

'Coalition Politics' and Regional Steadfastness

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) Between 1983 and 1984

Francesco Saverio Leopardi (The University of Edinburgh, UK)

Abstract After the evacuation from Beirut in late 1982, the PFLP tries to formulate new policy patterns, both at the Palestinian and the regional level, in order to present its own alternative, opposing Arafat's attempts to start direct negotiations with Israel under US sponsorship. Despite all the efforts made, the PFLP fails to effectively implement its agenda and results weakened at the end of this phase vis-à-vis Fatah-PLO leadership. From this, stems the necessity to report and assess PFLP's line and narrative during such a critical phase. The systematic study of PFLP's official publications (communiqués, congress resolutions, interviews released by the leaders, etc.), in the framework of the broader historiography on the Arab-Israeli conflict, is the methodology employed to achieve these goals. PFLP's official documentation, published by the party's mouthpiece Al-Hadaf, can be retrieved at the library of the Institute for Palestine Studies in Beirut.

Summary 1. Introduction. — 2. The Popular Front Resettles in Damascus. — 2.1. The Rapprochement with Syria. — 2.2. Defending Soviet Prestige: PFLP's Search for USSR Support. — 2.3. The 'Strategic' Importance of Syrian-Soviet Axis. — 3. Coalition Politics: The Union of the Left to Counterbalance Arafat's Growing Power. — 3.1. A Sign of Weakening. — 3.2. PFLP-DFLP Joint Command: The Need for PLO Reform. — 3.3. A 'National Front' Against Arafat. — 4. Conclusion: The Preparation of the 17th PNC and the Failure of Coalition Politics. — 4.1. The Fatah-Democratic Alliance Negotiations and the 'Aden Agreement'. — 4.2. The Convocation of the 17th PNC in Amman: The Seal of Arafat's Primacy.

1 Introduction

The 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the three-month long siege on the capital represent a crossroad for the whole Palestinian Liberation Organization. Forced to evacuate from Beirut and deprived of its military and civil infrastructures in Lebanon, the PLO seeks the road toward a new strategy to gain its main goal of liberating Palestine. However, the debate on the agenda for the new stage is a catalyst for historic rifts within the PLO: its leadership, that is Fatah, devotes itself to a diplomatic strategy which entails a rapprochement with Egypt and Jordan, favorable to a political settlement of the conflict with Israel, and sees the United States as the only power able to guarantee an agreement. The PLO leftist opposition instead, with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine at its

forefront, rejects the idea of a political path leading to a peace agreement with the Zionist enemy. A political settlement under US tutelage and in collaboration with the Jordanian and Egyptian regimes would mean the complete marginalization of PFLP's revolutionary line within the PLO. Indeed, the PFLP always distinguished itself within the PLO for its hard-line positions vis-à-vis the confrontation with Israel and its global revolutionary views, according to which the Palestinian liberation movement should not only aim to the liberation of the homeland but also to achieve a socialist revolution all over the Arab east. Another distinctive trait of the PFLP is also its well-defined and quite rigid political doctrine which absorbed the experience of several revolutionary movements like Maoism and Guevarism. These features contrast in particular with Fatah generic nationalism which however, ensured to Arafat's organization a wider popularity, and are also at the base of PLO internal divisions resurfacing with unprecedented strength in the aftermath of 1982 Lebanon War. In the light of this considerations, it is clear why the PFLP, throughout 1983 and 1984 sought to put into practice a radical alternative to Fatah diplomatic strategy, looking for coordination with other leftist faction, the DFLP first of all, and aligning itself with Syria at the regional level and with the USSR at the global one. Nevertheless, both external factors such as Syrian will to exploit the opposition to liquidate Arafat and take over the PLO, and internal ones, like the inability to build a cohesive leftist front to restrain Arafat's autocratic drift, undermined PFLP's effort and led to the failure of its post-Lebanon agenda sealed by 1985 Arafat-Hussein agreement to form a joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation for possible negotiation.

The importance of studying the PFLP relies on the fact that so far, scholarly works on the PLO focus on its mainstream, namely Fatah, giving to the Popular Front the space of a secondary actor (Sayigh 1989; Cobban 1984). For their part, those works treating specifically PLO internal dialogue illustrate some PFLP's position with more details, but always tend to highlight Fatah evolution and adaptability vis-à-vis a quickly changing context (Gresh 1988; Sahliyeh 1986). To date, only one monograph was consecrated to Habash's party addressing mainly its structure and ideology (Cubert 1997) and one article outlining PFLP decision-making process and internal contradictions (AbuKhalil 1987). Conversely, a significant number of studies has been dedicated to PFLP precursor, the Arab Nationalists Movement, illustrating its formation, the ideological evolution from rightist nationalism to Marxism and finally its demise leading to the emergence of national offshoots among which the PFLP (Kazziha 1975; Al-Kubeisi 1977; Barut 1997). In some of these latter works, the first years of the PFLP are addressed but again, little attention has been paid to this faction during later phases, especially to the years of decline which led to today's marginalization. In Palestine itself, the subject of the decline of the left has been partly treated (Hilal 2009; Ladadwe 2014) but not the specific case of single organizations. Therefore to fill these lacks, a study

of PFLP's course in its more recent years is key. Such a study should focus on the choices and the policies adopted by the Popular Front to counter its own weakening and to preserve a decisive influence within the PLO. Hence, this essay is a first attempt to address the gaps of historiography concentrating on the period when the problem of marginalization emerged forcibly and the PFLP made its first attempts to resist it.

2 The Popular Front Resettles in Damascus

2.1 The Rapprochement with Syria

The forced choices made after September 1982 by PLO leadership to establish a new base in Tunis and by the PFLP to settle in Damascus were both signs of a serious weakening that led every faction inside the Palestinian national movement to accept some unprecedented compromises. Unlike in the aftermath of 1971 eviction from Jordan, the Palestinian armed organizations had no hope to find in Tunisia, nor in Syria, the favorable conditions encountered in Lebanon. Yasser Arafat decided to bet on his diplomatic strategy and he needed as much independence as possible for his initiative in order to open a new course in PLO's relations with Egypt and Jordan: the price to pay was an exile-like base in Tunis and the risk of major splits inside the Liberation Organization (Sahliyah 1986, pp. 87-91). On the other hand, the PFLP could not afford to deny completely its two-decades long radical stand and, in the current situation, Syria was the only State in the Arab east adopting a 'steadfast' position toward the conflict. The PFLP knew that it was losing much of its independence and freedom of action while moving to Damascus but its adherence to a radical strategy did not leave much room for other possibilities. In other words, the PFLP was unable to compete within the framework of the 'Jordanian option' that prevailed in post-Lebanon period in the ranks of the PLO: this definition has been used to define PLO leadership decision to shift its attention and presence toward the Occupied Territories and Jordan and toward a political strategy, abandoning the military approach that dominated the previous decade (Khalidi 1985b, p. 90). For its part, the Popular Front had some significant implantations in the Occupied Territories, but the bulk of its mass support was still in the Beirut refugee camps and in Syrian controlled Lebanese areas as well as in the Yarmouk refugee camp in Damascus. From this stemmed PFLP's reluctance to leave Lebanon and the decision to settle in Syria as for the Party the proximity to the occupied homeland was not only a matter of propaganda but also one of strategic importance.

