

THE  
SOVIET UNION  
AND THE  
PALESTINE  
LIBERATION  
ORGANIZATION



THE  
SOVIET UNION  
AND THE  
PALESTINE  
LIBERATION  
ORGANIZATION

An Uneasy Alliance

Galia Golan

PRAEGER

---

PRAEGER SPECIAL STUDIES • PRAEGER SCIENTIFIC

**Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data**

Golan, Galia.

The Soviet Union and the Palestine Liberation  
Organization.

Bibliography: p.

1. Munazzamat al-Tahrir al-Filastīniyah. 2. Near  
East--Foreign relations--Russia. 3. Russia--Foreign  
relations--Near East. I. Title.

DS119.7.G623

327.47056

80-18760

ISBN 0-03-057319-X

Published in 1980 by Praeger Publishers  
CBS Educational and Professional Publishing  
A Division of CBS, Inc.  
521 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10017 U.S.A.

© 1980 by Praeger Publishers

*All rights reserved*

0123456789 145 987654321

Printed in the United States of America

# CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER ONE	
HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND	5
<i>Chronological Development of Soviet-PLO Relations</i>	5
<i>Soviet Theoretic-Analytic Basis for Relations with the PLO</i>	14
<i>Non-Soviet Analysis of the Development of Soviet-PLO Relations</i>	39
CHAPTER TWO	
PALESTINIAN STATEHOOD	50
<i>Self-Determination = Statehood</i>	50
<i>Locale of State: Instead of or alongside Israel</i>	65
<i>Borders with Israel: 1947 Partition Plan or 1949-67 Borders</i>	82
<i>The Jordanian Connection</i>	95
<i>The Autonomy Plan</i>	104
<i>Conclusions</i>	110

## CHAPTER THREE

THE GENEVA PEACE CONFERENCE	113
<i>Soviet Attitude to PLO Willingness to Attend</i>	113
<i>Soviet Position on Inclusion of the PLO</i>	128
<i>Conclusions</i>	140

## CHAPTER FOUR

INTERNAL DIFFERENCES IN THE PLO	143
<i>The Problem of Unity</i>	143
<i>Soviet Preferences within the PLO</i>	150
<i>The Palestine National Front, the Communists, Contacts with "Progressive-Zionists"</i>	165
<i>Conclusions</i>	178

## CHAPTER FIVE

THE LEBANESE CRISIS	180
<i>Soviet Policy</i>	180
<i>Problems with the Palestinians</i>	188
<i>Post-Civil War</i>	201
<i>Conclusions</i>	208

## CHAPTER SIX

TERRORISM	210
-----------	-----

## CHAPTER SEVEN

RECOGNITION OF THE PLO	228
------------------------	-----

CONCLUSIONS	247
<b>APPENDIX</b>	
BIBLIOGRAPHY	257
<i>Soviet Newspapers and Periodicals</i>	257
<i>Non-Soviet Newspapers and Periodicals</i>	258
<i>Books and Pamphlets</i>	260
<i>Articles</i>	266
INDEX	275
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	291





THE  
SOVIET UNION  
AND THE  
PALESTINE  
LIBERATION  
ORGANIZATION



# INTRODUCTION

This study is an attempt to answer a number of questions that have arisen in the process of analyzing the Soviet relationship with the various actors in the Arab-Israeli conflict and Soviet policy-making regarding this region of the world. Two basic assumptions of the research conducted for this work were that the relationship between the Soviet Union and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is a complex one composed of numerous problems, nuances, and even contradictions, and that, as a result of this, it is a relationship determined by a number of factors not immediately apparent to the casual observer and possibly even different from those officially proclaimed. Moreover, it was assumed from the outset that this is not a simple patron-client relationship from which superpower control or even influence over its client could be presumed—if indeed such a presumption can ever be made of patron-client relationships. For this reason this study is not an attempt to trace an historical picture of the Soviet attitude toward the Palestinian question as such nor an analysis of Soviet policy regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict in general. Rather, it focuses on the issues that have been paramount in the Soviets' relationship with the PLO and those that best indicate the Soviet Union's attitude toward this organization, while examining the factors or criteria at play both from a pragmatic and a theoretical point of view. From this certain conclusions may also be drawn with regard to Soviet behavior generally in its relationship with national liberation movements, just as the findings of this specific case may well throw some light on Soviet priorities and choices in the broader context of the Arab-Israeli conflict and its possible evolution.

\* \* \*

Specifically, the issues investigated include the complex of questions revolving around the very idea of a Palestinian state, its locale and borders, its relationship, if any, with Israel and Jordan, the Israeli "autonomy plan," a "Palestinian government-in-exile," and the problem of Palestinian refugees; PLO participation in negotia-

tions with Israel, Security Council resolution 242, and the Geneva Peace Conference; the Lebanese civil war and the Syrian-PLO confrontation; the methods employed by the PLO and the question of the use of armed struggle, guerilla warfare, or terrorism; the internal composition of the Palestinian movement, the problem of unity, Arafat's leadership, the "Rejectionists," the Marxists, the relationship with Communists and Israeli "progressives"; and the question of official Soviet recognition of the PLO as the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people." The factors and criteria examined are those contained in the Soviet theoretical literature on the Third World and national liberation movements as well as Soviet literature on the Palestinian movement itself, those contained in Western theoretical literature, and the more pragmatic considerations of politics, especially superpower politics, at the global, regional, and local levels. Ideological as well as domestic Soviet factors are considered to some degree, including the possibility of differences of opinion within the Soviet decision-making elite.

The major sources for this study were, of course, the Soviet press, radio broadcasts, periodical literature, books, pamphlets, leadership speeches, communiqués and the like. Of almost equal importance, however, were Arab—particularly Palestinian—sources, both in translation and in papers, journals, interviews, books, and pamphlets published in English and French, such as the Fatah newspaper *Free Palestine* or the PLO's *Journal of Palestine Studies*; see the bibliography for a complete list. For these sources as well as for translations from Arabic I am particularly indebted to the Truman Institute of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and especially to its librarian, Harriet Krasov. The Soviet material was available in the Documentation Bank of the Soviet and East European Research Centre of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. I am indeed grateful to my colleagues at the Centre and particularly to the documentation staff under the direction of Miriam Einbinder.

\* \* \*

Leonard Schapiro was most helpful and encouraging in providing his comments on my preliminary research into this subject. Similarly, Robert Freedman of Baltimore Hebrew College and Robert Rand of Radio Liberty were very helpful in sending me their own work on this subject. I should also like to thank Naomi Kies and Meir Pa'il for their information on the contacts between the PLO, the Soviet Union, and the Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace. Appreciation is also due my excellent typist Shelley Einis, secretary of the Soviet and East European Research Centre Shula Zur, and a number of graduate students who worked for me at various times during the

preparation of this study: Jack Drasinover, Masaud Egabaria, Norman Kass, Miriam Jayanti, Natan Rotenberg, and Alex Targonsky. The Faculty of Social Sciences and the Faculty of Humanities of the Hebrew University were most generous in their provision of research funds, and the Van Leer Institute of Jerusalem provided its lovely surroundings for the writing of this work. No acknowledgement would be complete without a word of thanks to my husband David Gild and my children Debra, Ilana, Yohai, and Doron, who all had to suffer my preoccupation with this undertaking during the past few years.

Jerusalem, April 1979

Galia Golan



## **CHAPTER ONE**

# **Historical and Theoretical Background**

The brief but complicated history of relations between the Soviet Union and the Palestine Liberation Organization was slow in getting under way. While these relations proceeded along a steadily rising curve in terms both of attention and of support, there was much hesitation and ambivalence on the part of the Soviet Union with regard to the nature and importance of the Palestinian movement. This chapter will first trace the uncertain beginnings of the Soviet-PLO relationship chronologically up to the point of open and direct Soviet support; then the reasons for the transformation of the Soviet attitude will be examined from the point of view of Soviet theory and explanations and of non-Soviet analyses and objective considerations of local, regional, and global policies.

### **CHRONOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF SOVIET-PLO RELATIONS**

There was basically no Soviet reaction to the founding of the PLO in 1964. The Soviets continued then as previously to perceive and treat the Palestinian problem as one of refugees and their right to return and/or to compensation, failing to refer to—or, by implication, to

recognize—their nationhood or national rights. Indeed, the earliest Soviet approach to the Palestinians' problem saw it as an artificially created problem, the responsibility for which lay with Britain and the United States.<sup>1</sup> This attitude toward the refugees was part of the Soviets' overall interpretation of the 1948 war, which until 1955 Moscow portrayed as nothing more than a British-U.S. provocation in which each power assisted its own puppets, setting them against each other.<sup>2</sup> With the post-Stalin change in the Soviet attitude toward the Arab regimes and, in consequence, the change in approach to the Arab-Israeli conflict,<sup>3</sup> this more extreme view of the Palestinian refugees was gradually revised. By the time of Abdel Nasser's 1958 visit to the Soviet Union, Moscow was willing to include a phrase in the final communiqué acknowledging the "legitimate rights of the Palestinian Arabs," and during his 1964 visit to Egypt, Nikita Khrushchev spoke of the "inalienable and lawful rights of the Palestinian Arabs."<sup>4</sup> Nonetheless, the approach was still one of the plight of refugees rather than of the demands of a national liberation movement. And thus, when the PLO was formed, Moscow remained virtually indifferent—so much so that Ahmad Shukeiry, leader of the new organization, claimed that his approaches to Moscow had been rebuffed, presumably leaving him no option but to turn to the Chinese, who did respond positively and concretely.<sup>5</sup>

A Palestinian spokesman was later to claim that although the Soviet Union maintained a negative attitude toward the PLO itself during its early years, Moscow nonetheless did recognize the Palestinian national movement, on the whole, as a national liberation movement.<sup>6</sup> According to this source, the Soviets maintained contacts with the

---

<sup>1</sup> See speech of Jacob Malik to Security Council, August 18, 1948, in Yaacov Ro'i, ed., *From Encroachment to Involvement* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1974), pp. 58-60.

<sup>2</sup> For a summary of Soviet sources on this subject at the time, see Alexander Bolton, *Soviet Middle East Studies, Part VI* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. V.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* Although Bolton traces the change to 1955-56, Ro'i points to the change in Moscow's UN behavior on the Arab-Israeli issue and the beginning of Soviet-Egyptian arms talks, both as early as 1954. Ro'i, *From Encroachment*, pp. 115-16.

<sup>4</sup> Ro'i, *From Encroachment*, pp. 252, 388. See also joint communiqué with Egypt in 1965 and with Syria in 1966.

<sup>5</sup> Moshe Maoz, *Palestinian Arab Politics* (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Academic Press, 1975), pp. 91-92.

<sup>6</sup> Farouq M., "Palestine and the Soviet Union," *Palestine* 3 (January 1977):35.



PLO and developed working relations, including the granting of scholarships for study in the USSR, with such Palestinian organizations as the General Union of Palestinian Students, the General Union of Palestinian Labor, and the General Union of Palestinian Women. Although these were in fact organizations of the PLO, the same source admits that this did not involve a change in the negative Soviet attitude toward the PLO as such. Another Palestinian source even claimed that although a Palestinian delegation was invited to an Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee meeting in Moscow in 1966, Soviet officials refused to receive them and turned down a request for the opening of a PLO office in Moscow and the training of Palestinians in the USSR.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, Soviet support for the new Syrian regime's policy of encouraging raids on Israel by Syrian-based Palestinians in 1966 and 1967 was interpreted by some as Soviet support, at least for the Syrian-favored Fatah organization.<sup>8</sup> Yet, in fact, rather than justify the raids as acts legitimized by the national liberation struggle, Moscow responded to Israeli accusations by referring to the raids as the "activity of mythical diversionary groups" or "mythical inventions" of Israel or Western intelligence.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, Moscow openly condemned Shukeiry as an extremist, while Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin clarified the Soviet position once again as one of "sympathy" for the "undeniable legal rights of the Palestinian refugees."<sup>10</sup>

The Soviet attitude toward the PLO did not change even as a consequence of the Six-Day War, as is often claimed by the Soviets.

---

<sup>7</sup> Salah Dabagh, *The Soviet Union and the Problem of Palestine* (Beirut: PLO Research Center, 1968), pp. 13-14. TASS, February 12, 1966, reported the delegation's arrival.

<sup>8</sup> Augustus R. Norton, "Moscow and the Palestinians, A New Tool of Soviet Policy in the Middle East," in Michael Curtis, Joseph Neyer, Chaim Waxman, and Allen Pollack, *The Palestinians* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1975), p. 232. According to John Cooley, *Green March, Black September* (London: Frank Cass, 1973), p. 160, this was claimed, as an exaggeration of the facts, by the Syrian regime. For the political implications of the fedayeen in Soviet-Syrian relations see Arnold Horelick, "Soviet Policy in the Middle East, Part I: Policy from 1955 to 1969," in Paul Hammond and Sidney Alexander, *Political Dynamics in the Middle East* (New York: American Elsevier, 1972), pp. 581-92. Fatah was founded in the 1950s and joined the PLO only in 1968.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, *Izvestiia*, May 8, 1966, or *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, May 21, 1966.

<sup>10</sup> Norton, "Moscow and the Palestinians," p. 223; Aryeh Yodfat, "The USSR and the Palestinians," *New Outlook* 19 (June 1976):30; TASS, May 17, 1966.

In fact, it was more than a year after the war before a change occurred, and, in the interim, Moscow included the organization among those "adventurist" and "ultra-revolutionary" Arab forces that were pressing for another round against Israel. As late as July, 1968, *Pravda* used the term "hysterical" in reference to PLO policy, while the prestigious Party organ *Kommunist* indirectly referred to members of the PLO as "the most backward elements of the Arab national movement that are nurtured by the Chinese for their own purposes."<sup>11</sup>

The turning point in Soviet-PLO relations, as acknowledged by the Palestinians themselves, came only toward the end of 1968, following Fatah leader Yasser Arafat's secret visit to Moscow as part of Nasser's July, 1968, delegation.<sup>12</sup> There are conflicting reports regarding the success of this visit with regard to the PLO. According to a knowledgeable Western journalist in Beirut, Arafat's request for arms was refused, and it is indeed true that even following this visit the Soviet press as well as the various Arab Communist parties continued to make highly critical comments regarding the Palestinian movement, speaking both of the Marxist-influenced extremism of some members and of the bourgeois—even reactionary—tendencies of others.<sup>13</sup>

Yet a Soviet book published in mid-1967 had revealed what may have been signs of an imminent shift in Soviet policy: acknowledging, finally, the Fatah raids from Syria prior to the June war, this Soviet publication expressed a certain understanding for what it called the anti-Jewish feelings revealed in the PLO and the demand for Israel's destruction as the natural—albeit "sharp"—reaction of refugees who were denied the right to return to their fatherland.<sup>14</sup> More

<sup>11</sup> L. Sheidin, "Imperialist Plot in the Middle East," *Kommunist* (July 1967): 107-18. Oded Eran, *The Soviet Union and the Palestine Guerilla Organizations* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1971), p. 5, argues that the Soviets were specifically negative toward the PLO in the period following the war as an indirect means of criticizing Syria's anti-Soviet-Nasser line of the time.

<sup>12</sup> Farouq M., "Palestine and the Soviet Union," pp. 35-36, gives the following periodicization of Soviet-PLO relations: 1964-68; 1968-70; 1970-73; 1973- , with the July 1968 trip as a turning point.

<sup>13</sup> Cooley, *Green March*, pp. 165-66. See also Fahmi Salfiti, "The Situation in Jordan and Communist Tactics," *World Marxist Review* 11 (October-November 1968):46; Georges Batal, Amjad Rashad, and Mohammed Harmel, "Vital Tasks of the Arab Liberation Movement" (statement of Arab CPs' meeting), *World Marxist Review* (September 1968):28.

<sup>14</sup> P. Demchenko, *Arabski Vostok v chas ispytani* [The Arab East in the Hour of Trial] (Moscow: Publishing House for Political Literature, 1967), p. 58.

concretely, at some point in late 1968 the Soviets did agree to supply military equipment, such as vehicles and uniforms, as well as training, and they permitted the transfer of arms from East Europe through the intermediary of the Arab states.<sup>15</sup> At the same time, the Soviet press began referring most positively and frequently to the Palestinian resistance movement, specifically Fatah, lauding its operations and, indeed, exaggerating its successes, as well as claiming that these operations were staged against military or strategic targets, such as power stations, and mainly in the occupied territories.<sup>16</sup> A decided stamp of approval was given when the Soviets began to use the word "partisans" in connection with these operations, explaining that the Palestinian actions were legitimate acts of self-defence similar to the resistance movements in Nazi-occupied territories during World War Two.<sup>17</sup> Nonetheless, even with this decided shift in the Soviet attitude and, apparently, policy toward the PLO, the Soviets only rarely called for anything more than the solution to the refugee problem. Occasionally they even stated that there were *two* parties to the Middle East conflict, Israel and the Arab states, excluding any mention of the Palestinians.<sup>18</sup> This was the way high-ranking Soviet Third World authorities reportedly explained the situation to Palestinian sympathizers as well. Resistance activity was to be seen as merely an auxiliary force, with the Arab governments, their military and economic potential, being the primary instruments in the struggle against Israel.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, at an international meeting of leftist

---

<sup>15</sup> Farouq M., "Palestine and the Soviet Union," p. 37; Cooley, *Green March*, p. 166 (according to whom the Soviet ambassador to Cairo in early 1969 turned down Arafat's earlier request for direct arms deliveries); Bard O'Neill, *Armed Struggle in Palestine: A Political-Military Analysis* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1978), p. 195, cites *New York Times*, January 17, 1970, and February 7, 1970, on East European arms supplies to Fatah and the *Daily Star* (Beirut), April 26, 1970, on the admission by the Bulgarian ambassador to Beirut regarding such deliveries.

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, V. Kudryavtsev, "Middle East: Military Situation," *New Times* (April 10, 1968):14-15; S. Astahov, "Israeli Expansionism and the Palestinian Refugees," *International Affairs* (July 1968):40-43.

<sup>17</sup> I. Blishchenko, "International Law and the Middle East Crisis," *Mezhdynarodnaya zhizn* (January 1969):42.

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, L. Zavyalov, "Tel Aviv Maneuvres," *New Times* (August 13, 1969):4.

<sup>19</sup> Cooley, *Green March*, p. 165, quoting a conversation held between a leftist *al-Akhbar* (Cairo) journalist and Soviet Middle East-Third World specialists Ulyanovski, Ivanov, and Primakov during Arafat's July 1968 visit to Moscow.

organizations in Cairo in the spring of 1969, the Soviet representative, Soviet Politburo member Alexander Shelepin, was said to have "clashed violently" with Fatah delegates over the effectiveness of guerilla operations. And in April 1969, for example, the Russian daily *Sovetskaya Rosiya* took Fatah to task for its goal of liquidating the state of Israel; it said that while the "Palestinian problem no doubt remains one of the most acute among the problems of the Near East awaiting a solution . . . does this mean that the problem of Palestinian refugees should be given paramount importance in a political settlement in the Near East at present, as . . . some . . . political leaders of the Arab world propose. It seems to me personally that this can only complicate the solution of the task of liquidating the consequences of the Israeli aggression of 1967 and, also, finally, the solution of the Palestinian problem."<sup>20</sup> This was also the position of the Soviets throughout the various two-power and four-power negotiations in 1968 and 1969, during which Soviet proposals always limited themselves to the problem of the refugees when dealing in any way with the Palestinian issue.<sup>21</sup>

At the close of 1969, yet another step was taken in the direction of the PLO when the Soviet Union apparently decided to recognize the organization as a legitimate national liberation movement, that is, the representative of a people (nation) engaged in a struggle against and for independence from imperialism. On October 20, 1969, the same Alexander Shelepin told a Budapest World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) meeting that the Soviet Union considered "the struggle of the Palestinian patriots for the liquidation of the consequences of Israeli aggression as a just antiimperialist national struggle of liberation and we will lend it support."<sup>22</sup> More authoritatively,

---

<sup>20</sup> *Sovetskaya Rosiya*, April 6 and 15, 1969. Also, in April 1969, Soviet President Podgorny is said to have refused to meet with Arafat during Podgorny's visit to Algeria: see Ehud Ya'ari, *Fatah* (Tel Aviv: Levin Epstein, 1970), p. 227.

