have been launched forth to reiterate to the enemy and the world at large that this people (of Palestine) did not die and that armed revolution is the road to return and to victory.

"The Assifa forces, emanating from the will of the revolting Palestinian masses, realize fully the scope of the battle politically and militarily. But they seek to overcome all conditions and obstacles, relying on their own strength and on the potentials of our Arab people.

"This is our path and this is our march. The situation is serious. Martyrs have fallen and blood has been shed. Let us rise to the level of responsibility -- the responsibility of an honorable battle because this take-off is nothing but the beginning of a war of liberation with a carefully planned and studied program. Our battle with Israel is a fierce one and warrants preparedness and mobilization.

"As far as we are concerned, we have started off from a Palestinian position connected to the soil of the nation. The best force that directs us is our faith in that this is the sound way for extracting our cause from the vicious circle it has been turning in. We depend on our Arab nation and its common struggle as well as on the forces of liberation in the world. Regardless of the sacrifices, our march will not come to a halt before the flag of Palestine is brandished again on our dear homeland. We also vow to our people to continue in this path and not to relinquish our arms until victory is achieved."

1966 COMPLAINT

In early 1966, or a year after the Palestinian Revolution was launched and 13 months before the June War of 1967 and before many had ever heard of Fateh or the Palestinian guerrillas, the Israeli delegate complained to the United Nations Security Council (UN Document S/7277 of May 3, 1966) saying:

"I have the honour, on instruction from my Government, to refer to certain recent occurrences in the Israel-Jordan border area.

"In January 1965, an Arab terrorist and sabotage group known as Fateh commenced organized armed incursions into Israel territory from the territory of neighboring Arab

states.

"... Since January 1965 there have been a total of 43 such terrorist attacks across the frontiers against civilian targets in the Israel border areas... A sketch map is attached showing the localities of these raids. The number of Israel casualties caused by them has been 27... A large number of homes and installations have been demolished or damaged, mostly in agricultural villages in the border region.

"During the month of April 1966," the Israeli note goes on, "there was a recrudescence of Fateh activity. Five raids were carried out, including the following three from Jordan:

"On 11 April, the water installation of Ein Yahav at Wadi Arava in the South was damaged by explosives...

"On 25 April, in the village of Beit Yousef... three dwellings were blown up at night...

"On 28 April, an army truck struck a mine placed on the road between Arad and Massada in the Dead Sea area.

"The Fateh organization publishes in the Arab press 'communiques' about its exploits. Although boastful and exaggerated, these stories are reasonably accurate about times and places."

This is what Israel had to say officially about Fateh in May 1966, a few months after its first operation and a full one year before the June 67 war.

INTENT

The intent of the Palestinian Revolution at this take-off stage between 1965 and 1967 was:

1. To personify the practical refusal of Zionist occupation; present the Palestinian cause to international public opinion as a cause of liberation rather than a problem of refugees or a problem concerning the diversion of the Jordan River waters; and mobilize the masses and instigate them to armed revolutionary action.

2. To incarnate the authentic revolutionary means for the liberation of Palestine through armed violence and prevent attempts by the Arab regimes to contain the Palestine struggle.

3. To create a revolutionary atmosphere on the (West) Bank and in the (Gaza) Strip aiming at ripening the objective conditions necessary for the emergence of armed revolution.

4. To give the upcoming generations the opportunity of getting used to take up arms and to acquaint them with the Palestinian soil through armed raids.

5. To focus the true nature of the struggle in the Middle East to allow the Palestinian people to assume their leading role in the liberation of their homeland, thereby preventing the presentation of the problem of Palestine as a regional one over disputed borders.

REVOLUTION'S GROWTH

Armed operations started to escalate and the revolution began to grow and to muster increased mass support. On the other hand, its cadres were exposed to imprisonment and torture on the hands of the counter-revolutionaries on the Arab scene. These arrests only helped increase the Revolution's determination to continue the armed struggle. Nevertheless its continued pleas for arms for the Palestinians so as to create the revolutionary immunity on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip went unheeded until the advent of the war of June 1967.

Such weaponry, about 6,000 instruments in all, was collected by Palestinian revolutionaries from territories evacuated by the retreating Arab armies.

June 5, 1967 also engendered a new incentive for the revolutionary vanguards of Fateh to move into the newly-occupied West Bank in order to make history and turn a new leaf in the Palestinian struggle.