However, every Arab State that directly dealt with Palestinian armed presence never had the intention to allow to the PLO a full autonomy of ac-

tion and Syria was no exception. President Hafiz al-Assad in particular was highly averse to Arafat freedom of action at least since the disruption of the Lebanese civil war; after 'Egypt's historic 'betrayal' in 1979 Syria's main goal in its regional policy was the creation of a bloc formed with Lebanon and the PLO in order to break its isolation and reach a hegemonic position (Hinnebusch 1986, p. 13). As the PLO chairman seemed always more committed to the Jordan option, Syria tried to influence Palestinian policies in the new stage through PLO opposition groups based in Damascus, notably the PFLP: in this phase the Popular Front could not but accept that its goals coincided with Syrian ones.

In the first aftermath of Israel's invasion, the PFLP and Syria objectives became actually closer mainly due to their opposition to American efforts to implement a political settlement between Lebanon and Israel, which was comprehensive also of the withdrawal of all foreigners forces: an equation that put on the same level Israeli, Syrian and Palestinian armed presence on the Lebanese territory. The signature of the Lebanese-Israeli agreement of the 17th May 1983 definitely seemed to put the Palestinians and Syria in the same camp and the PFLP grasped the occasion to call for the development of a common strategy with Syria and the Lebanese National Movement: the PFLP, alongside Syria, refused the linkage of Israeli and Syrian forces withdrawal and asked a unilateral Israeli withdrawal instead. Moreover, the Party thought that an increased level of military coordination with Syria was also needed because it was not possible to exclude another Israeli blow in order to liquidate the last obstacles to the normalization of its relations with Lebanon. At this regard, the PFLP estimated that Israel could resort to confessional divisions in order to deliver the final attack to Syria and the Palestinian revolution, therefore the alliance with the biggest 'nationalist' force operating in Lebanon, appeared as the best way to prepare for defense (PFLP Information Department 1983, p. 105).

However, the 1976 Syrian intervention against the PLO in Lebanon was not that far and the PFLP had to make an important effort of pragmatism to justify such an alliance. In addition, the Popular Front historically, has defined its linkages with Syria and all other «nationalist regimes» at the same time as of «alliance and conflict». On the one hand, the PFLP considered those regimes as allies in case of direct confrontation with Israel. On the other, the Arab nationalist states, due to their ruling «petit-bourgeois elites» did not look with favor at PFLP's all-out revolutionary project and disliked its military strategy, namely guerilla warfare, as this could vehicle its revolutionary calls in the countries where it was operating (PFLP Information Department 1972, pp. 70-78). Therefore, the situation emerged after 1982 required also a theoretical reformulation of PFLP's positions toward Syria.

At this regard, the Party, could count on the lessons of the most impor-

tant Marxist forces worldwide: for example, in this case, Maoist doctrine on primary and secondary inconsistencies allowed the PFLP to be flexible in its foreign policy and to adapt to a continuously changing situation of conflict (Tse-Tung 1967, pp. 311-345). After 1982, the PFLP could not afford to adopt a conflicting stand with Syria, therefore, contradictions with the Syrian regime, although always on the ground, automatically became less important and justified the pursuit of a greater entente with Assad. In addition this rapprochement with Syria was not just dictated by a post-war urgent necessity: it was the result of internal pressure by the pro-Syrian group led by Abu Ali Mustafa, PFLP's deputy Secretary-General. After the stroke that hit Habash in 1979, his leadership started to lose weight in the decision making process while Mustafa's group raised in importance. This internal current, from that moment on, tried as much as it could to align the Party with Syria's plans for the conflict (AbuKhalil 1987, pp. 367-369).

Since the PFLP found almost all of its mass-based support from Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, the weight of their opinion in Party's policies was preponderant if compared to that of Palestinians exiled in other Arab country or living in the Occupied Territories: for these reasons the perception they had of Syria's role in Lebanon received more attention by PFLP leadership. Syria's image among both Lebanese and Palestinians positively changed after the Israeli invasion. Before Israel's military operation Syria was much more perceived as simply another actor who wanted to impose its interests and hoped to benefit from the conflict. Although one cannot speak of a full support to the Syrian regime, the direct confrontation with the Zionist enemy mitigated the negative image that was attached to Syria intervention in Lebanon since 1976: the Syrian forces were an Arab army that was now directly opposed to the major enemy. This shift in people's perception of Syria revealed useful for the PFLP in presenting the coordination with Syria as a natural development of the ongoing war, not only against Israel's proxies but also directly against Zionist forces

Furthermore, despite the hard setback that Syria underwent during its short military confrontation with Israel in summer 1982 and its consequent withdrawal from the Chouf and south Lebanon, the Syrian Army still owned a remarkable military potential as the Soviet Union did not hesitate to replenish its depleted arsenals. As a consequence, although Syria could not compete with Israel's military supremacy, it could easily impose an overwhelming balance of power to the different militias in the Lebanese occupied territories. In fact, Syria involvement in Lebanon was characterized by the use of force against armed factions in situation of crushing favorable balance, the Palestinians knew it and the PFLP had no intention to defy Syria's strategy (Khalidi 1985a, pp. 506-508).