<sup>21</sup> *Pravda*, October 15, 1970; *New York Times*, January 11, 1969. L. L. Whetten, *The Canal War* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT University Press, 1974), discusses these negotiations at length.

<sup>22</sup> *Trud*, October 21, 1969. Robert Freedman, "Soviet Policy towards International Terrorism," in Yonah Alexander, *International Terrorism* (New York: Praeger, 1976), pp. 118-19, claims that this was already done in the February 18, 1969, TASS release at the UN, which spoke of Palestinian activities as a "liberation struggle" against Israel. Both Freedman and Leon Romaniacki, *The Arab Terrorists in the Middle East and Soviet Union* (Jerusalem: Soviet and East European Research Centre of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1973),

Premier Kosygin repeated this in a speech honoring a visiting Egyptian delegation on December 10, 1969: "The Soviet people consider the struggle of the Palestinian organizations for the liquidation of the consequences of aggression, in the situation where the Israeli aggression continues, as a just national liberation and anti-imperialist struggle, and supports it."<sup>23</sup> Still relegating the Palestinian issue to the realm of "other questions" to be solved after Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories, the Warsaw Pact resolution of November 26, 1969, spoke of the "anti-imperialist national liberation struggle of the *Arab people of Palestine*."<sup>24</sup> This characterization of the Palestinians, which was also used in the Soviet telegram to the Arab summit of December 1969<sup>25</sup>—and which had first been used, apparently, in the resolution of the June 1969 international Communist conference—provided the Palestinians with the status of a nation.<sup>26</sup> Formerly the Soviets had spoken only of the Arab population of Palestine or the Palestinian Arabs. As both Palestinians and Communists were to point out, the new terminology represented a qualitative change in the Soviet approach to the problem.<sup>27</sup>

The elevation of the PLO, which now included Fatah and was headed by Arafat, enabled Moscow openly to invite Arafat to lead a PLO delegation to the Soviet Union, in February 1970. Although the organization now had the status of a national liberation movement, the PLO's relationship with the Soviet Union was still not to be of an official nature; thus, the organization was invited only by the Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee, rather than a Party or a government body. Indeed, this limitation was to remain until 1974. Although the PLO subsequently lauded the 1970 visit as "one of our most important achievements on the international level,"<sup>28</sup> Arafat's repeated request for direct Soviet military supplies was not fulfilled; that the Soviets had even promised such aid was open to some dis-

---

p. 3, see the change in the Soviet position in the UN debate on the definition of aggression as further evidence of the Soviet shift regarding the PLO, for the Soviets asked for an additional paragraph that justified the use of "armed force in accordance with the Charter of the UN, including its use by dependent peoples, in order to exercise their inherent right of self-determination."

<sup>23</sup> *Pravda*, December 11, 1969.

<sup>24</sup> *Pravda*, November 27, 1969 [emphasis the author's].

<sup>25</sup> *Pravda*, December 22, 1969.

<sup>26</sup> "Documents Adopted by the International Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties," *World Marxist Review* 12 (July 1969):3.

<sup>27</sup> Farouq M., "Palestine and the Soviet Union," p. 37.

<sup>28</sup> *Arab Report and Record (ARR)* (June 1-15, 1970):344.

pute.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, Moscow reportedly raised some serious questions with the delegation over both the aims and the methods of the organization.<sup>30</sup> It may have been PLO dissatisfaction with this visit that led to Arafat's much-publicized trip to Peking the following month. In any case, the Soviets had apparently decided that if they were to support the PLO, they would have to ensure a more direct channel, be it for information, influence, or even eventual control. Therefore, in March 1970, several Arab Communist parties jointly created their own Palestinian organization, al-Ansar (the Partisans), and sought PLO membership for it. Neither the PLO nor Fatah was enthusiastic about this group, denying it membership in the PLO Central Council, because of its identification with the Soviet line favoring a political settlement and opposing the destruction of the State of Israel.<sup>31</sup> In fact, the group neither gained respectability among the Palestinians nor achieved much in the realm of resistance fighting—if for no other reason than that the Soviets were emphasizing political over armed action at the time.<sup>32</sup> It was superseded in 1973 by the Palestine National Front (PNF), created by the Jordanian Communist Party.<sup>33</sup>

In fact, Soviet-PLO relations were quite cool in 1970 and 1971, with Moscow offering no more than a relatively neutral attitude regarding the Jordanian civil war of 1970 and the Palestinians' defeat. In the Jordanian context, *Pravda*, October 17, 1970, even condemned "crazy extremists amongst the fedayeen, governed by the slogan 'the

---

<sup>29</sup> O'Neill, *Armed Struggle*, p. 195, claims there was such a promise, citing Simon Malley, "Arafat au Kremlin," *Africasia*, March 15, 1970, pp. 5-6. Cooley, *Green March*, pp. 158, 168, and Yodfat, "The USSR and the Palestinians," p. 31, say there was no such promise, Cooley even claiming that Arafat swore his associates to silence about the slender concrete gains achieved by this trip (p. 158).

<sup>30</sup> Cooley, *Green March*, pp. 107, 158; Yodfat, "The USSR and the Palestinians," p. 31.

<sup>31</sup> Cooley, *Green March*, p. 159; O'Neill, *Armed Struggle*, p. 114; William Quandt, Fuad Jabber, and Ann Mosley Lesch, *The Politics of Palestinian Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), pp. 67, 137; Amnon Cohen, "The Changing Patterns of West Bank Politics," *The Jerusalem Quarterly* (Fall 1977):108-9.

<sup>32</sup> See Chapter Five. For an admission of Ansar's failure see Naim Ashhab, "To Overcome the Crisis of the Palestinian Resistance," *World Marxist Review* 15 (May 1972):5. It was disbanded in 1972.

<sup>33</sup> See Chapter Four. In 1972 a number of Middle Eastern Communist parties sponsored the Arab Popular Conference in Beirut, from which grew Kamal Jumblatt's Arab Front for the Support of the Palestine Revolution.

worse it is, the better it is.'"<sup>34</sup> Nonetheless, contacts were maintained with Arafat in early 1971 and relations were said to have improved somewhat when Ansar was given one seat in the Palestine National Council of February–March 1971 and when, in October 1971, Arafat led a Fatah-Sa'iq'a delegation to Moscow.<sup>35</sup> On the latter occasion the Soviets reportedly made further promises regarding arms and training.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, the Soviet position regarding the Palestinians was given official, if restrained, codification in the twenty-fourth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party statement on the Middle East, on April 8, 1971, which expressed Soviet support for the Arab efforts "to defend the legitimate rights of the Arab people of Palestine."<sup>37</sup> Nonetheless, the Soviets remained cautious in their attitude toward the Palestinians, even admonishing the Syrian Communists over the fact that their 1970 draft party program placed too great an emphasis on the Palestinian issue.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, during talks with the Syrian Communist leaders in Moscow, Soviet functionaries—reportedly on behalf of Suslov and Ponomarev—spoke explicitly, firmly, and highly critically of the aims and methods of the Palestinians.<sup>39</sup> The contents of these talks, with all that they revealed regarding Moscow's position on the specific issues of the Palestinians' case, will be discussed below. In terms of the historical development of Soviet-PLO relations, however, this was a clear indication that the Soviets continued in a decided ambivalence, only tentatively and gradually improving the relationship.

---

<sup>34</sup> For Soviet criticism of the PLO in the Jordanian war see also Yodfat, "The USSR and the Palestinians," p. 31; Cooley, *Green March*, p. 168. The latter claims that the Soviets were also dissatisfied over the PLO's rejection of the U.S.-sponsored August 1970 cease-fire in the Egyptian-Israeli war of attrition. See also Richard J. Ward, Don Peretz, and Evan Wilson, *The Palestinian State* (Port Washington: Kennikat Press, 1977), p. 139.

<sup>35</sup> Quandt et al., *The Politics of Palestinian Nationalism*, p. 137; Ward et al., *The Palestinian State*, p. 139. The latter says that Ansar was allowed to join the PLO under Fatah command. According to Cooley, *Green March*, p. 170, there was a meeting of the Soviet ambassadors to Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon with Arafat in a Fatah base in Jordan on February 15, 1971.

<sup>36</sup> O'Neill, *Armed Struggle*, p. 195; Freedman, "Soviet Policy towards International Terrorism," p. 125; Lester Sobel, ed., *Palestinian Impasse: Arab Guerillas and International Terror* (New York: Facts on File, 1977), p. 117.

<sup>37</sup> Moscow domestic radio, April 8, 1971.

<sup>38</sup> "Special Documents: The Soviet Attitude to the Palestine Problem," *Journal of Palestine Studies* VI:1 (1972):187-212 (Syrian Communist Party protocol of Khaled Bagdash talks with the Soviets, May 1971).

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 191-98.

A genuine turning point in the relationship took place in the summer of 1972, as President Sadat was evicting Soviet military advisers from the country. During a visit to Moscow in July, Arafat finally obtained the long-sought Soviet agreement to provide the PLO with direct arms deliveries, which began arriving in Syria in September 1972.<sup>40</sup> In addition to the direct arms aid, this new augmentation of Soviet support was capped by the inclusion of the demand "for realization of the legitimate rights of the Arab people of Palestine" in the slogans for the anniversary of the October Revolution. A further, and still more significant, elevation of Soviet interest in and support for the PLO began in 1973, possibly just prior to but most apparently immediately following the Yom Kippur War, and subsequent years saw the continuation of this upward trend, with ever higher peaks, in 1974 with the first official Soviet government contact with Arafat and promise to open a PLO office in Moscow as well as official Soviet support for the creation of a Palestinian state, in 1976 with the opening of the PLO office, in 1977 with Arafat's audience with Brezhnev, and in 1978 with official Soviet recognition of the PLO as the "sole legitimate representative" of the Palestinian people. Each of these milestones, with their component issues and related problems, will be discussed in the following chapters.

### **SOVIET THEORETIC-ANALYTIC BASIS FOR RELATIONS WITH THE PLO**

Theoretically, at least from the Soviet point of view, explanations for the above development of Soviet-PLO relations should be sought in the realm of Marxist-Leninist theory regarding relations with the Third World, national liberation movements, revolutionary warfare, and guerilla movements. This is not, however, a consistent body of doctrine, for, as Soviet leadership and policies underwent changes, so, too, did the ideological guidelines experience revision and even debate. Any number of factors, ranging from the conditions facing the Bolsheviks prior to the revolution, the destruction of the Chinese Communist Party, through the death of Stalin, the advent of nuclear weapons, the Sino-Soviet dispute, the emergence and development of new African and Asian states, and up to and including detente,

---

<sup>40</sup>*New York Times*, September 17, 1972; *l'Orient le Jour* (Beirut), September 27, 1972.



all influenced the ideological genesis. By the time the PLO was founded in 1964, some of the relevant Soviet ideological tenets had become more-or-less stabilized, but others were in fact the subject of an ongoing debate that characterized Soviet theoretical literature throughout the 1960s.

Khrushchev, building on initial steps undertaken by Malenkov in the period following Stalin's death, had ordained a return to Leninist theory of nationalism, national liberation, and relations with the less-developed parts of the world. Abandoned was Stalin's bipolar view of the world in which the Communists were confronted by the capitalists in a battle that recognized no "third" road and demanded proletarian leadership of all stages of the revolutionary process. Whether merely to adapt to and attract the newly independent states that were opting for neutrality and the idea of a Third World or in retreat from the more activist but dangerous policies because of the concern over superpower confrontation and general war in the era of nuclear weapons—or both—Khrushchev advocated a more restrained policy. Arguing that the recently evolved strength of the socialist world now served as a check on the behavior of the imperialists, to such a point that they were no longer as willing as in the past to intervene militarily against people and states striving for independence from colonial rule, there was, therefore, a possibility for the peaceful development of the national liberation process.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, the basically antiimperialist nature of the nationalists in the colonial world was sufficient to render these people "revolutionary" and, therefore, worthy of support. Thus, the largely peasant or bourgeois nature of these groups was not to be considered an

---

<sup>41</sup> For discussions of the Soviet attitude toward the Third World, see Roger Kanet, *The Soviet Union and the Developing Nations* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1974); Roger Kanet and Donna Bahry, eds., *Soviet Economic and Political Relations with the Developing World* (New York: Praeger, 1974); W. Raymond Duncan, *Soviet Policy in Developing Countries* (Waltham, Mass.: Ginn Blaisdell, 1970); Edward Taborsky, *Communist Penetration of the Third World* (New York: Robert Speller and Sons, 1973); Alvin Rubinstein, ed., *Soviet and Chinese Influence in the Third World* (New York: Praeger, 1975); Jan Triska and David Finley, *Soviet Foreign Policy* (London: Macmillan, 1968); Philip Mosley, "The Kremlin and the Third World," *Foreign Affairs* 46 (October 1967):64-77; Elizabeth Kridl Valkenier, "Changing Soviet Perspectives on the Liberation Revolution," *Orbis* (Winter 1966):953-69; Harry Gelman, "Russia, China, and the Underdeveloped Areas," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 349 (September 1963):130-42; Daniel Papp, "National Liberation during Detente: The Soviet Outlook," *International Journal* XXXII (Winter 1976-77):82-99.

obstacle to support, particularly inasmuch as the proletariat was neither large nor well developed in these precapitalist or underdeveloped societies. Thus, Khrushchev returned to Lenin's two-stage theory of revolution, the first stage of which is satisfaction of the national aspirations of a people in the achievement of national independence from foreign rulers and the local feudal class, in what is at one and the same time a national bourgeois-democratic revolution. This stage is led by the bourgeois-peasant (petty bourgeois) nationalists and prepares the conditions necessary to the second stage, the socialist revolution, which will be led by the soon-to-be-developed proletariat. Khrushchev spoke of a national-democratic state, to emerge in the first stage, which by granting bourgeois-democratic freedoms would provide the opportunity for the Communist Party to exist, develop, and eventually gain control, while the economy of the new state might develop along a "noncapitalist" path in preparation for socialism.

The major issues in the above formulation revolved around the idea of cooperation with the national bourgeoisie, the role of the international Communist movement and the local proletariat, and the possibility of nonviolent revolutionary development. According to the theory, there was to be cooperation with the bourgeoisie in a struggle for national liberation, because such a struggle was, objectively, in the interests of the whole nation rather than of one specific class, the bourgeoisie. In this sense, a national liberation movement transcended the framework of the simple bourgeois-democratic revolutions known in history, thus assuming part of the task of the socialist revolution.<sup>42</sup> Nonetheless, the internal class struggle was not a central point of this revolution, while, on the other hand, because of its antiimperialist nature, international factors would play a large role. Both these factors, the national and international, rendered the national liberation movements more progressive and important to the socialist world than the standard, more limited bourgeois-democratic revolution.<sup>43</sup>

Argument arose over this theory in the mid-60s—perhaps

---

<sup>42</sup> V. L. Tyagunenko, "Some Questions of the Non-Capitalist Path of Development," *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia* 10 (1964): 13-25 and R. Ulyanovski, "Some Questions of the Non-Capitalist Development of the Liberated Countries," *Kommunist* 1 (1966): 109-19.

<sup>43</sup> V. L. Tyagunenko, *Problemy sovremennykh natsional'no-osvobodnitel'sykh revoliutsii* [Problems of Contemporary National Liberation Revolutions] (Moscow, 1966), pp. 24-26, cited in Duncan, *Soviet Policy in Developing Countries*, p. 19.

because of the setbacks suffered by the Soviets (and local Communists) in the newly independent countries of Africa, or perhaps because of a reexamination and a more expedient policy introduced by the post-Khrushchev leadership. Whatever the reason, certain reservations were expressed regarding the national liberation movements as ipso facto components of the world socialist revolution. Remarking that only five of the 38 newly independent countries in Africa had chosen a noncapitalist path of development, one theoretician concluded that the antiimperialist first stage of the national revolution was neither sufficient nor necessarily positive from the point of view of social progress: the content and nature of the movement must be more thoroughly examined so as to ensure that the second stage, the stage following national independence, would proceed in a way favorable to socialism. There ensued much discussion over neocolonialism as well as a more frank discussion of the internal politics of the new states and national liberation movements. It was claimed that proletarian or at least semiproletarian leadership should be present, giving the movement a "revolutionary democratic" nature. Then, but only then, should the international socialist community involve itself.<sup>44</sup> Even in this case, however, the role of the international socialist community was to be reduced; the emphasis was shifted to the internal evolution of the Third World nations themselves rather than to the international balance of power.

Thus, the conclusion was not, as it might have been, to pursue a more activist policy of pushing for local Communist-proletarian revolution but, rather, a more cautious policy about becoming involved at all.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, by 1970, major Soviet theoreticians were condemning the concentration on national liberation movements at the expense of the development and strengthening of the already existing socialist bloc. In his speech to the twenty-fifth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in 1976, Brezhnev mentioned the term national liberation

---

<sup>44</sup> N. A. Simoniya, "On the Character of National Liberation Revolution," *Narody Azii i Afriki* (June 1977):14-21. See also A. S. Kaufman, "On Socialist Doctrine and Developing Countries," *Narody Azii i Afriki* (April 1968):48-58. For a thorough discussion of the debate, see Ishwer Ojha, "The Kremlin and Third World Leadership," in Duncan, *Soviet Policy in Developing Countries*, pp. 9-28, Kanet, *The Soviet Union*, pp. 27-50, or John Keep, "The Soviet Union and the Third World," *Survey* (Summer 1969):21-28.

<sup>45</sup> Ojha, "The Kremlin," p. 25; Elizabeth Kridl Valkenier, "The Soviet Union and the Third World: From Khrushchev's 'Zone of Peace' to Brezhnev's 'Peace Program,'" in Kanet and Bahry, *Soviet Economics and Political Relations*, pp. 7-8.

movements as such only once.<sup>46</sup> And a Soviet pamphlet published in 1978 and entitled "The Socialist World and the National Liberation Movement" even critically distinguished between types of "revolutionary democratic" movements, warning of their pitfalls and dangers as well.<sup>47</sup> One of the items at issue concerned the various Maoist-Fanon-New Left theories that were hostile to the Soviet Union itself inasmuch as they argued that the major struggles in the world today were the countryside versus the city: the world farm versus the world town, the peasant versus the proletariat. This the Soviets condemned as an effort to separate the national liberation movement from the "other revolutionary forces of our day" and as a "petty bourgeois" deviation.<sup>48</sup>

While the need for an alliance, even if temporary, with the national bourgeoisie and the bourgeois-democratic revolutions was maintained, words of caution regarding the possibility of capitalist development and neocolonialism also became standard. But inasmuch as the Soviets were faced with a battle on two fronts, as it were—one against the eventuality of pro-Western regimes in the Third World as well as one against the equally undesirable extremism of the radical, often pro-Chinese movements—Soviet theory also cautioned against "skipping stages" or taking precipitate action, or even belittling the need for a broad alliance in the first stage.<sup>49</sup> The message appeared

---

<sup>46</sup> *Pravda*, February 25, 1976.

<sup>47</sup> Georgy Kim, *The Socialist World and the National Liberation Movement* (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency, 1978), pp. 13–63.