Fateh's decision to undertake such move was made on August 28, 1967. It was immediately implemented at the expense of heroic sacrifices which cost the Movement the loss, within three months, of 46 of its best men, including 26 officers. Those were an elite group because they were trained and raised during periods of oppression and severe hardships.

The aim was to build up the spirit of passive resistance among the masses to prevent the merger of the peoples'

life with the state of Zionist occupation. Passive resistance and non-co-operation with the enemy grew and the enemy's curricula and projects were rejected. Passive resistance developed into popular strikes and demonstrations. The masses recuperated confidence in themselves and in their ability to strive for the liberation of their land. Moreover, passive resistance escalated to include all popular sectors. The masses took up arms and started to resist the Zionist enemy.

At the end of 1967, Fateh considered that the three-month phase had achieved its purpose and that the revolution's success now depended on its ability to move from THE PHASE OF DISPERSEMENT AND VAGRANCY TO THAT OF CREATING THE NECESSARY MILITARY SET-UP FOR LIBERATION.

Guerilla war cannot achieve liberation but it is the cornerstone for building a popular liberation army. For this reason, Fateh decided to establish a secure base in the Aghwar (Jordan Valley).

Fateh's three-month experience in late 1967 had proved that a secure base cannot be established on the West Bank.

In fact, a secure base implies that the revolutionaries can work in it openly and without interruption. It implies that it should be located amidst the masses but in contact with the enemy so that its members can learn warfare by actually practising it. It also implies that it can be defended. Fateh realized that occupied Palestine constituted the actual battlefield rather than the secure base.

The difficulties encountered in setting up the secure base in the Aghwar were tremendous and were on the verge of leading to a confrontation between the Palestinian Revolution forces and the authorities in Jordan. The solution to the crisis was afforded by the enemy himself in his attack on al-Karameh on Thursday, March 21, 1968.

AL-KARAMEH

A thrilling town of more than 50,000 uprooted Palestinians which was gradually asserting itself as an agricultural beehive and a marketing and export center, al-Karameh lay only four kilometers to the east of the River Jordan and across Jericho, the oldest human settlement in the world.

On November 20, 1967, five months after the June War, al-Karamah was wantonly shelled with artillery and tank fire and bombarded by Israeli jets. The result: 14 killed and 28 injured -- all civilians. The dead included a girl of 16, two children under 8 and a man over 65.

Al-Karamah was shelled again on January 8 and 25 and February 9, 11 and 15, 1968, with the number of civilian casualties increasing.

On March 19, 1968, or two days before al-Karamah battle, Fateh issued a statement warning about Israeli troop concentrations along the River Jordan and declaring that Israeli statements blaming one Arab country or the other for commando activity were designed to mislead world public opinion.

Simultaneously Fateh's General Command convened to study its intelligence reports about Israeli troop concentrations particularly in Lydda and Ramleh to strike against the township of al-Karamah with the intent of occupying and holding hills on the East Bank commanding the Jordan Valley. Throughout Wednesday, March 20, 1968, members of the command debated the question, "Should the Palestinian guerillas stay put or retreat?"

The command's decision to brave conventional guerilla warfare rules and confront the enemy's advance rather than retreat was taken a few hours before the Israeli offensive in order to achieve the following objectives:

1. Consecration of the idea of steadfastness before the enemy's offensive so as to raise the morale of the Palestinian and Arab masses in the wake of the June setback.

2. Destruction of the enemy's morale by inflicting on his forces the heaviest losses possible.

3. Realization of complete integration between the revolution and the masses and increasing the people's confidence in the fedayeen and their ability to confront and defeat the enemy.

4. Increasing the rapprochement between the fedayeen and the Jordan Army through a common battle.

5. Liquidation of counter-revolutionary forces on the East Bank by discrediting their doubts about commando action and its ability to confront the enemy and protect the masses.

6. Pulling the rug from under the feet of the proponents of the political solution by raising the confidence of the Arab masses in their ability to achieve victories in a popular war led by its commando vanguard.

7. Testing the confidence of the commandos themselves and their ability to move into the phase of limited confrontation in all operations.

The military expectations of Fateh's General Command, which were subsequently substantiated, were that the enemy would:

1. Make a two-pronged pincer thrust against al-Karameh from the south and north of the township.

2. Drop a helicopter force east of al-Karameh to block the anticipated retreat of the commandos.

3. Have the forces advancing from the north, south and east join in combing the whole region of al-Karameh.

Counter-plans were laid down by Fateh's Command and the Palestinian revolutionaries were distributed accordingly.