2.2 Defending Soviet Prestige: PFLP's Search for USSR Support

Further divisions inside the PLO were fostered by the debate over the role of the Soviet Union in the Arab-Israeli conflict and more precisely over the importance of PLO alliance with the USSR in the wake of Israel's invasion and reoccupation of Lebanon. The PFLP was concerned by a decrease of Soviet prestige within the Palestinian political arena: while none of the fedayin organizations overtly raised doubts on the alliance with the Soviet Union, some independent members of the council, as for example Shafik al-Hout, highlighted Soviet ambiguous support for the PLO and its low consideration of the alliance with the Palestinian National Movement (Abu-Lughod 1983, p. 39). Therefore the PFLP, beside the DFLP and PFLP GC, committed itself to the defense of USSR's role in the region. Actually, at this regard during its 16th PNC speech, held in Algiers in from 14 to 22 February 1983, Habash referred to the Soviet Union to declare that

All the questions about what the USSR did during the siege aimed at dividing the Palestinian revolution from their natural allies. I invite this council to declare our clear distinction between our imperialist, Zionist and reactionary enemies and our friends from the socialist countries and the world national liberation movement. (Al-Hadaf 1983c, pp. 6-9)

The Party feared that these «negative tendencies» could gain popularity inside the PLO and firmly denounced those declarations that affirmed that «the key of the conflict was in American hands». These positions were strengthening the «imperialist plans» of settlement by trying to marginalize the importance of the major world actor engaged in the opposition to US expansion (PFLP Information Department 1983, p. 123). At the end of the PNC, the PLO stated once more the strategic role played by the Soviet Union in supporting liberation movements worldwide and formally reaffirmed USSR influence on the Palestinian arena: this is to be considered a concession to the leftist opposition made by a PLO leadership which was always more disenchanted toward Soviet role (Galia Golan 1986, pp. 288-289).

After the signing of the 1979 Camp David accords, the USSR decided to improve its relations with the PLO in order to counterbalance the loss of Egypt and its transition toward the Western camp. This moment coincided also with an improvement of Soviet Union's relations with the PFLP. Once very critical toward USSR's stands about some central questions of the conflict, the Popular front started to reduce its critics and showed a greater alignment with Soviet views of Middle Eastern politics (Galia Golan 1983, p. 13): for instance during the 16th session of the PNC, the PFLP pressured for the rejection of the Reagan and Fahd peace plans while did not oppose the acceptance of the Brezhnev proposal of settlement. Actually, the latter was far from the Reagan plan as it recognized PLO's role of unique repre-

sentative, but did not differ sensibly from the plan issued by the Saudi crown prince which instead was labeled by the Party as the «base for the final liquidation» (Al-Hadaf 1983d, p. 5). In other words the PFLP did not blackmail PLO leadership on the issue of the acceptance of any political solution of the conflict, de facto eliminating the main reason of discord with the Soviet Union which historically backed the idea of a partition of Palestine rather than fully support PLO's first long term goal to destroy Israel as a State (Ismael 2005, pp. 65, 76). One can better grasp the dimensions of this change in PFLP's positions if considers that, during the period of international aircrafts hijackings between 1968 and 1970 and even once this strategy had been abandoned, the Soviets considered the Popular Front a Maoist faction and accused it of «revolutionary adventurism», counter-productive to the advance of the Arab liberation movement (Harris 1977, p. 149).

Although the rapprochement was a sensible one, there were still several points of distance between Soviet projects for the Middle East and PFLP's understanding of the new phase. Nevertheless the Party avoided to stress or mention these discrepancies both in its press organs and in its political statements. In fact if the Popular Front was aligned on Syrian positions in rejecting any of Arafat's contacts with Egypt or Jordan, the Soviet Union was not a-priori opposed to some sort of Arafat-Hussein coordination or to the establishment of good relations between Mubarak and PLO chairman. Actually the USSR did not want to be completely excluded from possible peace negotiations and therefore was interested in presenting itself as a fundamental actor, even in the eyes of those countries that were moving closer to the Americans. Concerning the plan for a political settlements of the conflict, the only point of full agreement between the Soviets and Habash's party was the firm rejection of the Reagan plan: the USSR was playing a hard game of balances between its two most important allies, namely Syria and the PLO, and between the different components of the Palestine national movement (Freedman 1987, pp. 179-182).

The Soviet Union always showed its preference in supporting established governments rather than liberation movements, therefore despite the existing inconsistencies with Syria, it decided to enhance its relation with the Assad regime and to increase its presence in the country since early 1983. Nevertheless, Soviets did not envisage a Syrian-controlled PLO neither and consequently decided to improve the relations with Arafat as well in order to balance Syria's rejectionist stand. But beside that, the Soviets did not appreciate that PLO leadership did not totally close the door to the American administration. In such a context, the USSR was trying to maintain good relations with every possible actors in order not to preclude any possibility of action: this policy-pattern led the Soviet Union to give more importance and support to the rejectionist opposition inside the PLO, stressing on PFLP or DFLP position, rather than that of Fatah, over the Reagan plan (Galia Golan 1986, p. 192).

Unfortunately for the USSR this policy did not succeed in balancing support to its different allies and resulted in eventually fostering PLO internal split and hostility between the Palestinians and Syria: the civil war erupted during 1983 summer in Tripoli among Arafat loyalists and Syria-backed rebels represented the failure of this policy and became the worst scenario the Soviet Union could face.

2.3 The 'Strategic' Importance of Syrian-Soviet Axis

Given this fragile game of balances, the PFLP committed, before and after the Algiers PNC, to a propaganda effort aimed to present the viability of the alliance with Syria and the fundamental necessity to rely on the USSR and reject any American involvement.

The analyses published in PFLP's *Al Hadaf* focused on the continued role of opposition that Syria played during and after the war, towards Israel's aggressions and US attempt to impose a settlement. The stress was always on the positive stand that Syria was adopting at the Arab level as well as on the pressure that the Syrian Government was exercising on those regimes favorable to negotiations within the American pattern: Syria declared that it would attend upcoming Arab summits only to discuss the results reached until then, excluding any debate on possible alignment of Arab positions with the Reagan plan. Furthermore, the Assad regime was continually urging Jordan not to join American settlement negotiations. PFLP's account centered on the guarantee represented by Syrian armed presence in Lebanon: a precious guarantee of protection for PLO's interests. Before the Tripoli crisis, the PFLP also used to remark that Syrian-Palestinian relations were experiencing a «real operation of correction» since until then they were not «established on the right bases» (*Al-Hadaf* 1983e, pp. 4-5).

In its description of the important factors impeding the implementation of American conspiracies, the PFLP distinguished between direct factors and «helping» factors: while Syrian position was listed among the firsts, Soviet stand was considered part of the second group, in line with Soviet narrative over its intervention in Middle Eastern affairs, especially during the Israeli invasion. In Popular Front's views, progressive forces upgraded their relation with the Soviet Union because the «strategic alliance» between them had to reach the level of the «strategic collaboration» existing between the US and Israel. Moreover, Soviet increasing supplies of armaments to Syrian forces represented an important factors of deterrence thwarting any «further imperialist attempt» to obtain the end of Palestinian and military presence in Lebanon (*Al-Hadaf* 1983g, p. 11).