<sup>48</sup> Y. Zhukov, L. Delynsin, A. Iskenderov, and L. Stepanov, *The Third World* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970), p. 24, and Kim, *The Socialist World*, pp. 34–35. According to Zhukov et al., *The Third World*, p. 28, "By working on the nationalist feelings of the struggling peoples . . . [some] who range from neo-Trotskyites all the way to ultra-left opportunists, have been intentionally exaggerating the role and significance of the national liberation movement and trying to dissociate it from the other revolutionary forces of our day." See also V. Bushuyev, "The National Liberation Movement and Neo-Colonialism," *International Affairs* (March 1975):114, and Vi. Li, "The Role of the National Liberation Movement in the Anti-Imperialist Struggle," *International Affairs* (December 1971):69–77, which says that while national liberation movements are in the vanguard of world revolution and can aggravate the crises of the imperialist countries, they "cannot play a decisive role in the world fight against imperialism or determine the historical future of world socialism, i.e., they cannot exert a decisive influence on the resolution of the principal contradictions of the present epoch of transition from capitalism to socialism" (p. 72).

<sup>49</sup> See, for example, B. Gafurov, "Lenin and the Liberation of the Peoples of the East," *International Affairs* (June 1970):37; Zhukov et al., *The Third World*, p. 22.

to be to restrain one's hopes as to the reliability and potential of the national liberation movements while at the same time seeking to control them from within or ensuring links with the socialist camp, without, however, permitting oneself to be used or drawn into secondary but risky ventures.<sup>50</sup>

Greater emphasis by Soviet leaders in the late 1960s on the strengthening of the socialist camp, especially economically, combined in the 1970s with the accent on detente as the primary goal and prerequisite for the success of the national liberation struggle would indicate that the more restrained view has prevailed.<sup>51</sup> At this level of pronouncements, rather than actions, one may nonetheless find ample evidence for the opposite position: pronouncements emphasizing the essentiality of the involvement of the socialist camp, even to the point of active assistance and intervention on behalf of the national liberation struggle.<sup>52</sup> While it could still be argued that even an activist policy would be employed only if the character or content of the movement in question were sufficiently proletarian—Brezhnev told the 1976 Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) Congress that preferential treatment would in fact be given to new states that had chosen the socialist or at least progressive road of development—the issue was directly related to the Soviet attitude toward revolutionary war or wars of national liberation as well as toward a peaceful transition to socialism. Insofar as it was assumed that wars of national liberation are revolutionary wars, that is, anti-

---

<sup>50</sup> Simoniya, "National Liberation Revolution," p. 21, and Zhukov et al., *The Third World*, pp. 23-24.

<sup>51</sup> Zhukov et al., *The Third World*, pp. 24, 31-38; R. Yellon, "Shifts in Soviet Policy towards the Developing Areas 1964-1968," in Duncan, *Soviet Policy in Developing Countries*, pp. 225-86; Valkenier in Kanet and Bahry, *Soviet Economic and Political Relations*, pp. 7-8; N. Lebedev, "The USSR's Effort to Restructure International Relations," *International Affairs* (January 1976):6; E. Tarabrin, "The National Liberation Movement Today," *International Affairs* (May 1976):21; E. Zhukov, "The Impact of the Changes in International Relations on the National Liberation Struggle," *International Affairs* (December 1973):27-28; or Brezhnev to the 25th CPSU Congress, *Pravda*, February 25, 1976. These are but a few of the extremely numerous Soviet pronouncements on the value of detente for success in the national liberation struggle.

<sup>52</sup> A collection of such pronouncements may be found in Foy Kohler, Mose Harvey, Leon Goure, and Richard Soll, *Soviet Strategy for the Seventies, From the Cold War to Peaceful Coexistence* (Miami: University of Miami Press, 1973), pp. 186-202.

imperialist and, therefore, anticapitalist,<sup>53</sup> Soviet doctrine on wars characterized them as "just" wars.<sup>54</sup> The question was, to what degree was even this type of "just" war to be advocated or supported? Just as the policies of peaceful coexistence and the support of neutralism or alliance with bourgeois nationalist groupings were adopted in response to Soviet concern over the dangers involved in Stalin's activist two-camp view of the world given the advent of nuclear arms, so, too, did the concern over escalation to general, therefore nuclear, war prompt a more restrained Soviet attitude toward any, including revolutionary, war. Indeed, this moderation was a serious point of conflict between Moscow and Peking, leading to a slight hardening of the Soviet position in 1961. Nonetheless, the official Soviet line throughout the 1960s and 1970s continued to polemize with the Chinese, warning against such wars and defending the possibility of peaceful development.

The Soviet argument was then and is now that because of the emergence of a strong socialist bloc the imperialists are less and less willing to wage "colonial wars" or intervene with force against a national liberation movement.<sup>55</sup> Thus independence can be gained without the use of force. While it is stated that all means of obtaining independence are justified, including "national liberation wars and armed uprisings" or "armed struggle to counter the terror of colonial regimes," preference is to be given to peaceful means, with

---

<sup>53</sup> Lenin's *Collected Works* as published by Moscow in 1964 contains his 1916 *Junius Pamphlet*, in which Lenin said: "National wars *against* the imperialist powers are not only possible and probable; they are inevitable, *progressive* and *revolutionary*." [Emphasis in original.] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964), p. 312. See Wm. Pomeroy, *Guerilla Warfare and Marxism* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1969), for pertinent quotes from Lenin and others.

<sup>54</sup> For Soviet categorization of wars see Thomas Wolfe, *Soviet Strategy at the Crossroads* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964), pp. 111, 118-27; Raymond Garthoff, *Soviet Military Policy* (London: Faber and Faber, 1966), pp. 197-216; Wynfred Joshua and Stephen Gibert, *Arms for the Third World: Soviet Military and Diplomacy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1969), pp. 112-15.

<sup>55</sup> See, for example, Zhukov et al., *The Third World*, p. 14; A. Belyakov and F. Burlatsky, "Lenin's Theory of Socialist Revolution and the Present Time," *Kommunist* (September 1960), as cited in Gelman, "Russia, China," p. 133. See also above sources concerning detente and the national liberation struggle (footnote 51).

a minimum loss of resources or human life.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, certain conditions must be present to justify the use of force, and in each case the relationship between political forces and political expediency must be taken into account.<sup>57</sup> Mass support, especially support from the workers, is required. According to one authoritative work published in 1970, "The concept of violent revolution, which the ultra-left opportunists seek to impose upon the national liberation movement, has nothing in common with Marxism-Leninism."<sup>58</sup> Only when a revolutionary situation exists, should bold action be employed. "In the current phase of the national liberation movement, when new national states are emerging all over Asia and Africa, and many of them are taking the road of progressive socioeconomic reform, a call to armed struggle, viewed objectively, aims either to justify uprisings against existing regimes, including those in advanced countries, or provoke armed conflicts between the developing states and the former colonial powers in the interests of 'speeding up' the revolutionary process. Such 'revolutionary' postures can merely produce a schism in the united anti-imperialist front building up in these countries, causing serious harm to the national liberation movement and hold up its further development."<sup>59</sup>

The reference to armed struggle in this context appears to include guerilla warfare and partisan activity. There are, however, conflicting views as to the ultimate value the Soviets place on commando or partisan activities. Generally, it would appear that the Soviets believe such actions must eventually be complemented by conventional warfare,<sup>60</sup> but the only dicta the Soviets have specified—as distinct from the explicit recipe provided by the Chinese—are mass support and ideological motivation.<sup>61</sup> Thus emphasis should be placed on

---

<sup>56</sup> Gafurov, *Lenin and the Liberation*, pp. 38-39; Zhukov et al., *Third World*, p. 22; Y. Tarabin, "The National Liberation Movement: Problems and Prospects," *International Affairs* 2 (1978):59-61.

<sup>57</sup> Gafurov, *Lenin and the Liberation*, pp. 38-40; Zhukov et al., *Third World*, p. 23.

<sup>58</sup> Zhukov et al., *Third World*, p. 23.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>60</sup> See Bryce Denno, "Sino-Soviet Attitudes towards Revolutionary War," *Orbis* XI (Winter 1968):1202, or Garthoff, *Soviet Military Policy*, p. 200.

<sup>61</sup> Slavko Bjelajac, "Unconventional Warfare: American and Soviet Approaches," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 341 (May 1962):79. See, for example, Gafurov, *Lenin and the Liberation*, p. 37, or Zhukov et al., *The Third World*, pp. 22-23.

selection and organization of cadres as well as mass organization, agitation, and propaganda. When to employ guerilla warfare, however, appears to fall within the broader category of armed uprisings, subject to the strictures already mentioned.<sup>62</sup> Lenin stated the conditions for success as receipt of "the concerted effort of huge numbers of people in the oppressed countries . . . or a *particularly* favorable conjecture of international conditions (e.g., the fact that the imperialist powers cannot interfere . . . ) or the *simultaneous* uprising of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie in one of the big powers (this latter eventually holds first place as the most desirable and favorable for the victory of the proletariat)."<sup>63</sup> Specifically referring to guerilla warfare—in the context of the post-1905 situation in Russia, quoted by the Soviets in 1968—Lenin specified that such action must be analyzed "with reference to the circumstances of the uprising. These circumstances must be borne in mind, we must reflect on the peculiar features of an intermediate period between big acts of insurrection. . . . guerilla warfare is an inevitable form of struggle at a time when the mass movement has actually reached the point of an uprising and when fairly large intervals occur between big 'engagements' in the civil war." Lenin said that while he was far from regarding guerilla action as a trend for his own movement, it nonetheless needed to be assessed as one of the "new forms of struggle engendered by practical life."<sup>64</sup>

There are very few guidelines as to which national uprisings or movements are to be supported. Aside from the above-mentioned discussions in the 1960s over the desirability of at least a semi-proletarian nature and democratic leadership of the movement, the classic distinction, dating back to Marx and then Lenin, was also made between types of nationalism. While a nation, in Soviet parlance, means an historically evolved, stable community of people, united by a common language, territory, economic life, and culture, there were, nonetheless, two types of nationalism.<sup>65</sup> There was the nationalism

---

<sup>62</sup> The use of terror will be discussed in Chapter Five.

<sup>63</sup> Lenin, *Junius Pamphlet*, p. 312.

<sup>64</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 11 (Moscow: Progress Publishers), p. 223.

<sup>65</sup> "On the Results of the Discussion on Several Problems of the Theory of the Nation," *Voprosy istorii* 8 (1970):90. For a summary of the 1966-68 discussion of nationhood, see Boris Meissner, "The Soviet Concept of Nation and the Right of National Self-Determination," *International Journal* XXXII (Winter 1976-77):65-71. See also Charles Herod, *The Nation in the History of*



of the oppressor, a nationalism that according to Lenin "has become the symbol of national exceptionalism, social arrogance, and militant chauvinism [which] services the monopoly bourgeoisie to justify enslavement of their nations."<sup>66</sup> On the other hand, there was the nationalism of the oppressed, which is "formed in the struggle against imperialism and feudalism" and, therefore, is "progressive." This "national consciousness forms the initial stage of anti-imperialist consciousness, particularly for the many millions of peasants." However, both Lenin and the more pragmatic discussion among Soviet theoreticians in the 1960s pointed out that "even the nationalism of an oppressed nation has its reverse side. It usually reflects the ideology and desires of a reactionary top section of exploiters who endeavor to utilize nationalist slogans in their own selfish interests, often at the expense of other nations."<sup>67</sup> The guiding principle for Lenin and at least for Soviet theoreticians later was the degree to which the specific nationalism served the cause of "victory over imperialism and feudalism."<sup>68</sup> Similarly, self-determination not only means the freedom to choose existence as an independent state or inclusion in a larger state,<sup>69</sup> but, in fact, is in itself not a categorical imperative. As one Soviet article pointed out, in 1970, "On many occasions Lenin also stressed that the demand for the self-determination of nations does not in any sense imply unconditional support for any kind of movement for national independence. He said that

---

*Marxian Thought* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976), or Michael Lowy, "Marxism and the National Question," in Robin Blackburn, ed., *Revolution and Class Struggle* (London: Fontana/Collins, 1977), pp. 136-63.

<sup>66</sup> *Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism* (Moscow: 1963), Chapter 16, in Thomas Thornton, *The Third World in Soviet Perspective* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 40-60.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*; V. I. Lenin, *National Liberation, Socialism and Imperialism* (New York: International Publishers, 1968), pp. 160-62; Simoniya, "National Liberation Revolution," pp. 19-20; *The Program of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, 1961*, Part VI in Dan Jacobs, *The New Communist Manifesto* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 19; Zhukov et al., *The Third World*, pp. 50-53; Kim, *The Socialist World*, pp. 45-51; G. Kim, "Neo-Colonialism's Ideological Expansion," *International Affairs* (November 1978), p. 77.

<sup>68</sup> *Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism*, in Thornton, *The Third World in Soviet Perspective*, p. 46, and Simoniya, "National Liberation Revolution," pp. 3-21.

<sup>69</sup> Lenin, *National Liberation, Socialism*, p. 60. For later Soviet attitude toward self-determination, see Harold S. Johnson, *Self-Determination within the Community of Nations* (Leyden: A. W. Sijthoff, 1967), pp. 37, 534; Herod, *The Nation*, pp. 109-11.

this demand should be considered in close connection with the basic interests of the proletariat's struggle against imperialism."<sup>70</sup> This article argued that in solving the problem of self-determination one must consider the concrete historical circumstances and special national peculiarities of the country concerned. In many African states today an absolute interpretation would lead to review of nearly all national borders and the birth of hundreds of micropolitical formations.

Finally, there is the question of the extent or nature of Soviet support once a movement has stood the test of these somewhat vague or negative criteria. Although the Soviets maintain that national liberation victory can only be achieved in alliance with the "world socialist system and the international working movement" in order to keep the imperialists at bay,<sup>71</sup> they nonetheless seek to limit or at least control this alliance. Not only does Moscow emphasize the primacy of development of the socialist countries over and above the tasks of the national liberation movements, as we have already noted; it also explains the limits of its position: ". . . the socialist countries, in deciding their revolutionary tasks, cannot substitute for other detachments of the liberation struggle. They cannot take the place of the peoples of the young national states in solving the tasks of the national liberation movement, nor can they take the place of the working class of the capitalist countries in the struggle for the overthrow of capitalism. . . . such actions could lead to the unleashing of a world thermonuclear war, with all its grave consequences for all peoples. . . . The peoples of the socialist countries are concentrating their main efforts on the building of socialism and communism in their own countries, seeing in this the decisive precondition for intensifying their help to the other detachments of the liberation struggle and their chief contribution to the world revolutionary movement."<sup>72</sup> More recently, at the twenty-fifth CPSU Congress, Brezhnev was to repeat this line and add the pursuit of detente as the atmosphere most conducive to the people's struggle for independence.<sup>73</sup>

---

<sup>70</sup> D. Baratashvili, "Lenin's Doctrine of the Self-Determination of Nations and the National Liberation Struggle," *International Affairs* (December 1970): 13.

<sup>71</sup> See, for example, Gafurov, *Lenin and the Liberation*, p. 37; Zhukov et al., *The Third World*, p. 33; Li, "National Liberation Movement," p. 71.

<sup>72</sup> *Pravda*, October 27, 1965 (editorial).

<sup>73</sup> *Pravda*, February 25, 1976. Zhukov, "The Impact of the Changes in International Relations on the National Liberation Struggle," in Zhukov et al., *The Third World*, pp. 27-29, considers detente as beneficial for the national

Soviet theoretical works and even official pronouncements are sufficiently varied and pragmatic, however, to permit many interpretations. In a battle of quotations one can almost as easily find Soviet statements that not only condone the use of force in the national liberation struggle,<sup>74</sup> but even promise direct Soviet assistance.<sup>75</sup> Particularly when defending the policy of detente before such revolutionaries as Castro or Tito, Soviet leaders have explicitly recognized "the right of peoples with arms in hand to oppose aggression or to strive for liberation from foreign aggression," which action the Soviet Union "unfailingly assists."<sup>76</sup> Similarly, an article in the authoritative Party journal *Kommunist* explained that the socialist-national liberation alliance has more than a "defensive, passive nature;" given the new correlation of forces in the world "in decisive measure due to the increased power of socialism, the anti-imperialist forces have now acquired the possibility to impose upon imperialism such principles of international relations which are consistent with the interests of peace and social progress."<sup>77</sup> More recently, a Brezhnev speech in November 1977 stated that the Soviet Union would provide not only moral and political, economic and organizational support, but also assistance to new states in the area of defense.<sup>78</sup> More ominously, one commentator said in 1978 that the oppressed not only had the right to use every means in their liberation struggle, but that all states had the right "to use outside support to repel aggression."<sup>79</sup> While even these statements need not mean Soviet willingness actively to support—much less directly to engage in—wars of national liberation, some observers have claimed that in fact the Soviets do encourage such conflicts as a low-risk means of pursuing their own

---

liberation movements, because the cold war had made imperialism determined to stamp out these movements and, thus, helped to inculcate a particular stubbornness by its employment of armed intervention to reestablish the domination of foreign capital monopolies in the new countries. Socialism, he said, had no need to prove its superiority by war. See also sources in footnote 51 on the value of detente.

<sup>74</sup> See, for example, Gafurov, *Lenin and the Liberation*, p. 39, or Baratashvili, "Lenin's Doctrine," p. 13.

<sup>75</sup> See Kohler et al., *Soviet Strategy*, for this claim.

<sup>76</sup> *Prauda*, July 4, 1972 (Kosygin speech honoring Castro), although Vaikenier in Kanet and Bahry, *Soviet Economic and Political Relations*, pp. 7-8 argues that in 1974 the Soviets in fact shifted to a less generous line.

<sup>77</sup> G. Drambiants, "A Policy of International Solidarity," *Kommunist* (March 1972):92-93.

<sup>78</sup> *Prauda*, November 3, 1977.

<sup>79</sup> Tarabin, "The National Liberation Movement," p. 61.

interests without superpower confrontation.<sup>80</sup> The arguments with the Chinese and other revolutionary groups over just these points notwithstanding, Soviet behavior particularly in the 1970s has repeatedly raised the question of Soviet doctrine versus action. Before examining this question, however, it remains to determine how Soviet doctrine has been applied to the Palestinian movement.

Just where the PLO fit in or failed to fit into Soviet formulations on national liberation can be determined only by distinguishing between Soviet retrospective analyses, written from the vantage point of the mid-1970s—when Soviet-PLO relations were quite advanced—and analyses made at the time. Until 1968, Moscow did not even acknowledge the Palestinians as a nation (people), and when it finally did so, it made no explanation or justification of the term. It was only in the mid-1970s that the Soviet media began to explain that the Palestinians had a common history, land, language (dialect), and culture,<sup>81</sup> even though they had much earlier explained the various distinctions between the Israelis—which were a people—and the Jews, which, they said, were not.<sup>82</sup> The late clarification of the justice of the Palestinians' claim to be called a nation came, in fact, in 1974, with the appearance of Soviet support for the creation of a Palestinian state. Even having recognized the Palestinians as a people, and, in 1969, their struggle as one of "national liberation," there remained a number of ambiguities. Not only was there no mention of a struggle for an independent state—except critically when speaking of the Palestinians' proclaimed goal of destroying or replacing the Israeli state<sup>83</sup>—there was only at best equivocal support

---

<sup>80</sup> Robert Thompson, *Revolutionary War in World Strategy 1945-1969* (New York: Taplinger Publishing, 1970), p. 32, though even this analysis maintains that the Soviets are restrained because they can in fact use less risky methods, that is, they can afford to wait and are able to try to influence matters in other ways (p. 38). See also Bjelajac, "Unconventional Warfare," p. 79.

<sup>81</sup> See, for example, Y. Primakov, "Zionism and Israel against the Arab People of Palestine," Part II, *Azia i Afrika Sevodnia* (April 1977):8-13, or Y. Primakov, *Anotomiia blizhnevostokogo konfliktia* [Anatomy of the Near Eastern Conflict] (Moscow: "Mysl" Publishers, 1978), pp. 37, 39.