What happened during the 15 hours of fighting on March 21, 1968, between the invading Israeli force and the Fateh commandos (who were joined a few hours after the start of the battle by valiant men and officers of the Jordanian Army braving orders to intervene as well as contingents from the Popular Liberation Forces) marked an important turning point in the history of Palestinian resistance.

By the first light of dawn, Thursday, March 21, the Israeli armor, infantry and helicopter borne invasion units estimated at between 12,000 and 15,000 troops began to roll into Jordan territory with the intention of

crushing Palestinian commandos and crippling their activity by occupying and holding hills on the East Bank commanding the Jordan Valley.

North of the Dead Sea, Centurion tanks and half-track personnel carriers rumbled across the Allenby and Damiya bridges onto the East Bank and attempted to converge on al-Karameh. At the same time, helicopters landed enemy troops east of the camp to cut off any commando retreat into the hills.

A second enemy task force moved across the border south of the Dead Sea.

Enemy artillery laid down a barrage that walked ahead of the invading force while US-supplied jets crisscrossed the skies.

The Palestinian commandos were fully prepared for the onslaught. In al-Karameh, scores stayed on to defend the town while many more pulled back into the surrounding hills.

South of the Dead Sea, the enemy was allowed to advance through the towns of Safi, Feifa and Dahal before being hammered with precise and heavy barrages of persistent fire from the commandos entrenched in the surrounding hills.

The enemy helicopter force dropped east of al-Karameh was engaged by the commandos until their ammunition ran out and they switched to hand-to-hand fighting. The force coming down from Damiya Bridge was halted by rocket and artillery fire or minefields. The second arm of the enemy pincer coming from Allenby Bridge reached the camp.

Though outnumbered and outgunned, the Palestinian commandos in and around al-Karameh put up a fierce hand-to-hand and house-to-house fight, which frustrated the enemy hopes of entrapping them.

After less than 10 hours of close range combat, the enemy, who had undergone a traumatic experience on the hands of the Palestinian commandos, started the arduous and costly task of rolling back while being harassed by fierce Palestinian and Jordanian shelling and counter attacks.

It took the enemy force more than five hours to complete its retreat.

Hundreds of houses along the main street of al-Karameh were knocked to rubble by enemy tanks firing at point-

blank range as they moved down the road.

But beyond the main street, in the narrow alleyways where thousands of evicted and uprooted Palestinians once lived, there was no damage. In fact, while the Israelis penetrated al-Karamah, they never subdued it.

Even the casualty figures officially confessed by the Israelis themselves -- 100 soldiers and officers -- showed this was the highest figure ever suffered by the enemy in one day of fighting.

Compared with the population figures of other countries, this Israeli-type of casualty toll corresponded to putting out of action about 8,000 Americans in a single day.

More important still, the heavy losses failed to secure an end to the Palestinian commando activity.

The results of the clash raised Palestinian and Arab morale to an unprecedented level. Crowds turned out in tens of thousands in Amman the following day to attend the funeral of the Palestinian commandos and Jordanian soldiers killed in the clash and later mounted enemy tanks and other armoured vehicles which had been captured and brought to the capital for public display.

Foreign press reaction to the battle was equally heartening. Following are some typical reactions by the foreign media:

AN ISRAELI ERROR

It now looks as if the Israelis were guilty of a major miscalculation last Thursday when they sallied across the River Jordan on a one-day war to attack an Arab guerilla base... Most remarkable of all, they may even have managed to give a boost to Arab morale.

FINANCIAL TIMES
March 25, 1968

THE COST WORRIES ISRAEL

Some painfully uneasy questions are being asked here after publication of the casualty lists of last Thursday's battle against Arab guerrillas in Jordan.

The picture emerging now shows that the Israelis lost nearly 100 soldiers and officers in the fighting (nearly

a quarter killed, the rest wounded) without having secured an end to the guerrilla activity...

Questions asked by the Israelis are:-

Do the results of Thursday's battle justify the heavy loss in Israel's limited manpower?

Was it really necessary not to make ample use of Israel's superiority in airpower, and base this week's action mostly on ground forces?

Has sufficient thinking been devoted to seeking some other method of anti-guerrilla strategy?