In this moment of shifting alliances, the Popular Front was trying to reconstitute a homogenous image of the Steadfastness Front, focusing on the element of accordance between its regional and international patrons. In

Party's narrative the Israeli invasion showed once more American unreliability which implied the unfeasibility of the diplomatic strategy. The clear step to take was full adherence to armed struggle, which in the new phase could only be carried through a greater reliance on the Syrian ally and its Soviet backer (Al-Hadaf 1983h, pp. 4-5). The inconsistencies between the renewed stress on the importance of armed struggle and the new posture toward Soviet peace proposal is to be explained mainly with two factors: on the one hand the PFLP needed to respect the principle of consensus within the PNC as well as to pander the Soviets, on the other, the Popular Front was fully involved in the Lebanese arena in a struggle for survival, therefore the rhetoric of armed resistance still played a major role in Party's narrative.

3 Coalition Politics: The Union of the Left to Counterbalance Arafat's Growing Power

3.1 A Sign of Weakening

The 16th session of the PNC followed the traditional pattern of consensus politics but it was the last time that this principle was put into practice (cf. Gresh 1988, pp. 231-238). In fact, the post war period was marked on the one hand by Arafat's increasing autonomy in decision-making and on the other by the spreading pattern of coalition politics to which opposition parties inside the Palestinian arena started to resort more frequently: from this moment, the different factions that disagreed with Arafat's line tried to coordinate their policies in order to acquire a greater weight within the PLO and counterbalance Fatah's increasing power. That being so, coalition politics can be interpreted as a clear sign of the weakening that leftist opposition was experiencing in that period (Sayigh 1989, pp. 254-255). This conclusion is also reinforced if put in historic perspective. Actually, the period which followed the foundation in 1967, until the 1970 'Black September', represented probably a peak in the power and the capabilities of the Popular Front, a phase during which the PFLP could seriously claim to challenge Arafat's leadership and attempt to take over the PLO. But these were also the years of the painful splits which led to the creation of the PFLP-GC first, and then of the Democratic Front. Despite the negative effects of these fragmentations, the PFLP managed to cope with them and also to have a decisive influence on the rest of the PLO as testified by its major role in dragging the Palestinian armed factions into military confrontation with the Jordanian army despite Arafat's initial tentative to avoid such an outcome (Sayigh 1997, pp. 243-262). Conversely, more than 10 years after these events, the leftist opposition had to form a coa-

lition in the attempt to exert a significant influence on the PLO and the single factions appeared unable to make their own agenda emerge without resorting to this political instrument.

On the eve of the opening of the PNC, in January and early February 1983, the PFLP stressed continuously on the importance of «building front-like internal relations between Palestinian factions, far from any form of monopoly, individualism and authoritarianism» (Al-Hadaf 1983b, pp. 24-25) complaining also about the lack of attention reserved to the issue of national unity until then. Therefore, the strong attachment that PNC resolution expressed towards the unity of the PLO was considered as a result reached thanks to the effort of the Popular Front: PFLP's propaganda focused on «the spirit of national unity» that characterized the National Council, welcoming PLO adherence to the rejection of American peace plans. However, PNC formulation of the tasks for the new stage left space for free interpretations and contacts between Arafat and Hussein continued undisturbed.

3.2 PFLP-DFLP Joint Command: The Need for PLO Reform

The whole opposition inside the PLO knew that the chairman was determined in pursuing his diplomatic strategy, therefore the PFLP and the DFLP started to hold joint meetings since the first months after the PNC in order to organize a prompt reaction to any possible 'deviation' from what they considered as PNC political line. In April 1983, a statement issued by one of these meetings clearly declared their priorities and concerns towards Palestinian politics by affirming that «the two Fronts will firmly stand against any retreat from Palestine National Council Resolutions» (Al-Hadaf 1983f, pp. 12-13).

The PFLP and the DFLP were also concerned by the pressure to which the PLO leadership was subjected especially from Jordan and saw the increasing coordination between them as a useful tool to stop any attack aimed at substituting the PLO in its representative role. A great danger was embodied by «bureaucratic groups» and their «bourgeois aspirations» inside the national movement who were preaching the «American solutions» for the conflict. At this regard the two organizations started to call for sensible change in PLO main institutions:

The prompt application of democratic reform within the framework of the PLO organs and institutions requires enforcing the democratic forces among the Palestinian revolution's forces. [...] This reform should be implemented within the framework of national unity and with adherence to the principle of internal democratic dialogue that will enhance the role of the Palestinian national revolution and its national decisions. (PFLP-DFLP 1983a, pp. 224-226)

Attachment to Palestinian national program and the urgency of wide-range democratic reforms inside the PLO were the two main slogans waged by the two fronts, especially when the first clashes between Fatah loyalists and rebels started to occur in the Bekaa valley, in Lebanon, in June 1983.

The developments that the Lebanese and the Palestinian arenas lived since the second half of 1983, namely growing tensions inside Fatah and between PLO leadership and Syria as well as the clashes in the Lebanese Al-Jabal area between the National Forces and Phalanges-Lebanese army joint forces, pressured the two factions toward a greater coordination, in order to retain their political weight. As a results, at the end of June 1983 the PFLP and the DFLP announced the formation of a «political and military Joint Command» that would have been «responsible for the political affairs and moves of the two Fronts and for their armed forces, within the framework of strengthening the relations between them and unifying their ranks». The official statement as well as analyses by PFLP's cadres clearly defined the would-be scope of this step: the Joint Command was not to be considered as a simple 'axis', rather it represented the move toward a concrete unification founded on «an objective basis». Moreover, the PFLP and the DFLP intended to make more efforts to unify also their social institutions and trade unions. In such a critical moment, the two Fronts' aim was bolstering PLO institutions and role as well as to contribute to «the success of the decision of the Palestine National Council, including the decision to establish a unified Palestinian national army» (PFLP-DFLP 1983b, pp. 226-227).

But as PFLP press testified, this step received also some critics from those who saw an attempt by the two factions to benefit from the serious break that Fatah was experiencing. At this regard, the PFLP replied not only that such move aimed to build a strong bases for the unity of leftist forces, but that it was also a necessary decision in order to save the PLO from the current impasse and to protect it from a further fragmentation, an event that would only serve those forces aiming at its liquidation.