<sup>82</sup> See, for example, Y. Shraiber, "Zionism: Myth and Realities," *International Affairs* (July 1970):44-48; L. Medvedko, "Zionism and Israel," *International Affairs* (January 1971):61. Relying on the language criterion, a 1974 book was to introduce the term "Hebrew nation" or "Hebrews," which had developed in Israel. E. Dimitryev and V. Ladeikin, *Put' k miry na blizhnem vostokye* [The Road to Peace in the Middle East] (Moscow: International Relations Publishers, 1974), pp. 70-71.

<sup>83</sup> The Soviet position on a Palestinian state will be discussed at length in Chapter Two. For this earlier period see *Sovetskaya Rosiya*, April 15, 1969.

for the struggle at all, preference being given to the term "partisan resistance" rather than guerilla warfare. This distinction was clearly drawn by a Jordanian communist who explained that "Neither in Jordan nor in any other Arab country are conditions ripe for guerilla activity in or outside the occupied territories. . . . Their [the fedayeen] method of struggle is at variance with the objective conditions and strongly colored by extremism."<sup>84</sup> Implying that a guerilla war would in fact be a precipitous action, a June 1969 Soviet commentary accused the Chinese of pushing the Palestinians into a "people's liberation war," while Shelepin, in April 1969, reportedly argued that the Palestinian guerilla tactics simply were not effective.<sup>85</sup> Even when the legitimacy of a Palestinian liberation war was admitted, as in a *Sovetskaya Rosiya* article in April 1969 on Fatah, the movement was criticized for not recognizing the possibility of other than armed action and for ignoring one of the basic tenets of guerilla warfare: mass and political activity.<sup>86</sup> Indeed, one of the reasons the PLO responded negatively to the creation of Ansar in 1970 was that organization's advocacy of all, including nonviolent, means of struggle. And Soviet Third World expert Rotislav Ulyanovski told a large audience in Cairo in April 1970 that "launching a popular war from the West Bank may not be absurd, but it is difficult because of the nature of the terrain there."<sup>87</sup> By the same token, no mention was made of a Palestinian war of liberation or, for that matter, of a Palestinian national liberation movement, in the theoretical works on the Third World or even on the Arab-Israeli conflict at that time.<sup>88</sup> If anything, the Soviets sought to envelope the Palestinians within the overall Arab national liberation movement, for, as they explained, the most realistic approach was toward a political rather than a military solution, via the Arab states, whereby Israel would be forced out of the territories occupied in the 1967 war—thereby paving the way for solution of the Palestinian problem as well.

---

<sup>84</sup> Salfiti, "The Situation in Jordan," p. 46.

<sup>85</sup> *Za rubezhom* (June 6-12, 1969); Cooley, *Green March*, p. 166.

<sup>86</sup> Salfiti, "The Situation in Jordan," p. 46 commented: "They ignore mass and political activity and object to the existence of political parties in the present period." Similar criticism was voiced by the Arab CPs' statement, *World Marxist Review* (September 1968):28.

<sup>87</sup> *At'alia* (Cairo), June 1970, pp. 59-67 in Ro'i, *From Encroachment*, p. 527.

<sup>88</sup> See, for example, Zhukov et al., *The Third World*, or I. P. Blishchenko and V. D. Kudryavtsev, *Agresia Izraeli i mezhdunarodnoe pravo* [Israeli Aggression and International Law] (Moscow: International Publishers, 1970).

Moscow criticized the Palestinians for trying to take matters into their own hands, separating from the Arab liberation movement and trying to act independently. For if the major problem was that of the territories to be settled by the Arab states, the Palestinian "resistance" could only be considered an auxiliary force, not a decisive factor.<sup>89</sup> As a Soviet Middle East specialist asserted: "Needless to say, guerilla warfare cannot regain the seized territories. Political factors must be brought into play: Arab unity, stability of the progressive regimes in the Arab world, and primarily in the UAR [United Arab Republic], which unquestionably is the main force opposing the Israeli expansionists."<sup>90</sup>

Thus, if the legitimate use of force by means of a national liberation guerilla war was only reservedly supported, the terror tactics employed as part of this war were included in Soviet criticism of extremism or recklessness. In discussions with the Palestinians and other Arabs,<sup>91</sup> the Soviets reportedly argued specifically against these tactics, but publicly, at least, their occurrence in 1968 and 1969 was either ignored or distorted to appear as guerilla actions, that is, partisan actions against military or strategic targets.<sup>92</sup> An unusual exception to this position was the initial Soviet attitude to Palestinian attacks on Israeli civilian aircraft outside Israel, which Moscow openly supported. Yet this position changed as non-Israeli targets became involved<sup>93</sup> and, by 1970, Moscow was explicitly condemning acts of international terrorism.<sup>94</sup>

The PLO, and even Fatah, failed to meet entirely the new Soviet-proclaimed standards regarding national liberation move-

---

<sup>89</sup> Cooley, *Green March*, p. 165, report of comments by Soviet specialists Ulyanovski and Ivanov; Salfiti, "The Situation in Jordan," p. 46; Arab CPs' statement, *World Marxist Review* (September 1968):28.

<sup>90</sup> George Mirsky, "Israel: Illusions and Miscalculations," *New Times*, October 2, 1968, p. 7.

<sup>91</sup> *Al-Jumhuriya* (Cairo), July 10, 1969, in A. Y. Yodfat, "Moscow Reconsiders Fatah," *The New Middle East* (December 1969):17.

<sup>92</sup> See Chapter Six.

<sup>93</sup> Freedman, "Soviet Policy towards International Terrorism," pp. 122-23, argues that the change came only when a Soviet plane had been hijacked by two Lithuanians, and, as a result, the Soviets felt themselves vulnerable. He cites Soviet support, for the first time, for a UN resolution against hijacking in November 1970 as proof.

<sup>94</sup> *Izvestiia*, September 10, 1970; *Za rubezhom* (June 12-19, 1970); *Prauda*, September 13, 1970; A. Usvatov, "Who Gains By It?," *New Times*, September 23, 1970; *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, April 12, 1970.

ments. While Soviet complaints over extremist, Chinese-inspired tendencies would suggest that the movement was at least sufficiently revolutionary, in fact the influence of right-wing reactionary, even religious, nationalism was singled out for criticism, as was the general lack of a binding ideology or program.<sup>95</sup> In this context reference was made to the continued influence of the Muslim Brotherhood origins of "some leaders of Fatah" and to the support rendered the Palestinian organizations by Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

The major themes in Soviet retrospective accounts of the PLO's development, which implicitly account for the shifts in the Soviet attitude from the Soviet-theoretical point of view, focus on (1) the mass nature of the organization or, at least, the extent of its indigenous support; (2) the existence of a cohesive organization; (3) the nature of its leadership; (4) the nature of its doctrine: ideology, program, goals, and methods; (5) its relationship to the progressive-socialist world. One of the earliest Soviet accounts of the PLO's development, by Middle East specialist Igor Belyaev, explained that the Palestinian organizations had gained significance only after the Israeli occupation of Arab territories in the 1967 war, when they could claim to speak on behalf of the Arab refugees and Arabs within the occupied territories, as well as the Arab citizens of Israel.<sup>96</sup> A later commentary repeated this line and quoted Sa'iqa leader Zuhair Mohsen to the effect that the Palestinian struggle had become "a truly popular war against the aggressors in the seized territories and in the territory of Israel itself."<sup>97</sup> Another claimed that the Palestinian national liberation movement had acquired such scope that even Israel's supporters (read, the United States) had to take it into account.<sup>98</sup> A more detailed history of the movement claimed that the 1967 occupation of the West Bank had converted the Palestinian Resistance Movement from a movement of "a few commandos who attacked Israel from without, to a massive, popular

---

<sup>95</sup> *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, April 15, 1969. See also Salfiti, "The Situation in Jordan," p. 46; *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, April 12, 1970, criticized Habash, by name, as a "reactionary Lebanese politician" leading an "extremist group."

<sup>96</sup> Igor Belyaev, "Forces of Resistance to the Aggressor Are Growing," *Mirovaya ekonomika a mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia* (May 1970):77.

<sup>97</sup> R. Landa, "The Palestinian Question: The Socio-Political Aspects," *Azia i Afrika Sevodnia* (March 1976):7.

<sup>98</sup> I. Riabinov, "Zionist Policy at an Impasse," *Mirovaya ekonomika a mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia* (May 1976):48.

movement of resistance," eliciting a new approach to them on the part of the Arab states.<sup>99</sup> Thus, it stated, the political-administrative cadres had increased thirty-fold between 1967 and 1969, as compared with the previous two years, and the armed forces 100 to 150 times. This support included not only the population in the occupied territories and the refugees, but also a large number of young people, especially the young intelligentsia, and the Arab population of Israel.<sup>100</sup> On the other hand, local support on the West Bank was said to have foundered in the years between 1971 and 1972.

The Six-Day War was noted as the turning point with regard to the creation of a coherent organization as well. According to one of the earliest comments on this point, the PLO created in 1964 had disintegrated into individual groups within its first year of existence.<sup>101</sup> In any case, this version of the PLO was said to have been created by the Arab states, as distinct from the Fatah, which the Soviets on one occasion claimed was created in January 1965 and on another in August 1967, by the Palestinian people itself.<sup>102</sup> One account appeared to contradict this interpretation when it generalized that the creation of the PLO (by implication, before 1967) "was a great step forward on the road to revival of the Palestinian people."<sup>103</sup> Most accounts merely emphasized that following the 1967 war the PLO itself sought independence from the Arab states and unified itself into an organization based on Palestinian interests,<sup>104</sup> although the most detailed and, probably, authoritative account outlined Fatah's post-1967 path to power in the PLO and its attempt to create a united organization.<sup>105</sup> According to this account, genuine unity

---

<sup>99</sup> R. Landa, "From the History of the Palestinian Movement of Resistance (1967-1971)," *Narodi Azii i Afriki* (April 1976):20.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., p. 19. For other retrospective references to the element of mass support, see, for example, V. Vladimirovsky, "Middle East: Need for an Immediate Settlement," *International Affairs* (July 1976):100, or Primakov, "Zionism and Israel," Part I, *Azia i Afrika Sevodnia* (March 1977):8-12.

<sup>101</sup> *Izvestiia*, July 30, 1974.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid. said 1965; Landa, "From the History," p. 23, said 1967. Dimitryev and Ladeikin, *Road to Peace*, did date the founding as 1956. See Quandt, *The Policies of Palestinian Nationalism* and O'Neill for dates of the founding of Fatah in the 1950s. Tolkunov worked from the date of Fatah's first armed operation, Landa from its first official communiqué.

<sup>103</sup> E. Dimitryev, "The Middle East: An Important Factor of Settlement," *Kommunist* 2 (1976):101.

<sup>104</sup> Primakov, "Zionism and Israel," Part II, pp. 8-13; see also Landa, "The Palestinian Question," pp. 6-8; Landa, "From the History," pp. 19-20.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., pp. 23-28.



eluded the organization from 1967 to 1971 both because of the heterogeneity of the class and ideological composition of the movement and because of the orientation of various groups toward specific Arab countries; the struggle for unity was finally defeated by the war with King Hussein in 1970-71. Acknowledging that some Palestinians regarded the period between 1970 and 1973 as a transition stage, this Soviet history saw 1972 as the first stage of a turning point reached, finally, in the spring of 1973, both in terms of substantive changes (as we shall see below) and organizational development. The April 1972 Palestine National Council brought new unity to the organization, consolidated by the January 1973 decision to create the (Communist-sponsored) Palestine National Front. It was natural that Soviet history—unlike Palestinian accounts—would exaggerate the importance of this last organizational development, inasmuch as it marked the PLO's acceptance of the previously rejected Communists, as pointed out by the Soviets themselves.<sup>106</sup> Thus, cohesiveness of the PLO was said to have been achieved by the spring of 1973, with the creation of the Palestine National Front and the overcoming of certain dissidence, as proven by the fact that the PLO emerged intact from its clash with the Lebanese in May-June 1973. It was this gradually achieved "organized character" of the PLO that, according to a number of Soviet accounts, brought the PLO its support among the masses and assisted in the formation of a Palestinian people by developing a national consciousness.<sup>107</sup>

It is difficult to separate completely the category of the nature of the leadership of the movement from the category of doctrine—ideology, program, goals, and methods—inasmuch as the leadership issue was, of course, a question of conflicting views among competing Palestinian groups, both from the Soviet point of view and in reality. In this area as well, 1967, specifically the December 1967 replacement of Shukeiry as leader of the PLO, is singled out as the turning point.<sup>108</sup> Shukeiry was, and continues to be, consistently condemned for his

---

<sup>106</sup> Even this detailed history, however, omitted any reference to the failure of the Ansar group, as did E. Dimitryev, *Palestinskii uzhel* [The Palestinian Knot] (Moscow: International Relations Publishers, 1977), p. 68.

<sup>107</sup> Primakov, "Zionism and Israel," Part II, p. 12; Landa, "The Palestinian Question," pp. 6-7; Dimitryev, "The Middle East," p. 101.

<sup>108</sup> *Izvestiia*, July 30, 1974; Y. Primakov, "Israel Versus the Arab States," *International Affairs* (November 1976):50-51; Landa, "The Palestinian Question," p. 8; Dimitryev, "The Middle East," p. 101; Dimitryev, *The Palestinian Knot*, pp. 58-64.

extremism and adventurism; his removal is interpreted as the beginning of the decisive influence in the organization shifting to "progressive" people.<sup>109</sup> The 1974 commentary by the editor of *Izvestiia* maintained that the PLO was moving in the right direction (of combining its liberation mission with social revolutionary processes) because of "the fact that the movement contains influential elements which approach the process of the Palestinian movement's development if not from Marxist-Leninist positions, then at any rate, from positions of revolutionary democracy . . . [therefore] the Palestinian movement is one of the potential revolutionary phenomena in the present-day Arab world."<sup>110</sup>

The more detailed and sophisticated history published in 1976 explained that Shukeiry had not tried to build a mass organization, because he had counted on the armies of the Arab states, engaging in armed raids only as a means of prodding the Arab states and even provoking war between them and Israel. This line of criticism was particularly surprising given Moscow's own comments even in the 1968-72 period belittling the role to be played by the fedayeen, the unquestioned primacy if not exclusivity of the struggle to be waged by the Arab states. The policy attributed to Shukeiry was nonetheless said to have been discredited by the defeat of the Arab armies in 1967, resulting in the rise of persons who no longer wanted to rely on outside help or wait for "suitable conditions" but, rather, advocated independent national resistance.<sup>111</sup> Fatah was said to have emerged already by the end of 1967 as the new authority, starting as a movement for resistance on the occupied West Bank though forced very quickly to move to and operate from Jordan because of Israeli military superiority and "the absence of conditions for guerilla war."<sup>112</sup> While Fatah was said to have improved its guerilla capabilities in 1968 and replaced Shukeiry's policy of "armchair revolution" with one of direct armed struggle, there were still a number of negative phenomena in the Palestinian movement.

Fatah itself was said to be ideologically (and organizationally) inferior to Sa'iqa. The latter, "a Palestinian branch of the Syrian Ba'ath," conducted an anti-Zionist, antiimperialist struggle combined

---

<sup>109</sup> Dimitryev, "The Middle East," p. 101; Dimitryev and Ladeikin, *Road to Peace*, p. 68.

<sup>110</sup> *Izvestiia*, January 30, 1974.

<sup>111</sup> Landa, "From the History," p. 20.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

with a struggle against "colonialistic and exploitative capitalism."<sup>113</sup> Fatah, however, was said to have seen itself, at least in the 1967-70 period, as "independent of class organization," claiming to represent all exiled Palestinians, including the "patriotic bourgeoisie." Indeed, Fatah was said to refrain from using the term "reactionary" for fear of insulting someone, and it sought to remain aloof from theoretical differences, "subordinating everything to the interests of the armed struggle" and speaking only of a general "social justice."<sup>114</sup> This lack of a social program had been pointed out by *Sovetskaya Rosiya* in 1969 and was recalled, again, by *Izvestiia* in 1974, which warned against bourgeois influences in the PLO.<sup>115</sup> Following 1971, the PLO leadership, presumably Fatah, was said to have rid itself of its "illusions and beliefs about the non-class national brotherhood."<sup>116</sup> Seeking a change in ideological orientation, the Soviet history emphasized that the 1971 Palestine National Council (PNC) characterized the movement as "a progressive movement of the Palestinian Arab society founded on the struggle against 'international imperialism headed by the USA'" and aspiring for "a new life founded on the principles of democracy, peace, justice, freedom and equality."<sup>117</sup> It was claimed that "later"—apparently in 1973, with the creation of the Palestine National Front—the movement demonstrated "a real revolutionary trend," becoming "one of the advanced forces in the Arab liberation movement."<sup>118</sup>

The major problem, however, was said to have been connected with the presence of persons and groups whose ideological orientation and tactical policies were described as immature, romantic, leftist, eclectic, ultrarevolutionary, and ultraleftist extremist.<sup>119</sup> Thus, the

---

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 26, 30.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29. Dimitryev and Ladeikin still spoke of Fatah in this way in 1974, *Road to Peace*, p. 64.

<sup>115</sup> *Sovetskaya Rosiya*, April 15, 1969; *Izvestiia*, July 30, 1975. See also Dimitryev and Ladeikin, *Road to Peace*, p. 64.

<sup>116</sup> R. G. Landa, "The Contemporary Stage in the Struggle of the Palestinian Movement of Resistance," *Narodi Azii i Afriki* (May 1976):15-16.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16. It was in fact in 1972 that the Soviets began referring to the Palestinians as a "leading force" or "vanguard" of the Arab liberation struggle. See *Prauda*, September 15, 1972; October 17, 1972; TASS, July 11, 1972.

<sup>119</sup> Landa, "From the History," pp. 20-27; Landa, "Contemporary Stage," pp. 17-18.

Marxist organizations that emerged in 1967 were described as Marxist "to some extent" and leftist-revolutionary, intent upon revolution throughout the Arab world as the solution to the Palestinian problem. Unnamed groups were condemned for their "adventurous tactics," which alienated not only various strata of the Palestinian population but also Arab states important to the Palestinian movement, such as Egypt and Jordan.<sup>120</sup> By 1973 steps had been taken, it was claimed, against the "groundless and unrealistic slogans . . . which called for the "overthrow of existing regimes."<sup>121</sup> At the same time the more widespread objective of "all or nothing" began to give way to a more "realistic" approach, even among the formerly extreme leftists (such as Nayif Hawatmeh), "acknowledging the appropriate UN resolutions."<sup>122</sup> The reference was to a reduction of goals to something less than the destruction of the State of Israel or its replacement, that is, agreement to a Palestinian state in part of Palestine.

Aside from the problem of goals associated with the ideological coloring of the contending groups within the PLO, there was also the problem of means or tactics. The issue, from the Soviet point of view, was what form the Palestinians' struggle should take: a purely armed form or possibly other, political, forms as well, and if an armed one, guerilla or terror. The retrospective Soviet accounts, even more than Soviet comments at the time, were critical of the use of terror. While the extremist leftist groups were said to have been the major advocates of terror in the 1967-73 period, even Fatah was said to have supported the use of terror in the 1971-73 period.<sup>123</sup> With regard to the idea of armed struggle as such, that is, guerilla warfare, Soviet pronouncements after the fact were at variance with those made in the 1968-73 period itself. Indeed, even as Moscow continued to urge the PLO to agree to nonviolent means of struggle as well, such as participation in the Geneva Conference,<sup>124</sup> Soviet histories of the Palestinian movement tended toward praise for the Fatah policy of guerilla warfare. Thus, one article explained the Fatah turn to

---

<sup>120</sup> Landa, "Contemporary Stage," p. 17.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20; see also *Izvestiia*, July 30, 1974, and other references in Chapter Two.