OBSERVER

March 24, 1968

ARABS LOOK TO THEIR COMMANDOS

Arab commandos appear to have emerged as the strongest group in the fight against Israel following the raid against Jordan last Thursday.

Those who visited al-Karamah camp, the main target of the Israeli attack, said that it was still swarming with Arab guerrillas.

Arab commandos have now come into the open in Jordan and great significance is attached to King Hussein's statement at his press conference at Amman on Saturday that "We are all 'Fedayeen'" -- meaning commandos.

Arab guerrilla organisations in a series of communiques have claimed how well they fought the Israeli raiders with Fateh, the main guerrilla group, emphasising that the outcome of the fighting "has shattered the myth of Israeli air and technological superiority."

FINANCIAL TIMES

March 25, 1968

ISRAELIS STUNG BY LOSSES

TEL AVIV - The intransigence of King Hussein's response to the Israeli attack on his country has led to bitter comments here. At the same time there are signs that the Israeli public itself is not all that happy about the operations.

As the number of dead has risen from the original 21 to

23, with three missing, so the sense of shock has grown. This, however, does not mean that there is much doubt about the need for action against Fateh, but merely that the method is being debated. Apart from the fairly heavy casualties, there was the additional blow for the Israelis of seeing captured tanks and other equipment being shown on Jordan television. This can be received in Israel, and is avidly watched on the occupied West Bank.

...It is now being stressed that the attack took place under a number of strategic and political complications - the Fateh bases were in the middle of the protective pincers of Jordanian infantry brigades and the Israelis had orders not to start a head-on clash with the Arab Army.

Whatever the reason, their forces took a greater blow than they suffered in any comparable action and the Jordanians were able to give their public the biggest show of prizes they have ever won. The reaction of one commentator today seems fairly typical of the general public view.

GUARDIAN

March 25, 1968

WAS THE SACRIFICE WORTH WHILE?

...Very few openly question the policy reflected in last week's military action. Among these, surprisingly, is the economic editor of "Haaretz," Mr. Abraham Schweitzer, who is a close friend of Mr. Dayan.

"The Israeli soldier has again shed his blood and accomplished his duty according to orders," wrote Schweitzer. "But it is doubtful if dissuasion was achieved. The balance between the price the enemy paid and our losses was much worse than during the Six-Day War.

"One reason is that we fought the enemy how and where he expected. By our own hand we dissolved the fog of secrecy, announcing by all the means of communication which we dispose of what we intended to do.

"Thus, the enemy was freely allowed to dispose his reserves and concentrate his fire on the Israeli forces, whose action was limited in time and place.

"A war of the kind we face evidently necessitates a different answer, using forces differently composed and

with, foremost, sharper and better thinking in the planning.

JEWISH CHRONICLE

March 29, 1968

CHANGE IN STRATEGY

...A long time ago, lone voices were raised in Israel advocating that Arab terrorist methods should be imitated. This view is now gaining ground in responsible quarters.

The anguished reappraisal now going on is likely soon to result in a clearer formulation of long-term aims, particularly as regards the future of Jordan and the application of more flexible reprisal methods.

Possibilities seen here are that Israel will refrain from using regular land forces in limited actions where the Air Force, artillery or an irregular force could achieve the same purpose, with comparatively minor losses of life and international sympathy.

Meanwhile, informed military commentators here have attributed Israel's high losses in the al-Karamah raid -- 24 dead, three missing and some 70 wounded -- to the rigid advance limitation placed on the area of operations.

...There were two prime lessons of the al-Karamah operation: that land forces should not be thrown into action with their hands bound by political considerations, the enemy being aware in advance of the nature of the limitations placed on the operation; and that past victories are no guarantee of permanent success, but may create dangerous over-confidence if fed by the enemy's pusillanimity.

JEWISH CHRONICLE

March 29, 1968

RAIDS RESUME

Twenty-four hours after Israeli troops pulled back from the East Bank on Thursday of last week, Arab terrorists (meaning Palestinian commandos) were in action again.

JEWISH CHRONICLE

March 29, 1968

DOMINATING FORCE

...Since these have been among the first aims of the Palestinian resistance organisations, among which the Fateh group has emerged as the dominating force, the outcome of the battle must be considered the opposite of what the Israelis apparently set out to achieve, namely, the crippling of the guerrillas as a serious political or military force.