As Fatah internal crisis continued, the Joint Command decided to issue a «program for unity and democratic reform» of the PLO on October the first 1983: this proposal intended to represent a base for the salvation of the PLO as well as to open a comprehensive dialogue on the major changes to be implemented in the Liberation Organization. First of all, the program defined three main dangers impending on the PLO namely, political liquidation, threats of divisions that became more likely since PLO evacuation from Beirut and the eventual emergence of Fatah internal clashes and finally the risk of «restriction» of the PLO through the imposition of an Arab tutelage on it. These external factors apart, the document focused on PLO internal problems with regards to foreign policy and organizational aspects. Since the beginning of the post-Beirut phase, the PLO was not able to express clear positions towards the main issues that concerned the organization, despite those stands were fully defined by PNC resolutions: this situation

was a consequence of the «preponderance of tactics on strategy» which led to the implementation of «shortsighted maneuvers» that did not follow the scope of long term interests. To be clearer, the program affirmed that this shortsightedness emerged in several PLO improper behaviors: first, the Palestine Liberation Organization disregarded its anti-imperialist nature and consequently seemed to forget the «strategic truth» of the impossibility of coexistence between the Palestinian and Arab peoples and Zionism. The Joint Command referred to the dialogue that chairman Arafat wanted to open with those regional and international parts that called the PLO to recognize Israel. More precisely the document condemned PLO leadership tendency to put all the Arab regimes on the same level which allowed dialogue also with «reactionary regimes»: but the PLO forgot that it was part of the Arab liberation movement and therefore, contacts and collaboration were possible only with nationalist regimes, namely countries members of the Steadfastness and Confrontation Front and Syria in particular. Turning the attention on organizational aspects, the Joint Command highlighted the growing «despotism and individualism» in the decision-making process inside the PLO. Without directly mentioning Yasser Arafat, the document denounced the «individualistic tendency» that exacerbated during the last year in every context which was paralleled by a «category-based control» inside PLO organs (Al-Hadaf 1983a, pp. 6-10).

All this was to the detriment of PLO institutions and the practice of collective command that characterized the PLO for the previous two decades and fostered the emergence of a «bureaucratic class» inside PLO institutions accompanied by corruption and cronyism (Al-Hout 2009, p. 50). By pointing out these problems the PFLP and the DFLP were recognizing the arguments that Abu Musa, the Fatah-Uprising's leader, put forward in order to justify its rebellion against Arafat autocratic behavior (cf. Khalidi 1983, pp. 6-12; Rouleau et al. 1983, pp. 13-16). The whole national movement was aware of the lack of democracy inside the PLO at that moment, but the Joint Command decided not to attack Arafat nor to ask for his removal until his departure from Tripoli and the unprecedented meeting with Hosni Mubarak in Egypt.

The solution to these problems was the implementation of democracy at every level of the organization: the concept of «collective leadership» had to be implemented again in every decisional organs and the control of «deviation» was to be enforced. Furthermore the program of reforms envisaged a stricter control over the effectiveness of the «highest councils in the PLO» and the concession of a real autonomy to PLO unions and other civil institutions: this entailed the enhancement of Occupied Territories institutions in which every faction had to be represented according to its electoral weight. Concerning economic and military aspects, unification was the keyword for the correction of PLO path: a unified Palestinian army had to be created as well as all PLO finances had to be managed in the

cadre of the Palestinian National Fund, which was considered as the only institution that could equally distribute resources among the different factions without much corruption or cronyism.

All these organizational reforms had to be paralleled by PLO alignment with the Arab Liberation Movement and by putting an end to every «ambiguous» contacts with «defeatist» leaders which were threatening the implementation of PNC resolution and were a main cause of Fatah split (Al-Hadaf 1983a, pp. 6-10).

Throughout the entire siege of Arafat's loyalist forces in Tripoli, the PFLP alongside other leftists factions, continued merely to call for the unity of the movement and for dialogue and cohesion with the Syrian regime as well as to offer its good services as mediator. However the break between Arafat and Syria was too deep and the Joint Command was unable to play any active role, further demonstrating the correspondence of coalition politics and political weakening: this tragic episode of PLO history was demonstrating Syria's will to cancel the Palestinian national movement as an independent actor in the Arab-Israeli conflict and put it under its tutelage, disavowing Joint Command intentions to depict it as a fundamental ally (Rouleau 1983, p. 145). On the other hand, Arafat was not to give up the path he started after PLO eviction from Beirut and demonstrated it by visiting Cairo, the 22nd of December 1983, during his evacuation from Tripoli.

3.3 A 'National Front' Against Arafat

The conflict with Syria and the blow he underwent in Tripoli drove PLO chairman to an astonishing visit to Egypt with whom no contacts were held since 'Sadat's betrayal': once again Arafat reaffirmed his will to continue the dialogue with the 'moderate camp' and reject any collaboration with the 'radicals'. In front of Arafat's step the rest of the Palestinian movement, included a sensible part of Fatah, expressed deep outrage. For the PFLP and the Joint Command, previously loyal to Arafat leadership, his resignations became now an «urgent national mission». The decision of accomplishing this trip, represented the most serious evidence that Arafat was determined in continuing his 'individualistic' governance of the PLO. Therefore George Habash, called every PLO organs to move to reestablish democracy inside the national movement. The PFLP carried on an attack merely to the person of the chairman, stating continuously its will to act in respect of PLO rules and PNC resolutions. Similarly, Party's cadres précised that they were not leading an attack to Fatah but they only wanted every deviation to be removed: «the PLO was stronger than Yasser Arafat» (Al-Hadaf 1983i, pp. 4-5).

Also after Arafat's trip to Egypt, the pattern of coalition politics emerged as a top priority for the PFLP: the call for the unity of the left and for its

takeover in the PLO became a mantra repeated at every official occasion. The 25th of December 1983, the Joint Command issued a proclamation together with the Palestinian Communist Party (PCP) and the Palestine Liberation Front (PLF) in which these factions invoked the formation of the «largest Palestinian national front in order to end any form of conflict and partisan rivalry» (Al-Hadaf 1984b, pp. 26-27).

This 'Front' had to be convened in the framework of the Central Council of the PLO and at this regard the statement called Fatah Central Committee to further condemn the Arafat's visit to Cairo and to facilitate the organization of the Council: once this convened, all the parts refusing the «defeatist line» would implement the procedures to destitute Arafat. In addition the proclamation demanded Palestinian masses and institutions in the occupied territories to hold a «national conference like the one held Jerusalem in 1978 to condemn and fight Sadat's conspiracy». In sum, the four parties called for Arafat's total isolation both in the Palestinian as well as in the regional arena: the PLO leftist opposition needed the unification of Palestinian ranks to ouster the man that alone was imposing his strategy to the Palestinian National movement.

In the attempt to close the ranks of the left, the PFLP also tried to emphasize the divisions inside Fatah in the hope that this would relinquish Arafat's path choosing the 'steadfast' approach and the alliance with Syria: official statements and declarations by members of Fatah Revolutionary Council or by Fatah Foreign Office were published in which high-rank cadres rejected Arafat's action and affirmed that the chairman planned the trip by his own and thus lost his legitimacy inside the movement (Al-Hadaf 1984c, pp. 22-23).