<sup>123</sup> *Izvestiia*, July 30, 1974; Landa, "Contemporary Stage," pp. 20-21; Landa, "The Palestinian Question," p. 8; Dimitryev, "The Middle East," p. 101; Y. Primakov, "A Balanced Course in the Middle East or the Old Policy by New Methods?" *Mirovaya ekonomika a mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia* (December 1976):51-52.

<sup>124</sup> This will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

terror by the limited success and possibilities for guerilla action.<sup>125</sup> Another was even mildly critical of the lack of armed action in the occupied territories, while allowing that poor terrain as well as Israeli reprisals were as much to blame as PLO neglect of political work among the local population.<sup>126</sup> Nonetheless, even these histories, as well as other commentaries, spoke positively of the increasingly realistic stream in the PLO which, as early as 1971, understood the need to supplement guerilla action with other, not only armed, forms of struggle.<sup>127</sup> The creation of the PNF in 1973 was, again, credited as proof of the movement's "growing maturity" in its realization that "every genuine revolutionary has to take into consideration, at each definable stage, the arrangement of forces and their distribution, and, subsequently, to distinguish between the possible and realistic from the impractical."<sup>128</sup> Another commentary cited the 1974 PNC session as having declared the PLO's willingness "to use such forms of struggle as diplomatic and political," thereby paving the way for Palestinian participation in the Geneva Conference.<sup>129</sup> Yet, noting the PLO's refusal to negotiate with Israel, Soviet history in 1976 remained vague as to whether the PLO as such, even after 1973 (or 1974) had accepted "the experience of long national liberation wars (Cuba, Algeria, Vietnam) [which] shows that its optimal variant consists of a simultaneous adoption of methods of military, mass-political and diplomatic struggle, along with a change in the form of struggle."<sup>130</sup>

The last point that was emphasized in Soviet accounts of what might be termed the growing legitimacy of the PLO was the organization's gradual orientation toward and association with the progressive-socialist world. Although by 1972 the Soviets proclaimed that the Palestinian movement was in the vanguard of the Arab liberation

---

<sup>125</sup> Landa, "Contemporary Stage," pp. 19-20; Bard E. O'Neill, "A Typology of Political Terrorism: The Palestinian Resistance Movement," *Journal of International Affairs*, 32:1 (1978):25 and J. Bowyer Bell, *On Revolt: Strategies of National Liberation* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), pp. 221-23, also attribute the turn to terror to the failure of guerilla tactics, though Bell dates this earlier (1968-69) than O'Neill or Soviet accounts (1971).

<sup>126</sup> Primakov, "Zionism and Israel," Part II, p. 12.

<sup>127</sup> See, for example, *ibid.*, p. 13; Primakov, "A Balanced Course," p. 51; Landa, "Contemporary Stage," pp. 19, 22; *Izvestiia*, July 30, 1974.

<sup>128</sup> Landa, "Contemporary Stage," p. 22.

<sup>129</sup> Primakov, "A Balanced Course," pp. 51-52.

<sup>130</sup> Landa, "Contemporary Stage," p. 26.

movement, in 1974 *Izvestiia* editor Tolkunov spoke more reservedly of the movement's "potential," arguing that it would be stronger when it "organically" combined "its liberation mission with social revolutionary processes." Its cooperation with the other progressive forces would be of great benefit to the development of the general national liberation process in the Arab world and to its struggle against imperialist influence and the subversive activity of Arab reaction.<sup>131</sup> Yet, later retrospective accounts claimed that as early as during the 1967-71 period the Palestinians had joined the progressive forces in the Arab countries and attracted their support, by 1971 officially declaring themselves, at the PNC, "a progressive movement . . . founded on the struggle against 'international imperialism headed by the USA that covers for the Zionist occupation.'" <sup>132</sup> By this time, it was said, the PLO had rid itself of its pro-Chinese orientation and of any illusions regarding certain Western and Arab countries, primarily because of the disaster experienced in Jordan in 1970-71. Indeed, the Soviets claimed that *one* of the reasons for the Jordanian war was the realization among reactionary or conservative circles of the dangers to them inherent in the PLO leadership's interest in "consolidating the alliance with the progressive forces of the Arab countries."<sup>133</sup> This link was said to have been strengthened when in 1972 the PLO brought Communists into its ranks and especially in 1973, when the Communist-sponsored PNF was created. Indeed, the 1973 PNC meeting that decided on the creation of the PNF also declared, it was pointed out, that "the national struggle of the Palestinian Arabs was decisively and strongly directed toward the unity of all the world revolutionary forces" and that "the necessary and objective conditions" for success were embodied in the "mutual solidarity and aid between the Arab national and international revolutionary movements."<sup>134</sup> This process of drawing closer to the progressive and socialist world was said to have been capped by Arafat's visit to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in July 1974—the first visit by official government invitation—which was linked by Soviet commentators to the shift toward a "realistic policy" evident at the June 1974 PNC.<sup>135</sup>

---

<sup>131</sup> *Izvestiia*, July 30, 1974.

<sup>132</sup> Landa, "Contemporary Stage," p. 16.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 15-17; Dimitryev, "The Middle East," p. 101.

<sup>134</sup> Landa, "Contemporary Stage," p. 20.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24; Landa, "The Palestinian Question," p. 7. See also Chapter

Not only did the connection with the progressive forces of the world strengthen the characterization of the PLO as a movement worthy (by implication) of Soviet support, but this support and this connection were portrayed as themselves decisive to the emerging authority of the PLO. Specifically, this alliance was said to have helped the organization rid itself of extremist terrorist tendencies in the early 1970s, while Soviet support was credited with the responsibility for the PLO's successes at the UN and its increased recognition throughout the world.<sup>136</sup>

The link with the progressive-socialist camp and indeed the presumed achievement of all the qualifications necessary for Soviet support—mass support, cohesive organization, progressive leadership, and program, including rejection of the “absolutization of armed struggle”<sup>137</sup>—were said to have been accomplished steadily, between 1967 and 1971 or 1973 or slightly later. Whatever the exact date, the PLO finally reached the status not only of a national liberation movement but of a “revolutionary” or progressive movement said to be the “unmistakable factor” in the *radicalization* of the Arab liberation movement.<sup>138</sup> According to a 1977 commentary, the Palestinian movement had become so identified with the antiimperialist struggle that the attitude of a country or group toward this movement indicated on which side of the barricade it fell in the struggle between the two antagonistic systems in the world.<sup>139</sup> Yet, even having said this, the lack of a sufficiently elaborated program for social transformation was, again, critically noted. And one of the reasons for this deficiency was said to be the fact that the leadership was basically in the hands of the national bourgeoisie, with nationalism as the determining factor within the whole movement. While justifying both these phenomena on the basis of the Leninist approach to nationalism as the first stage of anticapitalist struggle, and claiming that in many cases Palestinian nationalism is both antiimperialist *and* revolutionary because of the socialist-progressive orientation among some of its leading units, it was clearly stated that “it is premature to speak of

---

<sup>136</sup> See, for example, Landa, “Contemporary Stage,” pp. 24–25; Landa, “The Palestinian Question,” p. 7; Primakov, “Zionism and Israel,” Part II, p. 12; Dimitryev, “The Middle East,” p. 105; Riabinov, “Zionist Policy,” p. 48.

<sup>137</sup> Landa, “From the History,” p. 31.

<sup>138</sup> E. D. Prylin, “The Palestinian National Liberation Movement and Middle East Settlement,” *Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo* (October 1977):95.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 95–96.

the victory of the nationalist democratic direction in the Palestinian movement."<sup>140</sup> Moreover, although the antiimperialist struggle was said to strengthen the overall democratic content of Palestinian nationalism, it also served as a breeding ground for "radical tendencies" leading to a "leftist, extremist leap to a unique sort of 'left-wing childhood disorder,' notable in national liberation movements in which the petty bourgeoisie play a leading role."<sup>141</sup> (In this last context, "several" of the radical Arab states, Algeria, Iraq, and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY), were criticized for "practically ignoring nonmilitary methods of resolving the Palestinian problem, clearly underestimating political means of struggle."<sup>142</sup> Thus, the PLO was still berated for its lack of unity that allowed for errors in two directions. The solution was seen, on the one hand, as restraint, to be exercised particularly by the PLO's Communist allies, and patience with regard to the necessary transitional stages of nationalism, including "the revolutionary explosion of the petty bourgeoisie with all its prejudices," and, on the other hand, as a strengthening of the link with the international revolutionary movement and socialist camp to ensure development in the correct general direction.<sup>143</sup> Indeed, the overall message of this analysis, by the deputy director of the Soviet Foreign Ministry's Near East Department in the official journal *Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo* [Soviet State and Law], was that the PLO was not yet sufficiently revolutionary or progressive in nature and that its very historical justification as well as ultimate success would be determined only by the degree to which the progressive forces within the movement predominated. Moreover, for all that this analysis placed the Palestinian problem at the center of the Middle East crisis, its successful solution was predicated not only upon the emergence of a progressive Palestinian movement but, first and secondly, upon the victory of progressive Arab regimes and the limiting of Western-imperialist influence in the region.<sup>144</sup> This last point not only tends to bring one almost full circle back to the Soviet position in 1967, but it also suggests an entirely different explanation for the Soviet attitude toward the PLO than that expounded by Soviet retrospective studies.

---

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., pp. 97-98.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., pp. 97-98.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>144</sup> See Leonard Schapiro, "The Soviet Union and the PLO," *Survey* 23 (Summer 1977-78):198-99.



## NON-SOVIET ANALYSIS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOVIET-PLO RELATIONS

Soviet studies tended to explain matters in accord with overall Soviet national liberation theory, changes within the PLO—correction of those points at variance with the theoretical model—accounting for Moscow's increased interest or support. However, inasmuch as the Soviets themselves continued to criticize these same points, that in fact did remain a serious source of problems in the Soviet-PLO relationship, a different set of considerations or theoretical framework may well have governed the twists and turns of Soviet policy toward the PLO and its struggle for national liberation. When judging from the point of view of reality and actual behavior, one may have to supplement Soviet theory with a less ideological analysis, if not totally ignore it. Of particular use may be the analytic framework provided by a Western specialist who sought to determine just when and why the Soviet Union decided to support a given struggle for national liberation. This analysis, by Stephen Gibert, proposed the following criteria: (1) the degree of risk to the Soviet Union should the liberation war escalate; (2) the probability of success for the national liberation forces; (3) the effect of Soviet support on the international scene (particularly the balance of forces and relations with China and with the United States) regardless of the outcome.<sup>145</sup> Missing from these criteria was the one factor that the Soviets claimed—both in their general theoretical works and in the analysis of the PLO—to be the primary if not the only relevant one: the ideological or socioeconomic nature of the movement. According to this analysis, while the Soviets prefer Communist, Marxist-Leninist, or simply leftist movements, this has not been a priority factor, given Soviet support not only for moderate movements but even for those that suppressed local communists. In terms of content, the major criterion was merely an anti-Western or antiimperialist line—which, as we have seen, was in fact the minimum demand running through Soviet pronouncements. If the movement is clearly anti-Western, the Soviets will support even a losing side, but they will *withhold* support even from local communists engaged in a conflict with an anti-Western regime if there is little likelihood of communist success.

---

<sup>145</sup> Stephen P. Gilbert, "Wars of Liberation and Soviet Military Policy," *Orbis*, X (Fall 1966):839-58, more explicit in Joshua and Gibert, *Arms for the Third World*, pp. 113-26.

If chances for success or failure are only slightly higher priorities than is the substantive nature of the movement, the international ramifications of support (or the withholding of support) are of much higher priority. Within this category, the Soviet decision and the degree of support will be conditioned by (1) the effect of granting aid on Soviet influence with the recipient; (2) the hostility or approval with which other noncommitted states will view this aid and the relative importance of the recipient within its own region; (3) the effect of such support on Western and/or Chinese influence vis-à-vis the recipient or others in the same region; and (4) the effect on the Soviet position versus the U.S. and/or Chinese positions should Soviet support increase the intensity of the conflict. The important points in this category are whether Soviet support will weaken the position of the West, bind the recipient more closely to Moscow, and reduce or eliminate Chinese influence. At the same time, the Soviets will seek to restrict aid—that is, the types of weapons provided—in such a way as to avoid escalation to general war and to keep the conflict as one of limited insurgency. Similar limitations regarding the route of delivery call for the use of third parties or proxies if these are necessary to avoid escalation to direct confrontation with the West. Concluding that “there is no such thing as a consistent Soviet theory of wars of liberation,” this analysis maintains that the Soviets judge each case on its own merits with the above criteria in mind, the danger of war escalation being the overall prime concern.

Given the above criteria, one might find some relevancy in James Rosenau's list of options available for the superpowers in the case of civil strife: (1) intervention on the side of the weaker, usually the insurgent; (2) intervention on the side of the stronger, usually the state; (3) intervention in order to restore and maintain peace because of the dangerous repercussions such conflicts can have on the international scene.<sup>146</sup> There is also the fourth option of doing nothing, which implicitly aids the stronger side. Arguing that the third option has been on the ascendancy, another analyst has concluded that awareness of the dangers involved has led both the Soviet Union and the United States to work out ground rules and agreements designed to contain their global conflict and to reduce the likelihood of confrontation that might arise from their backing of opposite sides in a civil conflict.<sup>147</sup>

---

<sup>146</sup> James Rosenau, *International Aspects of Civil Strife* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 23-24.

<sup>147</sup> Hedley Bull, *Civil Violence and the International System*, Part II, *Adelphi Papers* 83 (1971), pp. 30-36.

Assuming, however, that the risk is nonetheless deemed tolerable, the Soviets may choose Rosenau's first option, in accord with their appraisal of the international repercussions listed above, limiting this intervention to support or assistance only. The purpose in so doing may well be to influence the regional balance of power or even the global balance,<sup>148</sup> but, short of this, an additional set of aims may be at play: that ascribed to alliances between superpowers and little powers.<sup>149</sup> Taken in the context of national liberation movements, an alliance of the Soviet Union with such a movement, be it in power or merely struggling for power, might be designed (1) to obtain a source of local legitimacy for the superpower activity in the region even to the point of manpower deployment; (2) to divert the movement from alignment with the enemy—in this case the other superpower or China or an unfriendly dominant power in the regional subsystem; (3) to obtain control over the movement's actions and policies, be it for the purposes of limiting these actions, channelling them in the desired direction, or eliminating them altogether; (4) to obtain a basis from which to be admitted to and exercise leverage in the management of regional conflicts. Aside from the ever-persistent problem of overinvolvement, that is, the risk of becoming involved in a local or regional conflict culminating in escalation and superpower confrontation, there are other problems. As the Soviets themselves have learned, there is the problem of the ideological coloring of the ally or recipient movement, for having been strengthened by Soviet help the movement may gain independence and reject Soviet domination, possibly opting for alignment with another power such as the West or China. Similarly, it may opt for an anti-Communist or at least nonsocialist internal system. The internal unity, stability, and leadership of the recipient would be important factors from this point of view. The Soviets must also take care to prevent their own global interests and the concomitant interest in controlling the recipient from becoming an obstacle to the continuation of the relationship. This would be what one analyst calls failure to adjust to the lesser partner's needs as distinct from those of the superpower. Such a clash of interests might occur, however, even at the regional level as the Soviets pursue relations with various components

---

<sup>148</sup> See Louis Cantori and Stephen Spiegel, *The International Politics of Regions* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970), pp. 25-37 on the role of the intrusive system in subordinate regional systems.

<sup>149</sup> George Liska, *Alliance and the Third World* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins Press, 1968), pp. 24-39, 57-59.

of the subsystem. Failure to deliver or produce results may also become a problem in the relationship, given the ever-present threat that the recipient may shift alliances, which could prompt a radicalization of the superpower's policies or actions, possibly in contradiction to its regional or global interests.<sup>150</sup>

Without totally excluding or negating Soviet explanations, this combination of alliance theory and behavior toward civil strife, specifically liberation wars, provides a broader, and sometimes more accurate, basis for understanding the shifts in Soviet policy toward the PLO. The probable reasons for the Soviets' neglect of the Palestinian organizations up to 1968 are numerous, many of them coinciding in fact with those offered by Soviet analyses. It is probably true that the organization itself was perceived negatively by the Soviet Union as a small, disorganized, nonideological, often extremist and impetuous grouping, willing to link itself with any prospective backer, whether it be pro-Western, conservative Saudi Arabia or leftist China. Even Fatah, which had the backing of Moscow's clients in Damascus, suffered from these afflictions. Nor did the nascent Palestinian movement fit into Soviet regional or global interests and policies at the time. The post-Stalin policy of peaceful coexistence, and its later variant, detente, not only dictated a more restrained Soviet policy with regard to wars of any kind and even revolutionary activity, it also advocated a preference for state-to-state relations, often at the expense of local radical (national liberation or Communist) movements, in the interest of combating Western influence. This preference for stable state-to-state relations, while never fully excluding party or revolutionary work, became even more prominent with regard to the Middle East in the 1960s. At this time Soviet strategic interests moved into the forefront of their consideration of this region as a stepping-off point for forward deployment in the global struggle against the West. Specifically, the Soviets sought port and other facilities for their newly-born Mediterranean Naval Squadron, bases and other land facilities for the aircraft connected with this naval presence and tasks vis-à-vis the U.S. Sixth Fleet and other NATO forces in the area. This same strategic interest extended southward to the Indian Ocean area, for here, too, at least potentially, Soviet-U.S. confrontation might occur in the form of deep-sea antisubmarine warfare directed against U.S. nuclear submarine sec-

---

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

ond-strike capabilities.<sup>151</sup> Thus, traditional Soviet interests in the region, combined with the newer strategic interest, in the era of anti-colonial “nonalignment,” prompted the Soviet pursuit of close relations with stable (as far as possible) regimes that could concretely accommodate these interests.

The Palestinian organizations could not further these interests; they were too weak, unstable, disorganized, and ideologically heterogeneous to be of any influence on the Arab regimes of interest to the Soviets. Nor were they sufficiently important to any of Moscow’s favored Arab regimes to warrant—or require—Soviet attention. Particularly following the 1967 war, these organizations constituted a liability in that they threatened to undermine, even topple, existing Arab regimes with which Moscow maintained close relations, possibly even triggering a new war, which, in fact, they advocated. This problem in turn touched on Soviet objectives within the Arab-Israeli context, in which the Soviets were pursuing what they—and the Arabs—called a political rather than a military solution. Not only were the Soviets wary of the political and economic costs of another Arab military defeat, they were also concerned over the risk of escalation and Soviet-U.S. confrontation in the event of war. In any case, they based their policy toward the conflict on obtaining for the Arab states those territories lost in 1967—and this objective meant Security Council resolution 242, negotiations, and even some type of agreement with Israel, all of which entailed recognition of Israel or at least its right to exist.<sup>152</sup> At the same time, Moscow saw this as a limited, more realistic objective than that advocated by various Arab extremists, including the Palestinian organizations, which called for armed action and the total destruction of Israel.<sup>153</sup> Moreover, neither

---

<sup>151</sup> For fuller discussion of Soviet interests in the area and the Arab-Israeli conflict, see Galia Golan, *Yom Kippur and after: The Soviet Union and the Middle East Crisis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 1-20, 129-31.

<sup>152</sup> For Moscow’s post-1967 policy, see Horelick, “Soviet Policy in the Middle East,” pp. 592-604; Whetten, *The Canal War*, passim; Robert Freedman, *Soviet Policy towards the Middle East* (New York: Praeger, 1975), pp. 22-42.