The rise of Fateh is also a sign that the leadership of the Palestinians may now have begun to change to a new generation of revolutionary nationalist leaders in place of the old 'notables' whose authority collapsed after 1958, and who are as different from them in education, determination and technical abilities as the Zionist activist leaders were in their time from the wealthy assimilationists of the Diaspora or the passive patriarchs of the ghettos.

The guerrillas now emerging are no longer the paid thugs who often formed the 'fedayeen' of earlier years, but politically-motivated volunteers, often of good education. A relatively high proportion are Christian Arabs. The military arm of Fateh is said to be composed of two electrical engineers, two electronics specialists and two mathematicians...

OBSERVER

March 31, 1968

LESSON OF AL-KARAMEH

...Obviously the Fateh threat, which does not warrant being described as guerrilla warfare -- it is more of a series of hit-and-run raids -- must be met by various means, including reprisal raids, the establishment of an electronic fence and other techniques.

It would appear that there is a good case for the adoption by the Israelis of Fateh methods, even if only to emphasise Israel's contention that peace will reign east of the Jordan only if it exists west of the river...

Brig. Gen. Chaim Herzog,
JEWISH CHRONICLE,
April, 1968

KARAMEH DEBATE

The "Karameh debate" in Israel appears to have ended in a new consensus and in a modification of previous policies. Massive -- and pre-announced -- reprisal is likely to be replaced wherever possible by a modified concept of instant reprisal...

JEWISH CHRONICLE

April 5, 1968

CHANGE IN TACTICS

...Reports from Israel in the past three weeks have said that the Government began thinking of so adapting its strategy after the attack on March 21 with aircraft, tanks and helicopter-borne soldiers on the east bank refugee town of al-Karameh, then the biggest Arab guerrilla base in the Jordan valley.

Though the Israelis killed or captured many Arabs, the attack unquestionably failed to crush Fateh and the other Palestine guerrilla bands operating from the valley...

TIMES

April 18, 1968

COMMANDOS BACK IN AL-KARAMEH

Did Israel commit a massive strategic blunder in launching a 15-hour invasion of Jordan yesterday?

The evidence suggests so even by Israel's own professed objectives.

Israel claimed it was hitting out centers of commando operations on the Arab side of the Jordan River. The commandos were back in force today in this deserted refugee camp and vowing to carry on the fight with greater intensity.

Their relations with Jordanian forces here appeared, if anything, more friendly than before. In Amman, commandos led the funeral procession of 25 fighters killed in yesterday's battle, firing off their automatic weapons.

In short, nothing appears much changed from before the attack, which Israel said was a punitive measure launched

against the commandos and the Jordanian government for failing to stop raids into occupied territory. Nothing, that is, except the camp itself...

...The commandos are back in force -- just as visible as they were a week ago. As before, they carry their Communist arms openly. Their easy working relationship with the few army and police officials here has continued.

"They did not destroy our spirit," said one leader. "As Palestinians we will fight on."

"This is nothing more than what happened 20 years ago at Deir Yassin." Deir Yassin was an Arab village where male inhabitants were massacred by the Stern Gang in the Palestine mandate days. The massacre was in great measure responsible for the flight of Arab Palestinians from their homes...

It is too early to tell with any certainty, but the Israeli attack may turn into a serious strategic blunder. It certainly has not changed the attitude of the commandos nor does it appear to have altered the Jordanian government's position.

It did bring an international outcry against Israel. Furthermore, it has been turned into an Arab victory here.

There is evidence to support this claim. This correspondent saw three burned-out Israeli tanks during a tour of the valley battle-fields plus many more Israeli vehicles knocked out by Jordanian tank and artillery fire from the hills dominating the area. Usually reliable Jordanian sources said there were five more tanks in the Damiyah area to the north, which I did not visit, and they offered to take me there to see them.

Only one dead Israeli soldier was seen. He was the driver of a Patton tank and his charred body was left in the cockpit of the most advanced tank, which was already in the Jordanian foothills when knocked out...

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE
March 23, 1968

FRUSTRATED MALICE

...At al-Karamah, the Israelis demolished either by direct tank fire or by dynamite as many buildings as

possible on either side of the highway which runs through the town for a distance of two kilometers. This cannot in any way be construed as a pre-planned act of deterrence. It could be ascribed to frustrated malice on the part of men who had come to conquer and had failed.