However these efforts were not successful: at the end of March 1984 the Joint Command the PCP and the PLF issued another declaration, also known as the 'Aden Statement', that replicated the same call to all «nationalist personalities and forces» for the establishment of a collective leadership (PFLP et al. 1984, pp. 206-207). No progresses were registered, on the contrary, the hopes that Fatah members reactions to Arafat's visit would subvert the leadership inside the PLO, were sensibly smashed after few months. Actually a Fatah political document issued in March, provoked PFLP's critics which considered it a serious regression from the previous Fatah statements since it defined Arafat's moves only as an «organizational violation». This document, that intended to build the base for a dialogue with the Joint Command, did not overtly condemn the visit nor took any clear position toward Arafat's contacts with Egypt and Jordan: in PFLP's views Arafat's policies represented the main reason for PLO split and without a firm denunciation, no dialogue was possible. For the PFLP Fatah leadership was trying to force a split in the Liberation Organization, pressuring opposite factions to leave the national movement in order to impose its «new defeatist line» to other minor factions (Al-Hadaf 1984d, pp. 22-23).

Although, the Aden Statement entailed no particular advancement in the dialogue between PLO leadership and leftist opposition the PFLP took this meeting in high consideration because it represented an important step in the formation of a united leftist front, the first condition to meet in order to «correct» PLO political course after Arafat's visit to Egypt. In January 1984 the «Democratic Alliance» was set up, the Joint Command established common «points of views» with the Palestine Communist Party and the Palestine Liberation Front: in George Habash's words the development and unity of the «democratic and revolutionary current» was the «security valve for the treatment of the PLO crisis» (Al-Hadaf 1984k, pp. 7-12).

4 Conclusion: The Preparation of the 17th PNC and the Failure of Coalition Politics

4.1 The Fatah-Democratic Alliance Negotiations and the 'Aden Agreement'

Since the beginning of the year, the whole Palestinian national movement was mainly focused on internal politics and on the preparation of the 17th session of the Palestine National Council. The PFLP and other opposition factions were aware of the importance of the next PNC, the one that would seal the imposition or the rejection of the diplomatic strategy which the chairman tried to undertake. In this framework the Democratic Alliance was a tactical tool, and therefore a short-term entente, in order to safeguard the revolution from Arafat's activism, with a view to the establishment of a larger national front «open to everybody without exception, to every part who is ready to fight the deviationist approach and defeatism in the Palestinian arena» (Al-Hadaf 1984k, p. 10).

In this new phase, PLO opposition was on a total defensive stance and its political activity was limited to the reaction to the activities of the leadership: on the one hand Arafat and his supporters were interested in holding the next PNC as quickly as possible, on the other, the Democratic Alliance was seeking to gain time in order to reach some guarantees on the content and the focus of the discussions, before convening the council. For instance, the Joint Command conditioned its participation to the PNC to preliminary meetings that would define the «right political line with no space for interpretations» (Al-Hadaf 1984k, pp. 11-12), as on the contrary was the case for the 16th PNC. Furthermore Abu Ali Mustafa explained in a public intervention at the end of April 1984, that the council could not be convened without the «comprehensive political and organizational agreement» of every PLO faction. Such a consensus was the only condition capable to preserve the integrity of the PLO and prevent the split toward which the leadership was leading the national movement (Al-Hadaf 1984e,

p. 9). This demand also revealed PFLP's attachment to the traditional PLO consensus-policy as a mean to stop or at least to reduce the weight of Arafat's initiative on the Palestinian arena: a further signal of the defensive attitude adopted by the Democratic Alliance. In addition, PFLP's Secretary General explained that in order to «defend the legality» of the PLO, the Party was ready to resort to the boycott of the Executive Committee. If Fatah Central Committee had continued to back «the deviationist line» the Democratic Alliance would prevent «Arafat to speak for the PLO» by refraining its delegates to take part to Executive Committee activities: deprived of six members the committee would be unable to represent the Palestinian people. Actually, the card of quitting the main PLO institutions, had already been played by the PFLP as happened in September 1974, when the Front withdrawn from the Executive Committee to oppose PLO mainstream acceptance of the 'mini-State' on the West Bank and Gaza as a goal for the Palestinian national movement. In both cases the PFLP intended such step as a measure to avoid sharing the responsibility of «deviation and surrender» (Cobban 1984, p. 149), but at the same time, in both cases it was a clear sing of powerlessness: in the mid-Seventies only the precipitation of the Lebanese situation stopped Arafat's path toward negotiations with the enemy and again, despite a larger section of the PLO did not take part in the 17th PNC, as it will be shown, PFLP action apparently did not affect Fatah's strategy and only external events thwarted his effort of coordination with Jordan.

Despite the unprecedented split that the national movement was facing during this phase, usual preliminary talks between the Democratic Alliance and Fatah started in Aden and Algiers in spring 1984: for two months the delegations of PLO mainstream and of the so-called democratic forces negotiated the conditions for the convening of the Council without reaching any concrete result. The Democratic Alliance was asking the implementation of its plan of reforms as well as demanded a full national consensus which should include also those factions which took up arms against Arafat, now united in the «National Alliance». The Fatah representatives repeatedly declared their will to condition the opening of PNC works to a preliminary national consensus but Arafat for its part, adamantly pursued its strategy of dialogue with Egypt and Jordan and did not restrain from public declarations that angered both the Democratic Alliance and the Syrian-controlled radicals of the National Alliance (Arafat, Malley 1984, pp. 180-183). The PFLP started to overtly call for the «downfall» of PLO chairman as he was now completely committed to its «deviationist line» (Al-Hadaf 1984f, pp. 4-5).

Nevertheless contacts between the contending parts continued and, surprisingly, at the last round of talks held in Aden in May 1984, an agreement was reached (Aden-Algiers agreement). The leftist opposition renounced to its call for Arafat's immediate ouster but, on the other hand, obtained some formal concessions namely, the opposition to any delegation of representa-

tion to Jordan, the condemnation of Hussein's attempts to undermine the PLO as sole representative, the 'correction' of the relations with Syria and a concrete commitment to the development of an effective collective leadership inside the PLO, to limit Arafat's authoritarianism. At this regard, the Democratic Alliance was satisfied about the new control tasks appointed to the Central Council which now could «call the Executive Committee to account of its implementation of the decisions of the National Council» as well as set the creation by the Council of «permanent, effective committees composed by all member of the National Council» (Fatah, Democratic-Alliance 1984, pp. 200-204; Al-Hadaf 1984a, pp. 8-10).