<sup>153</sup> Interestingly, a PLO pamphlet of 1968 mentioned almost all these same points in its analysis of the lack of Soviet support for the organization (Salah Dabagh, *The Soviet Union and the Problem of Palestine*, passim). See also Cooley, *Green March*, pp. 157-71; Norton, “Moscow and the Palestinians,” pp. 232-39; O’Neill, *Armed Struggle in Palestine*, pp. 194-99; Horelick, “Soviet

the Soviet Union, nor for that matter, any other state, perceived the Palestinian problem as crucial to the achievement of a settlement regarding the territories; it was seen as a perhaps difficult but secondary problem, which even the Arab governments tended to ignore. Thus, if in the pre-1967 period the Soviets could accord the Palestinians no more than secondary, "nuisance" value against Israel—useful tactically perhaps for strengthening the regime in Damascus<sup>154</sup>—in the immediate post-1967-war period even this role was of dubious, even negative consequence.

What, then, caused the change in Soviet attitude in 1968–69? It is true that Soviet theoretical formulations regarding the Third World in general underwent certain changes in this period, resulting in what might be seen as greater emphasis on revolutionary activity or at least revolutionary orientations, by implication, perhaps, granting national liberation movements, as distinct from bourgeois regimes, greater attention. Yet, this was not the case with regard to the Middle East, where Moscow could build on "progressive" regimes, which, in any case, still held the key to Soviet strategic interests. In keeping with those interests, the new Soviet policy emphasized the strengthening of the socialist camp before and as a prerequisite for the achievement of the national liberation revolution and so forth. Coupled with detente, this policy did not provide particularly favorable ground for improved relations with national liberation movements. At the same time, the PLO no more fit the new, somewhat more "revolutionary," Soviet requirements for national liberation movements than it had previously.

Changes within the organization that might have affected the Soviet attitude had, however, occurred—as indeed the Soviets later claimed. Shukeiry had been ousted in December 1967, and Fatah had joined the PLO in 1968, assuming its leadership in 1969. While this did provide for some basic organizational improvement and a somewhat less reckless policy, the ascendancy of Fatah as such brought few changes in the overall goals, means, or even ideological coloring of the organization.<sup>155</sup> Indeed, while favored over Shukeiry, Fatah was still perceived as bourgeois and heavily influenced by

---

Policy in the Middle East," pp. 584–85, 603–4, 625–26; Moshe Maoz, "Soviet and Chinese Influence on the Palestinian Guerilla Movement," in Rubinstein, *Soviet and Chinese Influence*, pp. 116–17.

<sup>154</sup> See Horelick, "Soviet Policy in the Middle East," pp. 584–85.

<sup>155</sup> See even Soviet criticism in the 1968–70 period cited above.

reactionary elements, including Saudi Arabia.<sup>156</sup> From the Soviet point of view, it was probably the lack of sufficient change within the PLO—organizationally, ideologically, or with regard to goals and means—that accounted for the severe limitations on Soviet support at this time, as well as the continued caution and even criticism in the Soviet approach after 1968–69.

Nor does there appear to have been any change in Soviet objectives regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict at this time. The Soviets continued to base their policies on the Arab states and to favor as the major objectives negotiations, a political solution, and the return of the occupied territories, opposing another round of general hostilities. Nonetheless, it was in the realm of regional and global considerations that the reasons for the shift were most likely to be found. The PLO, in the form of Fatah, was becoming a factor on the Middle East scene as it operated more effectively and commanded greater attention, both within the Arab world and internationally. It is possible that the intrusion of the Palestinian organizations into Arab politics in such pro-Western states as Jordan and Lebanon evoked Soviet interest. One observer has claimed a link between the 1969 Shelepin recognition of the Palestinian struggle as one for national liberation and the fighting then going on in Lebanon between the Beirut government and Palestinian forces.<sup>157</sup> Another claims that Moscow saw a possibility for toppling King Hussein.<sup>158</sup> More significant at the time, however, was the fact that Egypt, the cornerstone of Soviet policy in the region, had undertaken a rapprochement and cooperative position with Fatah in 1968.<sup>159</sup> Therefore, perceiving the growing importance of the Palestinian organizations, particularly in the politics of the Arab world and in the eyes of the Arab regimes, specifically of Egypt, the Soviets sought at least to open the road to these groups and, by 1970, even to gain some influence, possibly even control, over them.

At this stage any positive Soviet calculations regarding the Palestinians probably did not exceed those of regional considerations, at least insofar as East-West, Soviet-U.S. competition was concerned—the above contentions regarding Jordan and Lebanon

---

<sup>156</sup> See, for example, Salfiti, "The Situation in Jordan," p. 46; *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, April 15, 1969.

<sup>157</sup> Cooley, *Green March*, p. 168.

<sup>158</sup> Maoz, "Soviet and Chinese Influence," p. 117.

<sup>159</sup> See Eran, *The Soviet Union and the Palestine Guerilla Organizations*, pp. 12-15.

notwithstanding. The Soviets did not perceive of the Palestinian issue as a card to play against Washington. The Palestinians continued to be neglected in Soviet negotiating positions with the United States, and Soviet priorities remained the same, even critical of those, like the PLO, who disagreed with the August 1970 ceasefire in the Israeli-Egyptian war of attrition.<sup>160</sup> Thus, the Palestinians' war with King Hussein was discouraged rather than supported, especially once Syrian intervention against Hussein threatened to bring Israel and the United States into action. If anything, it might be said that global considerations determined the Soviet policy toward the PLO at this time, prompting a negative or, at best, most restrained attitude. Global considerations also entered the picture in the form of the Sino-Soviet dispute. As the PLO itself began to assume greater importance, particularly in the Arab world, the Soviets probably became less willing to leave the field open to the Chinese. The Sino-Soviet dispute had reached new heights with the 1969 Ussuri River battles and the international conference of Communist parties in Moscow in the same year. Without placing excessive emphasis upon this factor, it might be argued that Moscow, therefore, wanted to shore up its image as champion of national liberation movements in response to Chinese accusations—and actions. Yet, just as Soviet support for the Palestinians in response to greater Arab-state interest failed to evoke any change in the Soviets' evaluation or treatment of the Palestinian issue in negotiations over the Arab-Israeli conflict, so, too, the Chinese challenge—to whatever degree it played a role—failed to produce any radicalization in the Soviet position on war or terror, or, for that matter, the goals of the Palestinian struggle.<sup>161</sup>

The 1972 step-up in Soviet support for the PLO may have been caused, in part—as the Soviets claim—by internal PLO developments as a result of the Jordanian war, such as a rethinking of policies and alliances. One Western analyst claims just the opposite, however, arguing that the increase in Moscow's support was occasioned not by a strengthening of the PLO organization and consolidation of a unified policy but, on the contrary, by the weakened position and disarray of the organization as a result of the disaster that provided the Soviets with an opportunity for gaining control.<sup>162</sup> At the very least

---

<sup>160</sup> Cooley, *Green March*, p. 168.

<sup>161</sup> See Maoz, "Soviet and Chinese Influence," pp. 119-26; Norton, "Moscow and the Palestinians," pp. 232-39; O'Neill, *Armed Struggle in Palestine*, pp. 198-99.

<sup>162</sup> Freedman, "Soviet Policy towards International Terrorism," p. 124.



one might agree that the weakened state of the PLO in 1971-72 rendered the organization less risky from the point of view of Soviet interests.<sup>163</sup>

Again, however, it was probably broader regional and even global considerations that governed the 1972 shift. The overriding factor at this time was the serious deterioration in Soviet-Egyptian relations, which was climaxed by Sadat's expulsion of Soviet military advisers just prior to Arafat's visit to Moscow in July 1972. The boost in Soviet support for the PLO may be seen as part of Moscow's general effort to compensate for its increasingly poor position with Egypt—and the Sudan—by means of the formation of a "progressive front," composed primarily of Iraq and Syria as well as the Palestinians. From this point of view, Moscow may have been seeking an additional option in the region in order to bolster its position at least in the propaganda war. At a minimum, support for the Palestinians at this time would please Iraq and Syria, while the move could be used to dispel accusations both that the Soviets had foresaken the Arabs in the interests of detente, as indeed Sadat claimed, and that Moscow was losing ground in the struggle for influence in the region.

Thus, it was probably in connection with Soviet problems in Egypt that Moscow began more seriously to develop its position with the Palestinians as a *tactical* option—at this time primarily in relations with the Arab states. Sometime in 1973, whether before or after the October war is difficult to determine, this tactical use of the Palestinian issue entered into the broader Soviet competition with the United States. This was still part of Moscow's growing reliance on the more radical wing of the Arab world, particularly as a lever in the post-1973 Arab-Israeli negotiations. Yet, even as Soviet-PLO relations expanded, with the Palestinian issue achieving increasing Soviet attention, Moscow's attitude continued to be governed by broader considerations. Thus the Palestinian organizations continued to remain secondary—if nonetheless more important than previously—in Soviet policy regarding the area. There was the possibility, however, that tactical support could become strategic, that the Palestinian issue could be transformed in Soviet eyes from a secondary, utilitarian matter to a central, essential problem. In other words, to what degree did the Palestinians become a vital factor for future Soviet ambitions in the region, or, conversely, to what degree did they remain expendable? The answer to these questions was dependent, as we

---

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., p. 124, and O'Neill, *Armed Struggle in Palestine*, p. 195.

shall see in the following chapters, more upon Soviet objectives regarding a solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict and upon the responses chosen to U.S. inroads into the region than upon the internal evolution of the PLO itself. Nonetheless, the two frames of reference were not totally independent, for PLO policies had ramifications for Soviet regional and global relationships, while a Soviet effort to use the Palestinian issue and the PLO tactically necessitated some interaction and involvement with the latter's behavior and policies.

Still another factor may have been at play, in conjunction with—though possibly also independently of—the above local, regional, and global factors. This might be a domestic element, that is, varying, possibly opposing, opinions among Soviet decision makers, generally on the question of national liberation struggle, specifically on the attitude toward the Palestinian issue itself. The ideological debate in Soviet Third World literature may well have been a reflection of such differing views, just as the early ambiguities in Soviet pronouncements concerning the Palestinians may have been the result of contending preferences. It has indeed been argued that more ideologically oriented Soviet leaders such as Suslov and Shelepin opposed the policy of favoring state-to-state relations over—and often at the expense of—national liberation movements and even local Communist parties.<sup>164</sup> Similarly, influential persons in the Soviet hierarchy who were responsible for links with national liberation movements—or nonruling Communist parties—such as Politburo member Boris Ponomarev or deputy chairman of the Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee Viktor Kudryavtsev, may have been pushing for greater support for the Palestinians, as distinct, perhaps, from persons dealing with the Third World states, broader issues of the region's politics or global issues, be they military or political. Although differences in expressions and pronouncements may in fact be found in the early, as well as later, period of Soviet-PLO relations, it is almost impossible to determine whether these were in fact signs of conflicting opinions, manifestations of some sort of natural or even directed division of labor intended to serve a number of simultaneous objectives and maintain open options, or merely the result of ambiguities inherent to Soviet policy on this subject

---

<sup>164</sup> Ilana Dimant-Kass, *The Soviet Involvement in the Middle East: Policy Formulation* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1978); Galia Golan, "Internal Pressure and Soviet Foreign Policy Decisions," unpublished paper, Jerusalem, 1973. See also Dina Spechler, *Domestic Influences on Soviet Foreign Policy* (University Press of America, 1978).

altogether. This is not to say that the Soviet decision-making authority is monolithic or even unified; rather, it is an admission of the poverty of sources available for a thorough, differential analysis of the internal functioning of this authority. Nonetheless, insofar as is possible, this factor will be examined, along with those already discussed, in the analysis in the following chapter of Soviet policies regarding the Palestinian issue.

## CHAPTER TWO

# Palestinian Statehood

### SELF-DETERMINATION = STATEHOOD

In the 1971 meeting between Soviet officials and Syrian Communist leaders—a purported protocol of which was subsequently published by the Syrians and the Palestinians themselves—the Soviets were outspokenly contemptuous about the idea of a Palestinian state. Their direct comment was “How big? Where? When? It raises many problems.”<sup>1</sup> Supporting the right to return and even self-determination after return (defined as the right to determine their own administration, to determine the form and character of the state), they explained: “The demand for a unified state also comes within the category of the right to self-determination; the right to self-determination does not necessarily imply a separate state,” urging the Syrian Communists to accept the fact of the existence of Israel rather than pit one national movement against another’s rights to

---

<sup>1</sup> This and following: “Special Document: The Soviet Attitude to the Palestine Problem,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* II (Autumn 1972):187–212.

self-determination. Moreover, the Soviets argued that the slogan calling for the destruction of Israel was "unsound not only tactically but also as a matter of principle. . . . It is permissible to struggle against the racialism of the State of Israel, its reactionary qualities, its colonialist character, but it is not permissible to talk about eliminating the State of Israel." On this last point, the existence of the State of Israel, the Soviet position subsequently remained consistent, but many of the other points contained in the statement were soon to undergo modification.

The over-all opposition to a Palestinian state expressed in the statement was apparently official and authoritative; it was expressed in great detail by a delegation of Soviet experts and officials during and just following the Syrian Communists' meeting with Politbureau members Suslov and Ponomarev, both known for their support of national liberation movements, the former in his capacity as ideological leader of the CPSU, the latter as party secretary responsible for contacts with foreign nonruling Communist parties and national liberation movements. Despite later denials—Moscow was later to claim that it had "never" considered the Palestinian problem merely a "refugee" rather than a "national" problem and that it had always championed the Palestinians' right to statehood<sup>2</sup>—the negative Soviet attitude toward a Palestinian state was probably due to Moscow's appraisal of both the general international situation and the specific strength of the Palestinian movement itself. For all that both these factors had been moving in a direction favorable to the Palestinians' demands, prompting in the process Soviet support for the PLO, the Soviets still saw in the idea of statehood a complex issue that might place serious obstacles in the way of any kind of agreement they might reach with the United States over the Middle East, without in fact its being a condition categorically demanded by the Arab states at this time. Moreover, as the Soviet leaders pointed out, the idea of a state posed so many dilemmas that were problematic within the PLO itself, such as the existence of Israel, the borders of such a state, the nature and timing of such a state, that there seemed little point in pressing the issue.

Even as early as 1969 there were, nonetheless, one or two statements that suggested that at least some quarters in the Soviet Union might be interested in the idea of a Palestinian state. The already mentioned reference in 1969 to the Palestinians as a national

---

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, TASS, May 22, 1977.

liberation movement was possibly a hint in this direction.<sup>3</sup> There were even occasional subsequent references to self-determination and, although self-determination did not necessarily mean statehood, one of these—published in 1971—was to speak of the Palestinian struggle as one “for self-determination, for a restoration of its national rights.”<sup>4</sup> According to one Western observer, it was in 1971 that the PLO leaders, at least, received the impression that Moscow was supporting the idea of a Palestinian state—alongside Israel.<sup>5</sup> At least one later Soviet commentary delineated 1971 as a turning point with regard to PLO thinking, claiming that the organization began to draw lessons from the tragic experience of the 1970–71 Jordanian civil war, and these lessons in time brought the organization to a “more thorough understanding of the genuine interests of the Palestinian people.”<sup>6</sup> If this was how the Soviets perceived matters at the time—and indeed 1972 was a year of increased Soviet support for the PLO, albeit primarily for tactical reasons, in response to the deterioration in Soviet-Egyptian relations—the Soviets may well have been considering a revision of their attitude toward Palestinian statehood. Nonetheless, in the formal Soviet position there was no change.

The Soviet position on a Palestinian state did in fact undergo a transformation apparently immediately following if not prior to or

---

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter One. Specifically, there was a direct reference to the creation of an Arab state in Palestine, at no expense to Israel territorially, because “Palestine had been restored to its 1947 borders” as a result of the 1967 war (Radio Peace and Progress in Yiddish, August 14, 1969, as cited in John Cooley, *Green March, Black September* (London: Frank Cass, 1973), p. 169).

<sup>4</sup> Y. Primakov, “The Middle East Crisis in 1971,” in *Mezhdunarodnyi ezhegodnik politika i ekonomika, vypusk 1971* [International Yearbook: Politics and Economy for 1971] (Moscow: Political Literature Publishers, 1971), p. 216. Prior to the 1973 war, there was a Soviet Arabic-language commentary (March 5, 1973) that explained that the “right of the Palestinian Arab people to determine their own destiny as they wish and without external interference is the most important of their legitimate rights . . . [they] themselves can deal with the question of the forms of exercising their right to determine their own destiny” and then referred to the U.N. General Assembly 1947 partition plan “regarding the creation of an Arab state on the basis of this right . . . to determine their own destiny.” This suggested a change in the Soviets’ 1971 attitude toward a Palestinian state, as did the resolution of the September 1973 meeting of Arab Communist parties referring to the Palestinians’ right to self-determination. See *Prauda*, October 19, 1973.

<sup>5</sup> Cooley, *Green March*, p. 169.

<sup>6</sup> R. G. Landa, “From the History of the Palestinian Movement of Resistance (1967–1971),” *Narody Azii i Afriki* (April 1976):31.

during the Yom Kippur War. Although the Soviets barely mentioned the Palestinians during the war (presumably in an effort to prevent complications in the cease-fire negotiations),<sup>7</sup> immediately following the war they sent a memorandum to each of the PLO leaders—Arafat, Habash, and Hawatmeh.<sup>8</sup> In this memorandum Moscow reportedly queried the PLO as to their exact meaning of the term “legitimate rights,” recommending the idea of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza Strip. At approximately the same time, the Soviet-sponsored component of the PLO—the Palestine National Front (PNF)—came out for the creation of a Palestinian state,<sup>9</sup> and on November 15, 1973, in a joint communiqué with Tito, the Soviets again added the phrase “national” to the “legitimate rights” demanded for the Palestinians.<sup>10</sup> Just what occasioned this shift is difficult to determine. It is possible that the Soviets estimated that serious negotiations for a Middle East settlement were imminent, necessitating a clarification of the Palestinian issue and the PLO’s position. Soviet and Communist sources themselves explained their position both as a response to maturing attitudes within the PLO—the PLO reportedly had proposed, in the summer of 1973, the idea of a

---

<sup>7</sup> After a brief line in the Soviet government statement on the outbreak of the war (TASS, October 7, 1973), the Palestinians were not mentioned in subsequent official statements (the October 12 and 23 warnings), in the speeches of Soviet leaders, in most of the resolutions and statements of protest meetings, or even in the Soviet reports of the official statements of Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Czechoslovakia on the war. The only major exception to this was the trade union paper *Trud* and trade union leader Shelepin’s speech to WFTU. This discrepancy had been notable prior to the war as well, suggesting Shelepin opposition on ideological grounds to Soviet support for bourgeois—even progressive—regimes rather than, or at the expense of, national liberation movements and local Communist parties. See Ilana Kass, *Soviet Involvement in the Middle East: Policy Formulation* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1978). Only when Jordan had announced its plan to provide troops did the Soviet press express any particular attention to the Palestinian contribution to the war efforts. Moreover, the Soviet-U.S. cease-fire proposal, based as it was on resolution 242, was in direct contradiction to PLO—as well as Syrian and Iraqi—positions. See Soviet response to Palestinian criticism on this, Moscow radio in Arabic, October 22, 1973.

<sup>8</sup> *Le Monde*, October 31, 1973, November 6, 1973; *New York Times*, November 2, 1973; *The Guardian*, November 6, 1973; Voice of Palestine, October 30, 1973.

<sup>9</sup> Revealed by Moscow radio in Arabic, February 26, 1975, September 3, 1975.