Thomas I. Green,
MIDDLE EAST NEWS LETTER
May, 1968

STAND FAST

On 21st March 1968, the battle of al-Karameh took place. A sizeable Israeli column, preceded by tanks and with air cover, crossed the Jordan. The Palestinian commandos, who could have avoided a confrontation, received the order to stand fast and they held out for twelve hours. Israeli losses were not inconsiderable and some tanks were left behind on the field of battle. According to the Israelis this battle was of small importance; but for the Palestinian resistance, al-Karameh represented an important turning point. For the Arab states (King Hussein had his photograph taken mounted on a ruined tank), as well as for the mass of the Palestinian people, al-Karameh was an act of armed propaganda. The Palestinian resistance organisations, who had knowingly broken the rules of guerilla warfare, wanted to prove that even without tanks or planes it was possible to fight against the victors of the six-day war. The Israelis, who only drew up a military balance-sheet of this battle, ignored the psychological importance of this fedayeen victory, however modest, for the defeated Palestinian masses.

Gerard Chaliand,
LE MONDE DIPLOMATIQUE,
March 1969

FIRST DEFEAT

"Fateh's greatest victory was in March, 1968, in the battle of al-Karameh when a strong Israeli force which attacked the Jordanian town was repulsed with heavy casualties after a day's fighting. It was the first time

for many years that an Israeli military expedition had been seriously challenged, let alone defeated."

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH
February 28, 1969

SAFE BASE

The Palestinian Revolution's decision to stay put at al-Karameh enabled the Palestinian Revolution to set-up the safe base it was after in the Aghwar. The base was needed to build a popular army without delay.

While people were busy celebrating the victory of al-Karameh, Fateh was pondering over the new problems confronting the revolution. In two weeks, the ranks of freedom fighters grew from slightly more than 700 to several thousands most of whom had kaki uniforms but lacked political awareness, military training, arms, medical supplies etc..

After al-Karameh, the revolution embarked on the phase of founding the nucleus of the Palestinian popular army.

Thousands of men were sent for training abroad.

This extensive training of commandos limited operations in occupied Palestine throughout the frustrating 1968 year. By early 1969, however, the Palestinian liberation struggle took new dimensions when it moved from the limited confrontation (or hit and run phase) to that of mobile war (or hit and hold) such as in the battles of al-Himmah, the spa town which was held for several hours on May 2, 1969, Sha'sha'a, Green Belt and Nahal-Golan.

Nevertheless, the most important accomplishments of the forces of the Palestinian Revolution have been

(1) the breaches they succeeded, to the enemy's astonishment, in making through extremely complex enemy mine-fields and electronic devices opposite Beisan. This proved the ability of the revolution to break and leap into occupied Palestine despite the enemy's efforts to seal off the occupied territory. This is what paved the way for the major operations.

(2) the growth of the popular liberation war within oc-

occupied territory until it covered the whole of occupied Palestine. Palestinian revolutionaries today are now undertaking revolutionary action throughout Palestine. Even the Palestinians under occupation since 1948 have revolted and started to resist Zionist occupation, to destroy his military institutions and posts and rally to the revolutionary march. This is a positive factor which escalated resistance from within and dispersed and harrassed enemy forces. This has had a great effect on all aspects of the enemy's normal daily life in the occupied homeland.

ACHIEVEMENTS

In five years, the Palestinian Revolution has been able:

- (1) To create the mature Palestinian freedom fighter and an armed Palestinian force capable of effective and flexible action.
- (2) To develop its armed struggle both qualitatively and quantitatively and to found the nucleus of the popular liberation army.
- (3) To create an independent Palestinian political entity on the Arab and international levels.
- (4) To mold the homeless camp refugees into potential homebound commandos and to secure the freedom of movement of the Palestinian masses in the Arab host countries.
- (5) To set up educational, social, medical and economic institutions and to found or revive Palestinian popular organizations.
- (6) To mobilize both factions - the new and the old - of the popular masses in the occupied homeland to take an active part in the armed struggle.
- (7) To seek revolutionary unity within the Palestine Liberation Organization and through the establishment of the Palestinian Armed Struggle Command.

(8) To muster the support and protection of the Arab masses despite Arab official attempts to besiege the revolution or to contain it or to plot against it or to infiltrate it or to overcrowd it with new puppet organizations or to drag it into power politics.