4.2 The Convocation of the 17th PNC in Amman: The Seal of Arafat's Primacy

Although the new agreement was supposed to start a «comprehensive national dialogue» it soon received many attacks leaving little chance to its implementation. On the one hand, Arafat continued to state his will to go further on the way of dialogue with Jordan and Egypt while, on the other, the National Alliance saw the Aden-Algiers agreement as demagogic and accused the Democratic Alliance for abandoning the commitment to PLO reform and the restoration of the revolutionary line within the Organization.

The Democratic Alliance was stuck between the brand new approach emerged with Arafat's activism, who was trying to bypass the internal opposition through a broader entente with Jordan and Egypt, and a radical small opposition committed to full rebellion and totally in the hands of Syria. Furthermore some contrasts started to appear also inside the Democratic Alliance: divergences emerged especially about the position to adopt vis-à-vis Arafat, after the signing of the agreements. The PFLP labeled reports about disagreement with the DFLP as «rumors» but actually was not allowed to issue a reminder to Fatah Central Committee on measures to be taken against Arafat on behalf of the Democratic Alliance. The Democratic and the Popular Fronts did not share exactly the same view on the matter and although this was a small event, it showed the 'tactical' nature of the alliance between two forces that sometimes had also opposed opinions on important issues (Al-Hadaf 1984h, pp. 6-18).

At the end of summer 1984 the impasse inside the PLO reached its climax, the national dialogue, that the agreements were supposed to start, was paralyzed: every faction was contributing to this paralysis and despite the PFLP and the DFLP continued to claim their adherence to the accords vis-à-vis Arafat's violation and Fatah Central Committee inability to refrain its chairman, they started to demand the deferment of the 17th session of the PNC, although in Aden they agreed on convening it in mid-September. First, the PFLP argued that both holding a PNC with the exclusion of National Alliance forces, as demanded by Fatah and abandoning the legiti-

macy of PLO praxis in order to revolt against the leadership and topple Arafat as the National Alliance was asking, would consecrate the final fragmentation and the end of the PLO as an effective actor in the region. Afterwards, the review of the relations with Syria became a top priority: for the PFLP, 1985 was likely to be a «hot year» in which another military confrontation with Israel in Lebanon could occur. In addition, this dangerous phase demanded to put apart any difference and unify around major issues, namely the opposition to the international defeatist plan. Convening the PNC before reaching a solution concerning relations with Syria would worsen the current crisis (Al-Hadaf 1984g, pp. 4-5).

Clearly this latter and other among PFLP's claims, were mainly a consequence of Syria's pressure on the whole Democratic Alliance. Actually, the Alliance's call for the safeguard of PLO unity during the debate that preceded the PNC was in contradiction with its will to include the National Alliance in the dialogue while, the latter, was first of all committed to Arafat's deposition and to the creation of an alternative Palestinian platform. In October 1984 the implementation of the Aden-Algiers agreements was completely blocked while Arafat and the Syrian clients of the National Alliance were putting the PLO on its way towards the split. Finally, at the beginning of November, the break was made official: the Fatah Central Committee decided to convene the 17th session of the Palestine National Council out of the framework of the Aden-Algiers agreements for the 22nd of the same month, and moreover it decided to hold it in Amman, for the first time since 1970 Black September. By convening the PNC, Arafat sanctioned PLO new course: the one where the principle of majority prevailed on the principle of consensus in the decision-making progress. He exploited the paralysis provoked by the insistence of the Democratic Alliance to make his line pass through legitimate PLO institution (Sayigh 1989, pp. 255-257).

PFLP's Political Bureau held an emergency meeting shortly after the official call of the PNC and issued an independent statement. The Popular Front bitterly condemned this «individualist» step which was about to realize the worst threat to PLO's survival: Arafat was officially sanctioning the split in the national movement in a moment when «imperialist efforts» were «focused on the crystallization of a reactionary axes» and needed the «Palestinian coverage» to succeed. Ironically, Fatah made its step while a delegation of the Democratic Alliance was heading to Tunis in order to hold further talks meant to overcome the crisis. The party finally declared its dissociation and rejection vis-à-vis this decision as well as called all parties and personalities opposed to the deviationist line and its «destructive consequences» to concretely start a comprehensive dialogue and to make all possible efforts to prevent the PNC to take place (Al-Hadaf 1984i, pp. 4-11).

However, PFLP's efforts to thwart the holding of the PNC were vain, and Fatah managed to convene the council though a considerable part of the PLO decided to boycott the session. All the factions of the Democratic

Alliance did not take part to the PNC but the leftist coalition was about to finish, especially the experience of the Joint Command with the DFLP. Actually, the DFLP decided to freeze its participation to the Joint Command as it was disappointed with PFLP's stubbornness in seeking a dialogue with PLO's rebels and held its former ally responsible for the failure of the talks with Fatah Central Committee (Al-Hadaf 1984j, pp. 4-6).

Once the 17th PNC concluded, the Popular Front was defeated on every front: its incapability to endorse a defined stand and to resist multiple sources of pressure drove the Party to a de-facto inaction from which it emerged sharply weakened. The project of union of all leftist forces failed because the Front was unable to definitively dismiss the National Alliance and formulate a better coordination with the Democratic Front, which leaned closer to Fatah. The lack of ability, or will, to distance itself from Syria's agenda for the PLO discredited the Front inside the Palestinian national movement and left more space to Arafat's strategy. The PLO chairman for its part, benefitted from this situation and pursued with strength the way of coordination with Jordan and Egypt, without seeking a settlement with the internal opposition. In the following years, despite the fall of the Hussein-Arafat agreement and the disruption of the first Intifada, the PFLP was unable to recover the advantage and the power acquired by Yasser Arafat between 1982 and 1984. The Front managed to play an active role during the unprecedented uprising exploded in the Occupied Territories in December 1987 but the keys of PLO decision-making were completely in the hands of Fatah's leader which could not be restrained by any means through PLO institutions. The marginalization of Habash's party appeared definitive as also the Islamist current emerged with strength, during the Nineties in particular, the Palestinian political arena was polarized between Fatah, and the newly created Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamás) leaving no room for the traditional secular leftist opposition.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Al-Hadaf (1983a). *Barnāmağ al-waḥda wa al-işlāḥ ad-dimuqrāṭī fī munazzama at-tahrīr al-filastīniyya* (Program of unity and democratic reform in the Palestine Liberation Organization). 695, 24 October.