<sup>10</sup> TASS, November 15, 1973.

provisional state on the West Bank and Gaza Strip<sup>11</sup>—and the change in the balance of forces—read, the increased bargaining power of the Arabs in the wake of the Yom Kippur War (and the oil boycott).<sup>12</sup> The second factor may have persuaded Moscow that there might now be a chance for achieving fulfillment of at least limited Palestinian demands, thereby solving this aspect of the conflict. On the other hand, increased Soviet support for the PLO may have been part of what was to emerge as Soviet tactics, whereby Moscow sought to prove to the Arabs in the early post-war period that the Soviet Union, despite its cooperation with the United States especially with regard to the cease-fire, Security Council resolution 338, and the coming Geneva Peace Conference, remained loyal to the Arab cause. Subsequently, the tactic was designed to demonstrate that the Soviets were the only champion of *all* the Arab demands, including those of the Palestinians, as distinct from the merely partial commitment and efforts of the United States. The Soviets hoped thus to demonstrate to the Arabs the essentiality of Soviet participation in whatever negotiations evolved, while Hoping to demonstrate to the United States (and Israel) that Moscow controlled the radical card, specifically the war option, and could, therefore, not be ignored. The Soviets may also have wanted an additional option for the negotiations, primarily because of the already apparent increased importance of the United States in the Middle East conflict and the emerging U.S.-Egyptian relationship, as well as a means of claiming a role in whatever talks concerned Jordan and Israel who were, until then, exclusively U.S. clients. The fact that the Soviets were considering the idea of statehood (in the areas that were to be returned to the Arabs) as the demand they would support would, however, suggest that Moscow was in fact

---

<sup>11</sup> Hawatmeh interviews revealed that in 1973, before the war, he had proposed the idea of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza Strip as an "interim objective"—*ar-Ray al-Amm* (Kuwait), March 19, 1977; *as-Siyassah* (Kuwait), May 8, 1977; in the second interview, Hawatmeh said the PLO had made the same proposal then.

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, *Les Communistes et la Question Palestinienne*, put out by the Central Committee of the Jordanian Communist Party and the Directing Committee of the Palestinian Communist Organization of Transjordan, 1977, 29 pp.; R. Landa, "The Contemporary Stage in the Struggle of the Palestinian Movement of Resistance," *Narody Azii i Afriki* (May 1976):22; Landa, "From the History," pp. 21, 23, 25; E. Dimitryev, "The Middle East: An Important Factor of Settlement," *Kommunist* (1976):99-105.



seeking some realistic alternative that might fit the negotiating process at a time when it seemed most unlikely that any such process could entirely ignore the Palestinians' demands or try to reduce them to those of a refugee problem only.

Still, the Soviet commitment to Palestinian statehood was ambiguous and slow in emerging. Gromyko's speech at the Geneva Peace Conference in December 1973 almost totally ignored the issue; Gromyko did *not* use the new term "national" legitimate rights, while he relegated the Palestinian problem to the secondary position of "many other aspects of settlement" that would find their solution if the "root cause" were solved—the "root cause" being explained only as the Israeli occupation of Arab lands "that continues for over six years."<sup>13</sup> Only gradually, in 1974, did the Soviets begin regularly to employ the new formulation, the "national" legitimate rights of the Palestinians, and in May 1974 the Jordanian Communist Party Central Committee called for an independent national state for the Palestinians.<sup>14</sup> Finally, in the fall of 1974, Moscow made its first official public reference to a Palestinian state.<sup>15</sup> This came first in the form of a speech by Podgorny on September 8, 1974, while in Bulgaria, in which the Soviet leader specified the Palestinians' "right to establish their own statehood in one form or another."<sup>16</sup> Podgorny himself repeated this in the name of the Politburo in a cable to Algerian President Houari Boumedienne, who made it public on October 4, 1974.<sup>17</sup> While the cable may not have been intended for publication, and it was conceivable that Podgorny was expressing a dissenting rather than the officially accepted view at the time (Podgorny had in the past exhibited a certain tendency to a more radical view on the Middle East),<sup>18</sup> the fact that these pronounce-

---

<sup>13</sup> TASS, December 21, 1973.

<sup>14</sup> Jordanian Communist Party, *Les Communistes*, p. 10.

<sup>15</sup> Soviet Middle East commentator Igor Belyaev had already raised the idea on Moscow radio, June 2, 1974, and he later told an Arab paper—*an-Nahar* (Beirut), November 4, 1974—that when Arafat was in Moscow in the summer of 1974 he was told by the Soviets that they would support the creation of an independent state.

<sup>16</sup> *Prauda*, September 9, 1974.

<sup>17</sup> Algiers radio, October 4, 1974.

<sup>18</sup> Detectable in a more skeptical attitude toward the Geneva Conference, expressed at the end of December 1973, this was particularly apparent during Assad's visit to Moscow, April 1974. On that occasion, Podgorny, unlike Brezhnev, referred to the Palestinians' "national" rights and expressed a harsher warning regarding the Syrian-Israeli disengagement talks.

ments did constitute a new official Soviet position was confirmed just a week later. In a speech in Kishniev on October 11, Brezhnev referred for the first time to the rights of the Palestinians to a "national home," confirmed still further by Brezhnev's November 26 speech, which changed the phrase to a Palestinian "state."

This new "breakthrough" was most probably connected with the Rabat Conference of Arab leaders opening at the end of October. The situation facing Moscow on the eve of this meeting was the serious deterioration that had taken place in Soviet-Egyptian relations since the previous spring, the general belief that Sadat would urge the conference to accept U.S. Secretary of State Kissinger's step-by-step approach (as distinct from the Soviet's efforts to reconvene the Geneva Conference), and the fact that the United States was trying to promote talks for an Israeli-Jordanian agreement or another Israeli-Egyptian accord. Thus, it was no wonder that the Soviets sought to strengthen their position, at least with the more radical Arabs, prior to the meeting, in hopes both of countering whatever arguments Sadat might present and of forestalling any agreement to procedures or negotiations that would exclude the Soviets. Added support for the Palestinians at this time, at least on this issue, might well provide a vehicle for such objectives. Indeed, by this time Soviet tactical support for the more radical Arab camp was designed also to isolate and pressurize Egypt, although this policy did not go so far as to support the most radical line within the PLO itself. And it is even possible that the Soviets knew or estimated that the Rabat Conference was going to call for a Palestinian national authority in the territories liberated and define the latter as the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.<sup>19</sup> Foreknowledge of this decision may well have been the reason for the decision of the more radical Palestinians not to attend, as well as for Soviet willingness to commit itself to a Palestinian state at this time.

The hesitant and only gradual emergence of Soviet support for a Palestinian state was dictated not only by international and pan-Arab, as well as perhaps internal, even ideological, considerations,

---

<sup>19</sup> *Free Palestine* (London organ of Fatah), 9 (November 1976):2, editorial, revealed the full content of this decision, as did Palestine National Council chairman Khalid al-Fahum in an interview to *Monday Morning* (Beirut), September 12, 1977, pp. 10-15. Soviet reporting of Rabat at the time also claimed that the decision referred to the territories occupied in 1967, but the published version of the Rabat resolution on Palestine had not been so specific; see *Journal of Palestine Studies* IX (Winter 1975):177-78.

but also by the complexity of the issue itself, which caused distinct hesitation on the part of the PLO to declare for a state. Although official Soviet support for Palestinian statehood carried with it too many implications to have been merely a response to internal PLO debates, one of the explanations for the timing of the Soviet move may have been a desire to provide support for the views coalescing around Arafat—in opposition to the Marxist-oriented but more extremist George Habash—in favor of a state.<sup>20</sup> Notwithstanding Soviet claims to the contrary, the PLO had not yet come out for statehood, even though some of its leading figures, such as Arafat and Hawatmeh, did support the idea. The Soviets had even hailed the June 1974 Palestine National Council (PNC) decision to create a “Palestinian authority” on any liberated territory as proof of such a position, but the use of the term “authority” had in fact been chosen by the PNC because of the continued opposition of some PLO components such as George Habash’s Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and Ahmad Jibril’s PFLP-General Command to any mention of a state at this time.<sup>21</sup> Because of this official PLO reticence, the Soviet-PLO communiqué of November 24, 1974, remarkable for its urging of a Palestinian state, linked this position to the “Soviet side” only.<sup>22</sup> It was only a year and two Arafat visits later that the PLO leader agreed to join the Soviets’ call for a Palestinian state, in the statement issued at the close of Arafat’s talks in Moscow, November 28, 1975.<sup>23</sup> It was yet another year before an official PLO statement spoke of the goal of establishing an “independent Palestinian state.”<sup>24</sup>

In their explanations of PLO reticence on this issue, the Israeli

---

<sup>20</sup> As we shall see in Chapter Three, Habash withdrew from the PLO executive committee in September 1974 and declined, at the last minute, to participate in the Rabat Conference because of his opposition to Arafat’s position regarding a state and other issues.

<sup>21</sup> *Journal of Palestine Studies* IV (Winter 1975):167. Soviet versions of the PNC decision and Arafat’s position: Victor Bukharkov, “Palestine National Council Session,” *New Times* (June 1974):13; “Yasser Arafat on the Problems of the Palestine Movement,” *New Times* (August 1974):11.

<sup>22</sup> TASS, November 30, 1974.

<sup>23</sup> Moscow radio in Arabic, Voice of Palestine, November 28, 1975. The statement at the close of Arafat’s intervening May 1975 visit had had only the Soviet side speaking of a state; see *Pravda*, May 5, 1975.

<sup>24</sup> As a result of the PLO-Central Council session of December 1976 in Damascus, according to Judith Perera and Terence Mirabelli, “West Bank State: The Hurdles Ahead,” *The Middle East* (London) (February 1977):11, and Damascus radio, December 14, 1976.

Communists, for example, claimed that certain extremist quarters believed that statehood could only come with socialist revolution;<sup>25</sup> one Soviet commentary inferred such an attitude in criticizing Habash's extremism.<sup>26</sup> The real problem, however, was that any declaration for statehood at this point in time opened up the whole dilemma of a locale, the question of borders implying even something fixed and permanent, including de facto recognition of Israel, rather than a temporary unit perceived as a stage to something else. The Soviets for their part were not opposed to such delineations and even limitations, and Soviet accounts of the development of the PLO characterized the PLO's acceptance of such limitations as a sign of their growing maturity and realism. But the PLO itself was far from decided or decisive on this matter for some time, and the limitations proposed by the Soviets became a source of dispute between the two.

PLO ambiguity notwithstanding, from the close of 1974 onward the official Soviet position consistently called not only for ensurance of the Palestinians' legitimate—sometimes “inalienable”—national rights, but specified these as the right to self-determination and the establishment of their own state. It was only on such rare occasions as the joint Soviet-U.S. statement of October 1, 1977, that the phrase was missing, Moscow's partner in this case being willing to go only so far as to acknowledge the Palestinians' “legitimate rights.”<sup>27</sup> This term in itself constituted a change in the U.S. position, but the PLO reportedly was not entirely satisfied with the content of the statement, the omission of any reference to “national” rights or statehood being, possibly, one of its objections.<sup>28</sup>

A decided dilemma had been created in the Soviet situation with the advent of the Carter administration in Washington. Moscow generally strove to prove the efficacy of its support for the PLO and its loyalty to the Palestinian cause by claiming that there was a pro-Palestinian shift in the position of the United States that was the

---

<sup>25</sup> Emil Touma and Tawfiq Toubi of Rakah as reported in *Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP)* 55 (1977):14-15, 18-20.

<sup>26</sup> Landa, “From the History,” pp. 26, 30.

<sup>27</sup> TASS, October 2, 1977. See also Soviet communiqués with such Rejection Front states as Iraq, which refused to use the term “state” because of its implied territorial limitations, recognition of Israel, and the idea of negotiations.

<sup>28</sup> See below for more important PLO objections, according to MENA, October 2, 1977; QNA (Qatar), November 2, 1977; Leon Keshishian, “PLO at the U.N.,” *The Middle East* (November 1977):31. The major opposition to this point came from the Rejection Front: Baghdad radio, October 6 and 7, 1977; INA (Iraq), October 4, 1977.

result of Moscow's efforts and pressures.<sup>29</sup> And indeed, the Soviet Union may have welcomed, at least to a certain degree, what appeared to be a gradual U.S. acknowledgement of the Palestinians' demands—in the form of the Carter administration's statement regarding a Palestinian "homeland"<sup>30</sup>—insofar as this brought the Soviet and U.S. positions closer. This might enable the superpower cooperation—that is, Soviet participation—in the negotiating process desired by Moscow and generally denied by the previous U.S. administration. Yet, this very change in the attitude of the United States in the direction of a Palestinian state posed serious problems for Soviet policy, specifically the concern that now even the PLO, as Egypt before it, might opt for U.S. friendship on the grounds that the United States was the only superpower *able* and now, finally, *willing* to deliver what the Arabs sought. This concern was fed by the fact of PLO financial dependence upon Saudi Arabia and the resultant emergence of closer PLO-Saudi Arabian relations, which, in Moscow's eyes, meant the growing influence of a pro-U.S. anti-Soviet power over the PLO.<sup>31</sup> To counter what the USSR feared might be an erosion of the Soviet-PLO alliance, Soviet propaganda and even some official pronouncements denounced the U.S. position for its ambiguity regarding a state, as distinct from a homeland, as well as for what was called its deliberate vagueness with regard to the area meant and its relationship to Jordan, or Israel. In addition to the direct propaganda attacks on the U.S. position, which clearly stated that Washington was engaging in subterfuge and deception in order to divide the Arabs and drive a wedge between them and their natural socialist allies (as well as to serve up to Israel a settlement detrimental to the Arabs, including the Palestinians), the Soviets appeared to add still another element to their Palestinian position—the old but rarely mentioned demand for the return of the Palestinians to their homes. The appearance and meaning of this demand will be discussed below, but the timing of its appearance would seem to have been determined by Moscow's desire to counter the emerging U.S. position with a still more radical demand, thereby demonstrating to the PLO the Soviet Union's continued value.

---

<sup>29</sup> *As-Siyassah*, April 23, 1977 (Mohsen interview); *al-Dastur* (Paris), May 15, 1977.

<sup>30</sup> Clinton speech, March 17, 1977, for example.

<sup>31</sup> Reports of Saudi Arabian pressures on the PLO to make concessions were carried, for example, by TASS, September 1, 1977; *Prauda*, September 15, 1977. More generally, there were constant references to "Arab reaction," working together with the imperialists and Zionists.

The Soviet's justification of their demand for Palestinian statehood was usually based upon references to the U.N. charter, to decisions of the U.N., or, on occasion, to the U.N. General Assembly November 29, 1947, decision to partition Palestine. The choice of one or another of these justifications carried with it certain tactical implications, including some connected with the locale intended for such a state; these implications will be discussed below. On a theoretical level, the Soviet argument generally was that the Palestinian Arab people constituted a three- (sometimes four-) million-strong people (nation) deprived of its national rights.<sup>32</sup> Most Soviet references to the Palestinians, particularly in the daily press, did not specifically include the Israeli Arabs in this category; indeed, most Soviet comments distinguished between the Palestinians living in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the Arabs—only rarely actually called Palestinians—living in "Israel proper" or the Arab citizens of Israel.<sup>33</sup> Generally, the reference was

---

<sup>32</sup> See, for example, Yuri Potomov, "Middle East: Time for Real Solution," *New Times* (April 1976):4-5; Lev Bausin, "Condemnation of Israeli Outrages," *New Times* (May 1976):15; *Izvestiia*, May 20, 1976; R. Gherman, "Tel Aviv's Calculations and Miscalculations," *New Times* (August 1976):10-11; Y. Primakov, "Zionism and Israel against the Arab People of Palestine," Part II, *Aziia i Afrika Sevodnia* (April 1977):8-13. There is some ambiguity regarding the size of the Palestinian people. The latest Soviet book on the subject spoke of 3.5 million Palestinians as of the end of 1977—see E. Dimitryev, *Palestinskii uzhel* [The Palestinian Knot] (Moscow: International Relations Publishers, 1978), p. 140—while a radio discussion on March 7, 1978, referred to 3.5 million, with the implication that this figure did *not* include those Arabs living in pre-1967 Israel. Later quotes of 3.5 million did, however, imply that this figure included *all* Palestinians, one million of whom were said to be on the West Bank and Gaza; see, for example, *Izvestiia*, October 11, 1978; *Prauda*, March 30, June 22, 1979. TASS, April 11, 1978, quoted PLO official Khalid Fahum's figure of 4 million and Dmitry Volsky, "Who Occupied the Fourth Chair?," *New Times* (October 1978):6 quoted the Moscow PLO representative on 4 million, as did Vladimir Belyakov, "Grief and Hopes of the Palestinians," *New Times* (January 1979):25, of whom only 1.7 million live in Palestine (including Gaza, the West Bank, and Israel proper). D. Volsky subsequently used the 4 million figure himself, "The Game Goes On," *New Times* (September 1979): 15.

<sup>33</sup> Landa, "The Contemporary Stage," p. 28; *Prauda and Krasnaya zvezda*, April 1, 1976; *Izvestiia*, May 9, 1976; *Krasnaya zvezda*, May 13, 1977; E. Dimitryev and V. Ladeikin, *Put' k miry na blizhem vostokeye* [The road to Peace in the Middle East] (Moscow: International Relations Publishers, 1974), p. 62; see also "The Soviet Attitude to the Arabs of Israel," unpublished paper, The Soviet and East European Research Centre, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1978, 7 pp. (in Hebrew).

to a people driven—in 1948 and in 1967—from its age-old lands;<sup>34</sup> but an authoritative series written by Soviet Middle East specialist Yevgeny Primakov in the spring of 1977 clearly specified that the Palestinian people comprised three groups: those who had remained “on the territory of Israel” after 1948, those residing in the occupied territories, and the “hundreds of thousands of refugees” living in various Arab countries.<sup>35</sup> This specific reference to the Israeli Arabs as part of the Palestinian people implied that this group—some 450,000 people<sup>36</sup>—also had a right to self-determination, although the official Soviet position, as expressed in such statements as that of the Soviet government on April 28, 1976, or its settlement proposal of October 1976, or speeches by Brezhnev, limited itself to the “banished” Palestinians, that is, those outside the State of Israel.<sup>37</sup> The Israel Communist Party (Rakah) generally assumed the official Soviet position, demanding for Israeli Arabs—whom they did not hesitate, however, to describe as part of the Palestinian people—“full national equality.”<sup>38</sup> This, as almost all Soviet treatment of the issue, implied rights within the existing state, as distinct from and in argument with the separatist demands expressed by some groups of Israeli Arabs.<sup>39</sup> The purposely ambiguous Soviet position basically suggested

---

<sup>34</sup> See, for example, E. Dimitryev, “The Middle East,” p. 99, *Prauda*, March 27, 1976; *Izvestiia*, May 20, 1976; A. K. Kislov, “Vital Problems of a Middle East Settlement,” *S.Sh.A.* (July 1977):23, 26; Soviet government statement of April 28, 1976 in TASS, April 28, 1976, all refer to the Palestinians as “evictees,” “exiles,” or a “banished people.”

<sup>35</sup> Y. Primakov, “Zionism and Israel against the Arab People of Palestine,” Part I, *Aziia i Afrika Sevodnia* (March 1977):8-12.

<sup>36</sup> TASS, September 2, 1977, employed the incorrect figure of 600,000, but usually Soviet sources used the figure, accepted by both the Arabs and Israel, of 450,000.

<sup>37</sup> April 1976 statement in *Prauda*, April 29, 1976; October 1976 statement in TASS, October 1, 1976.

<sup>38</sup> Tawfiq Zayyat (Rakah) to Moscow radio, July 26, 1976 (following the first publicized official meeting between Rakah and the Jordanian Communist Party). See also John Pittman (CP-USA) and Zahi Karkabi (Rakah), “The True Face of Zionism,” *World Marxist Review* 20 (March 1977):110; Meir Vilner (Rakah), “Peace in the Middle East,” *World Marxist Review* 20 (April 1977):31.