(9) To earn international recognition for the legitimacy of the revolution and the chances of its success (repeated questions about Fateh's program for the future and the fate of the Jews in Palestine; the UN General Assembly resolution recognizing the inalienable rights of the Palestinians).

(10) To earn international recognition for the revolution as an important factor which must be reckoned with in discussing the future of the region and particularly the Palestine problem. (What will be the Revolution's stand toward the political settlement if it were accepted by the Arab regimes?)

(11) To participate in scores of international conferences such as in Algeria, Italy, France and Cuba, and to establish strong friendly bonds with wings of the international left.

(12) To develop friendly and comradeship relations with China and Vietnam.

(13) To begin to earn international understanding from the Socialist Bloc while the dialogue continues with the Soviet Union, which, by virtue of Marxist ideology, stands by the Revolution. (Palestinian revolutionaries led by Abu Ammar visit Soviet Union in February 1970).

(14) To shake Israeli military strategy particularly in the wake of the battle of al-Karameh.

(15) To freeze half of the Israeli armed forces on the confrontation lines on the West Bank, in the Golan and in Upper Galilee; to force the evacuation by the enemy of several front-line settlements and to impose on the enemy a financial drain of three million dollars daily against 1.5 million dollars in 1968.

(16) To disarm Zionist diplomacy particularly among the leftist groups by reiterating the ultimate objective of the liberation struggle i.e. the creation of a new unitary democratic, non-sectarian Palestine where Christians, Jews and Moslems will have equal rights and obligations without discrimination as to race, color or creed. (Break off between France's Socialist Unified Party and Israel's Mapam Party).

(17) To besiege Zionist Israeli propagandists (such as in Canada, London and Frankfurt) by an effective information campaign which has succeeded in exposing the credibility gap in Israeli claims and statements (Demand by the Foreign Press Association that Israel abolish censorship on all outgoing news material).

(18) To succeed in having the secret cadres of the Revolution penetrate deep into the heart of the enemy armed forces.

(It has now been announced that Mohammad Hassan Ghureifat al-Haib, 24, one of the Palestinians arrested in November 1969 in connection with the Acre cell responsible for the successful Fateh operations in Haifa was, until his arrest, a deputy officer in the Israeli army. Al-Haif and other members of the cell have been tortured to death in an Israeli prison).

TASKS AHEAD

This is not to say that the Palestinian Revolution's tasks ahead are simple and easy. Wrestling with neo-colonialism and world imperialism and their Zionist offshoot requires the continued mobilization, training and equipment of the Palestinian masses both within and without the occupied homeland and the development of a popular liberation army; it requires the foiling of attempts by counter-revolutionaries to belittle, discredit and liquidate the revolution; it necessitates the mobilization and commitment of the Arab masses to the revolution and its basic creed in that national liberation, restoration of nationhood to the people and decolonization is always a violent phenomenon and that armed struggle is THE only means for liberation and return; it preor-

dains the unification of all battling Palestinian revolutionary forces in a national front shelving all abstract and impotent disputes over ideological contexts and theoretical principles; reiterating the fact that the Palestinians' struggle today is a national liberation rather than a class struggle and putting an end to confusion and overbids which encourage the Arab regimes to exercise power politics on the Palestinian scene, particularly through the creation of puppet organizations.

More important still is the tremendous task incumbent on the Palestinian Revolution in winning Jews all over the world and particularly in the occupied homeland to the ultimate objective of its liberation struggle - namely: the establishment of a UNITARY, DEMOCRATIC AND NON-SECTARIAN Palestine State in which Christians, Jews and Moslems will have equal rights and obligations, irrespective of race, color or creed.

A progressive national liberation movement cannot be motivated by revenge and should not suffer from the racial exclusiveness that characterizes the very enemy it is striving to conquer. Serious discussions with progressive Jews in Europe, America and occupied Palestine should be kept up and developed to foster in word and deed the deep consciousness of the distinction between Judaism as a religion and Zionism as a political, racial and colonial movement. Consequently, the Palestinian Revolution should continue to reiterate its conviction and belief that the aim of its struggle is to build a democratic Palestinian State for Christians, Jews and Moslems and that this aim is not a tactical move on its part but the embodiment of a principle and the true expression of its strategy. The Palestinian Revolution should continue to reiterate its conviction and belief that armed struggle is not an end in itself, but a means to a great humanitarian end.







THE PALESTINE NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT, FATEH