Al-Hadaf (1984a). *Muḥađdir liqā' 'aden* (Report of the Aden Meeting). 730, 16 July.

Al-Hadaf (1983b). 657, 24 January.

Al-Hadaf (1983c). 661, 21 February.

Al-Hadaf (1983d). 662, 28 February.

Al-Hadaf (1983e). 669, 18 April.

Al-Hadaf (1983f). 670, 25 April.

- Al-Hadaf* (1983g). 672, 9 May.
Al-Hadaf (1983h). 673, 16 May.
Al-Hadaf (1983i). 704, 26 December.
Al-Hadaf (1984b). 705, 2 January.
Al-Hadaf (1984c). 707, 16 January.
Al-Hadaf (1984d). 717, 2 April.
Al-Hadaf (1984e). 721, 30 April.
Al-Hadaf (1984f). 722, 14 May.
Al-Hadaf (1984g). 739, 24 September.
Al-Hadaf (1984h). 740, 1 October.
Al-Hadaf (1984i). 747, 19 November.
Al-Hadaf (1984j). 748, 26 November.
Al-Hadaf (1984k). 718, 9 April.
- Arafat, Yasser; Malley, Simon (1984). «Yasser Arafat Interviewed». *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 14 (1), pp. 179-183.
- Fatah, Democratic-Alliance (1984). «Aden-Algiers Agreement Between Fateh Central Committee and the Palestinian Democratic Alliance». *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 14 (1), pp. 194-215.
- PFLP et al. (1984). «Statement Issued by the Joint Command of the Democratic and Popular Fronts, the Palestine Liberation Front and the Palestine Communist Party, Calling for a Collective Leadership». *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 13 (4), pp. 199-221.
- PFLP Information Department (1983). *At-taqrīr as-siyāsī aṣ-ṣādir ‘an al-lağna al-markaziyya fī dawratihā ar-raābi‘a ḥawla ḥarb Lubnān - The political report issued by the fourth general assembly of PFLP’s Central Committee on the war of Lebanon 1983*. Damascus: PFLP Information Department.
- PFLP Information Department (1972). *Task of the New stage: The Political Report of the Third National Congress of PFLP*. Beirut.
- PFLP-DFLP (1983a). «PFLP-DFLP Joint Communiqué on the Latest Developments on Palestinian and Arab Levels». *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 13 (1), pp. 219-239.
- PFLP-DFLP (1983b). «PFLP-DFLP Joint Statement on the Formation of a Joint Political and Military Command». *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 13 (1), pp. 219-239.

Secondary Sources

- AbuKhalil, As’ad (1987). «Internal Contradictions in the PFLP: Decision Making and Policy Orientation». *Middle East Journal*, 41 (3), pp. 361-378.
- Abu-Lughod, Ibrahim (1983). «Flexible Militancy: A Report on the Sixteenth Session of the Palestine National Council, Algiers, February 14-22, 1983». *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 12 (4), pp. 25-40.

- Al-Hout, Shafik (2009). «Arafat and the Journey of the Palestinian Revolution: An Interview with Shafiq Al Hout». *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 39 (1), pp. 45-57.
- Al-Kubeisi, Basil (1977). *Storia del Movimento dei Nazionalisti Arabi*, Milano: Jaca Books.
- Barut, Muhammad Jamal (1997). *Harakat al-Qawmiyyin al-'Arab: Al-Nash'a, al-Tatawwur, al-Masa'ir - The Arab Nationalist Movement: Formation, Evolution and Destinies*. Damascus: al-Markaz al-'Arabi lil-Dirasat al-Istratijiyy.
- Cobban, Helena (1984). *The Palestinian Liberation Organisation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cubert, Harold (1997). *The PFLP's Changing Role in the Middle East*. London: Frank Cass.
- Freedman, Robert, 1987. «Soviet Policy toward the Middle East». *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science*, 36 (4), pp. 176-197.
- Golan, Galia (1983). The Soviet Union and the Israeli Action in Lebanon. *International Affairs*, 59 (1), pp. 7-16.
- Golan, Galia (1986). «The Soviet Union and the PLO since the War in Lebanon». *Middle East Journal*, 40 (2), pp. 285-305.
- Gresh, Alain (1988). *The PLO: The Struggle Within*. London: Zed Books.
- Harris, Lillian (1977). «China's Relations with the PLO». *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 7 (1), pp. 123-154.
- Hilal, Jamil (2009). *Al-yasār al-filastīnī. 'ilā 'ayna? (The Palestinian Left: Where to?)*. Ramallah: Rosa Luxemburg Foundation.
- Hinnebusch, Raymond (1986). «Syrian Policy in Lebanon and the Palestinians». *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 8 (1), pp. 1-20.
- Ismael, Tariq (2005). *The Communist Movement in the Arab World*. Oxon: Routledge Curzon.
- Kazziha, Walid (1975). *Revolutionary Transformation in the Arab World: Habash and His Comrades from Nationalism to Marxism*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Khalidi, Rashid (1983). «Behind the Fateh Rebellion». *MERIP Reports*, 119, pp. 6-12.
- Khalidi, Rashid (1985a). «Lebanon in the Context of Regional Politics: Palestinian and Syrian Involvement in the Lebanese Crisis». *Third World Quarterly*, 7 (3), pp. 495-514.
- Khalidi, Rashid (1985b). «The Palestinian Dilemma: PLO Policy After Lebanon» [online]. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 15 (1), pp. 88-103. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2536578> (2014-09-26).
- Ladadwe, Hassan (2014). «The Palestinian Left: Reality and Challenges - Al-Yasār al-filastīnī: al-wāqi' wa at-tahaddī». In: Hilal, J.; Herman, K. (eds.), *Mapping of the Arab Left: Contemporary Leftist Politics in the Arab East - 'itlāla 'awalliyya 'alā al-yasār fī-l-mašriq al-'arabī*. Ramallah: Rosa Luxemburg Foundation.

- Rouleau, Eric (1983). «The Future of the PLO». *Foreign Affairs*, 62 (1), pp. 138-156.
- Rouleau, Eric; Paul, Jim; Stork, Joe (1983). «The Mutiny against Arafat». *MERIP Reports*, 119, pp. 13-16.
- Sahliyah, Emile (1986). *The PLO after the Lebanon War*. Boulder (CO): Westview Press.
- Sayigh, Yezid (1997). *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*. Oxford: Claredon Press.
- Sayigh, Yezid (1989). «Struggle within, Struggle without: The Transformation of PLO Politics since 1982». *International Affairs*, 65 (2), pp. 247-271.
- Tse-Tung, Mao (1967). *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, vol. 1. Beijing: Foreign Language Press.