<sup>39</sup> See *Jerusalem Post*, February 1, 25, and 28, 1979; *Yediot Ahronot* (Tel Aviv), January 18, 1979; *Zo Haderech* (Tel Aviv), December 22, 1976. For a radical left view on the different ideas regarding the Israeli Arabs, including the views of Rakah, see Uri Davis in *Free Palestine* 9 (March 1976):8; Uri Davis, “Stranger in His Own Land,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* VIII (Winter 1979): 133-43; Michel Warschowski, “The Israeli Communist Party and the Radical Anti-Zionist Left,” *MERIP* 66 (1978):24-25.

that the creation of a Palestinian state would, somehow, solve the problem of the Israeli Arabs; Moscow's position regarding the locale of such a state and the problem of returning refugees shed somewhat more light on this subject, as we shall see below.

Although the Soviets did discuss the steps leading to the formation of a Palestinian state, within the territorial context, they were extremely cautious and generally reticent to do so within any political context. Thus, there was little to no Soviet response to the issue raised in the Arab world and debated within the PLO regarding the creation of a provisional Palestinian government or government-in-exile. When the idea was first raised publicly by Sadat in 1972, the Soviets limited themselves merely to reporting the suggestion, although there were some claims that Moscow approved the idea following the 1973 war as a means of facilitating PLO participation in Geneva.<sup>40</sup> There was indeed one public expression of Soviet support for the idea in the form of an interview given by Soviet Middle East expert Igor Belyaev to an Arab paper in November 1974, in which it was said that Moscow would recognize such a government and consider its formation a positive step.<sup>41</sup> Following the Rabat summit, when the PLO undertook a study of the question, the Soviets let their preferences be known within the framework of the debate, that is, support for a type of government that would be no more than a copy of the PLO executive rather than a politically broader grouping to which other elements—the implication was pro-Western—would be added.<sup>42</sup> During this debate Hawatmeh announced his support for the creation of a provisional government, stating that he would discuss the matter with the Soviets during his visit to Moscow (just prior to an Arafat visit, November 1974).<sup>43</sup> Moscow may have sought, through Hawatmeh, to influence the PLO decision in favor of a Marxist-oriented government or, at the least,

---

<sup>40</sup> Eric Rouleau in *Le Monde*, May 22, 1975, said that the PNF program of December 1973 supported the idea, but Moscow's account of the program, on Moscow radio in Arabic, September 3, 1975, made no mention of it. *An-Nahar Arab Report and Memo* (Beirut) 1 (October 10, 1977):5-6, also said that the Soviets had approved this idea following the 1973 war in order to facilitate the convening of the Geneva Conference. There were also many rumors to this effect at the time of Arafat's 1974 visits to the Soviet Union.

<sup>41</sup> *An-Nahar*, November 4, 1974.

<sup>42</sup> *As-Safir* (Beirut), December 14, 1974, in *Journal of Palestine Studies* IV (Spring 1975):144.

<sup>43</sup> *Le Monde* interview, November 6, 1974.



a PLO-type government as distinct from a bourgeois or purely nationalist oriented body.

When the issue arose again at the end of 1976 and beginning of 1977—following a suspension of the question by the PLO due to the Lebanese war—the Soviet position became much less positive. Most likely reflecting Soviet thinking, the Palestinian Communist Organization (originally the branch of the Jordanian Communist Party located on the West Bank) expressed reservations about the idea on the grounds that it (1) might split the PLO itself; (2) might lead to the withdrawal of recognition the PLO had already received from some states; and (3) might be no more than the tool of the reactionary Arab regimes favoring a capitulationist path.<sup>44</sup> These reservations became actual objections in the form of Soviet quotations of comments by Nayif Hawatmeh, now opposed to the idea of a government-in-exile, at the beginning of 1977 and then, more directly, in Moscow's own treatment of Sadat's proposal of such a government to the Palestine National Council in March 1977.<sup>45</sup> At this time major Soviet objections stemmed from concern over the fact that it was in fact Egypt and Saudi Arabia that were actively pursuing the idea—Syria reportedly was opposed<sup>46</sup>—and, therefore, planning to dominate the new body. Given PLO financial dependence upon Saudi Arabia, this was not an unlikely possibility. By the end of 1978, however, it was the Rejectionists who were advocating the idea of such a government, primarily because of their concern that Jordan might join Sadat's peace initiative.<sup>47</sup> Soviet thinking may, however, have been guided by other criteria altogether; Moscow may have concluded that it was too early yet to force the Palestinian issue by such a formal and irrevocable step as creation of a Palestinian government—the problems of PLO recognition, participation in Geneva, even exclusive rights to represent the Palestinians being difficult enough when it came to negotiations. Moreover, the Soviets may have objected for just the reason presented by Sadat in favor of such a body: the assumption by the PLO of full official responsibility for actions and decisions connected with the Palestinians. As

---

<sup>44</sup> *Al-Watan* (clandestine organ of the Palestine Communist Organization), in *MERIP* 55 (1977):17.

<sup>45</sup> Radio Peace and Progress in Arabic, January 6, 1977, March 14, 1977.

<sup>46</sup> Godfrey Jansen, "The PLO after Cairo," *Middle East International* (London) (May 1977):8.

<sup>47</sup> See issues debated prior to the January 1979 PNC session, summarized in *Jerusalem Post*, January 16, 1979.

PLO political department chief Faruq Qaddumi told an interviewer, such a government would have to assume responsibility for the refugees, who were until now taken care of by the U.N., and also for actions such as hijacking by certain groups against Israel or in third countries.<sup>48</sup> On the other hand, as a number of PLO officials, including a founder member of the Soviet-sponsored Palestine National Front, pointed out—as did one Soviet commentary, at least by implication—if it was thought that a major advantage to be gained would be official recognition in the world and the status necessary for membership in international organizations, maintenance of missions abroad, and the conclusion of agreements, the PLO itself had already attained just this.<sup>49</sup> Whatever the substantive reasons for Soviet hesitancy regarding the creation of a Palestinian government-in-exile, it cannot be excluded that the Soviets did not in fact have any strong opinions on the matter one way or another, merely following what appeared to be the general conclusion within the PLO, reinforced by the fact that the only strong advocate of the idea was Egypt, at one time, and the more extreme Rejectionists at another.<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> Reuter, January 11, 1977, as cited in *Free Palestine* 10 (February 1977):7.

<sup>49</sup> *Free Palestine* 10 (February 1977): editorial, p. 11; *The Middle East* (November 1977):32 interview with PNF founding member Abdel-Jawad Saleh; Igor Blishchenko, "The Rights of the Palestinians," *New Times* (January 1978): 20. See also Dimitryev, "The Middle East," who likened the PLO to the Jewish Agency, prior to Israeli statehood, as a political body capable of concluding negotiations and agreements.

<sup>50</sup> The Yugoslavs reportedly encouraged the idea when Arafat visited at the end of 1976, but Belgrade's position need not have influenced or implied anything regarding Soviet thinking; see *Maghreb Arab Press*, December 9, 1976. In the autumn of 1977 Sadat again suggested a government-in-exile, and it was said that Arafat had agreed that one should be set up following an invitation to the PLO to participate in Geneva. There was a flurry of rumors in the Arab world on the imminent possibility of the creation of such a government, especially after the Soviet-U.S. joint statement in October, but there was no public Soviet response; see *An-Nahar Arab Report and Memo* 1 (October 10, 1977): 506. Again, just after Camp David, there was a report that the PLO, including the Rejectionists, had decided to set up a "moderate" government-in-exile and that Arafat had secured Soviet support for the idea during his October-November 1978 visit to Moscow. There was no confirmation of this from either PLO or other sources, and the Soviets made no mention of it. See *Arab Report and Record* (November 1978):804, quoting the London based *Ash-Sharq al-Awsat*, November 9, 1978. On Soviet support for but Fatah opposition to the idea see *MEED Arab Report* (January 31, 1979):11.

## LOCALE OF STATE: INSTEAD OF OR ALONGSIDE ISRAEL

The very idea of Palestinian statehood was complicated by the multi-faceted question of the locale or borders of such a state, since a number of alternatives were possible, each carrying a significant set of implications. The alternatives were: (1) a democratic, secular Palestinian state in all of Mandatory Palestine, that is, Palestinian sovereignty over all of Palestine as advocated by the PLO charter of 1968; (2) a state within the territory granted the Arabs, as distinct from the Jews, in the U.N. General Assembly decision of November 29, 1947, that is, the partition plan; or (3) a state limited to territories occupied by Israel in the June 1967 war, that is, the West Bank of the Jordan and the Gaza Strip. Either of the second two alternatives implied not only a limitation on Palestinian territorial aspirations and, therefore, a change in the PLO charter but also the continued existence and recognition of the State of Israel, while the first alternative implied the destruction or dismantling of the State of Israel. The third alternative meant acceptance of Israel's rule over areas obtained in the 1948-49 war, while the second alternative meant dismemberment of Israel as it had existed, as an integral unit, since within months of its founding in 1948. The second two alternatives left the status of Jerusalem and the Palestinian refugees somewhat unclear, while all three begged the question of Jordan.

The Soviet Union by and large ignored the PLO's idea of a democratic-secular state as such. While on rare occasions it reported PLO, or other, statements specifying this demand—such as Arafat's speech to the U.N. General Assembly in 1974<sup>51</sup>—Moscow's only

---

<sup>51</sup> Landa, "The Contemporary Stage," p. 24 reported that Arafat "invited Israel to form together a united, democratic, progressive state" of Christians, Jews, and Moslems, although the same article praised the PNF's opposition to the "all or nothing" approach, that is, a state instead of Israel, as a sign of realism (p. 22). Another exception was *Pravda's* November 7, 1977, report of an Iraqi Ba'th representative's statement on the Palestinians' right to establish a democratic state in which all would coexist. Typical of Moscow's ignoring of the democratic-secular state idea, however, was a TASS comment that while Israel and the United States were trying to use the Lebanese events as proof of the "impossibility of peaceful coexistence of Moslems and Christians within the framework of one state, by the same token it could also be possible to prove the impossibility of existence of a Palestinian state alongside Israel," without any reference whatsoever to the PLO's concept of a secular democratic state—which

discussion of the idea consisted of dismissing the possibility of Jews and Arabs living together in one state as unrealistic. As early as 1969, *Sovetskaya Rosiya* argued that it was "doubtful if it is possible now to turn back the wheel of history and build anew a Palestinian people composed of Jews and Arabs."<sup>52</sup> More to the point was the maintenance of this line even once Moscow had recognized the existence of a Palestinian Arab people and demanded a state for them. This took several forms, as expressed both by Soviet and non-Soviet Communist sources. As if to concede that Moscow had at least considered the option, an oft-forgotten, almost never referred to fact of history began to be mentioned, albeit rarely, from 1974 on:<sup>53</sup> the Soviets' expressed preference, during the 1947 U.N. debate, for the creation of a binational state in Palestine as preferable to partition.<sup>54</sup> The Arab demand at the time had been for a binational state, but it may well have been included in the Soviet position then simply for the purpose of keeping some option open for future relations with the Arabs, as the over-all thrust of the Soviet position in the 1947 U.N. debate was clearly in favor of partition in the event that a binational state could not be worked out. And in the critical vote the Soviet Union supported partition, that is, the creation of two states in Palestine. Although the rehashing of this 1947 position may have been due in part to a certain Soviet defensiveness, in the 1970s, for having played a positive role in the creation of the State of Israel, the references to the Soviets' 1947 position appeared, rather, in justifications of Moscow's *rejection* of the idea of a single state in Palestine. A very low-level statement in 1975, the answer to a reader's query in *New Times*, explained that by 1947 the Jewish community in Palestine had become an "objective fact" and that "the road to peace in the Middle East does not lie through cancellation of the 1947 U.N. resolution," as some "extremist" parties would have it.<sup>55</sup> A more authoritative

---

is what the U.S. and Israeli claims were all about. See TASS, June 15, 1976; *Krasnaya zvezda*, June 16, 1976.

<sup>52</sup> *Sovetskaya Rosiya*, April 15, 1969.

<sup>53</sup> *Izvestiia*, July 30, 1974; Lev Tolkunov, "The Middle East Crisis and the Ways of Solving It," *Kommunist* 13 (1974):99.

<sup>54</sup> Gromyko speech: U.N. General Assembly, 1st Special Session, 77th Plenary Meeting, Vol. I (1947), pp. 127-35. The speech can also be found in Yaacov Ro'i, *From Encroachment to Involvement* (New York: John Wiley, 1974), pp. 38-41.

<sup>55</sup> Vladimir Shelepin in *New Times* (July 1975):31.

explanation was that imperialist-sown hatred had rendered the idea of a unitary state impossible, while, according to both Arab and Israeli Communist sources, the impossibility of the idea had remained because of the accumulation of mutual hostility and wars over the years.<sup>56</sup> One Palestinian spokesman acknowledged this as the position of the "Palestinian Arab and Jewish Communists" but argued that it was doubtful that partition was any less realistic a solution than the creation of a secular state.<sup>57</sup>

More frequently heard was the general Soviet admonition against the destruction of the State of Israel, voiced in the form of criticism of both the earlier immaturity of the Palestinian movement in the days of Shukeiry and present-day "extremists."<sup>58</sup> Recognizing that there were still groups within the PLO that refused to agree to the existence of Israel, Moscow condemned those who advocated a Palestinian state *instead* of Israel, still arguing, as it had with the Syrian Communists in 1971, that self-determination for one people could not be at the expense of self-determination of another, "the Israeli people included."<sup>59</sup> Moscow emphasized that the Soviet demand for a Palestinian state was explicitly for a state *alongside* Israel, and this became the stand of the Israeli and Arab Communist parties alike, as well as of the Soviet-sponsored PNF.<sup>60</sup> The Soviets

---

<sup>56</sup> Dimitryev, "The Middle East," p. 99; R. Landa, "The Palestinian Question: the Socio-Political Aspect," *Aziia i Afrika Sevodnia* (March 1976): 6-8; Jordanian Communist Party, *Les Communistes*, p. 10; Victor Bukharkov, "The Palestinians' Stand," *New Times* (April 1977):10-11, which commented *inter alia*, that it would be a long time before trust between Palestinians and Israelis could be established; Tawfiq Zayyad as quoted in *MERIP* 55 (1977):18.

<sup>57</sup> Shafiq al-Hout, director of the PLO Beirut office, in "New PLO Hints," *The Middle East* (November 1976):74 (speech to Association of Arab University Graduates, New York, October 1976).

<sup>58</sup> See, for example, Dimitryev, "The Middle East," p. 101; Y. Primakov, "Zionism and Israel," Part II, p. 10. It was also used in Moscow broadcasts in Hebrew to calm Israeli fears. In his conversation with Abba Eban at the Geneva Conference, Gromyko cited the Soviets' 1947-48 support for the founding of Israel as a commitment for the future as well. (*Ha'aretz* (Tel Aviv), October 4, 1974.)

<sup>59</sup> *Izvestiia*, July 30, 1974; Blishchenko, "The Rights of the Palestinians," p. 20.

<sup>60</sup> Selim el-Qassem (Rakah), "Discrimination: A Bankrupt Policy," *World Marxist Review* 19 (October 1976), p. 41; "Interview with the Palestine National Front," *Palestine Digest* (Washington), 6 (October 1976), p. 21; al-Hout, "New PLO Hint," p. 75; Touma, Zayyat, *al-Watan* in *MERIP*, No. 55 (1977), pp. 14-15, 17, 19; Jordanian Communist Party, *Les Communistes*, p. 10, and Naim Ashhab, "The Palestinian Aspect of the Middle East Crisis," *World Marxist*

tried to present this as the view accepted by the majority of the PLO components as well, praising this as a maturation to a realistic position.<sup>61</sup> Thus, they denied the Israeli accusation that the PLO charter, with its clauses calling for the liberation of all of Palestine and the destruction of the "Zionist entity," still governed that organization. Following, however, the reaffirmation of the PLO charter at the 1977 session of the PNC, the Soviets rephrased this denial, on one occasion arguing that the Israeli "interpretation" of the charter, that is, that it called for the liquidation of Israel, was totally incorrect, on another occasion claiming that the program of the World Zionist Organization, Israel's declaration of Independence, and the platforms of Israel's current ruling parties advocated a "Greater Israel" from the Nile to the Euphrates, a plank that threatened the existence of certain Arab states.<sup>62</sup> Generally, however, the Soviet media quoted Arafat or Palestinian moderates such as Hamami to the effect that nobody intended today, as had Shukeiry in the past, to push the Jews into the sea.<sup>63</sup>

Soviet claims notwithstanding, the issue of a Palestinian state instead of or alongside Israel, the latter implying the continuing existence and recognition of Israel, remained a bone of contention between Moscow and the PLO. The Rejection Front within the PLO was the first to bring the discord with the Soviets over this into the

---

*Review* 17 (April 1974), p. 29. The Iraqi Communist Party may have dissented on this point—see, for example, Azziz Muhammed, "Tasks of the Revolutionary Forces of Iraq," *World Marxist Review* 19 (September 1976), pp. 3-5. The Syrian Communist Party had been sufficiently purged over the years to bring agreement on this point.

<sup>61</sup> See, for example, *Izvestiia*, July 30, 1974; Dimitryev, *Palestinian Knot*, pp. 93-94. One exception to this was the comment in the by no means moderate book by Dimitryev and Ladeikin, *The Road to Peace*, published in 1974, which claimed that the most significant and major shortcoming of the Palestinian movement was its failure to recognize the rights of the "Hebrew nation" to self-determination and an independent state, specifying that the movement had not yet reached this realistic position, finding it difficult to abandon their old slogan for the elimination of the State of Israel (pp. 70-73).

<sup>62</sup> Blishchenko, "The Rights of the Palestinians," p. 21, or Bukharkov, "The Palestinians' Stand," p. 10. This line was to be used subsequently by the PLO.

<sup>63</sup> Oleg Alov, "The Objective: Geneva," *New Times* (October 1977):9; I. Riabinov, "Zionist Policy at an Impasse," *Mirovaya ekonomika a mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia* (May 1976):47-59; Radio Peace and Progress in Hebrew, October 2, 1977; Bukharkov, "The Palestinians' Stand," p. 10; R. Landa, "From the History," pp. 30-31.

open. Responding to the November 1973 PLO talks in Moscow, PFLP leader George Habash said:

The Soviets are friends who have a specific point of view on resolution 242. Will the balance of forces, taken together with the Soviet point of view, allow us—according to the analysis of the situation by certain comrades—to reach the goal of Palestine national democratic jurisdiction, followed by total withdrawal from Arab territories without recognition, without peace, without secure frontiers, without demilitarized zones, without international forces, without all of these safeguards? My answer is certainly not. . . . Because as I have said, Israel would survive even if the maximum achieved at the Geneva Conference was the acceptance of the Soviet point of view, *since this is the Soviet understanding of a just settlement*. . . . I think you actually heard the Soviet point of view when our delegation went to Moscow. Thus the situation is that our point of view on the question of Israel and secure borders differs from that of another effective party.<sup>64</sup>

Later Habash revealed that he had refused to join the July–August 1974 PLO visit to the Soviet Union because of the latter’s position on this, as well as a few other issues. He argued that “for the present circumstances, the direct result of the establishment of such a state [a “mini-state”] is the recognition of Israel as a state and the acceptance of its peace.”<sup>65</sup> The PFLP remained adamant in its opposition to the Soviet line, criticizing the Soviet-U.S. statement of October 1977 with a commentary against resolution 242 and any settlement that “ignored the Palestinians’ rights to self-determination and a state on all the Palestinian territory.”<sup>66</sup> Another member of the Rejection Front, the Palestinian Popular Struggle Front, expressed its dissatisfaction with the Soviet-U.S. statement, criticizing it for, among other things, its “attempt to induce the PLO leadership to make more concessions, in particular to recognize the Zionist entity,” adding that the statement did “not satisfy the aspirations of our

---

<sup>64</sup> *Shu'un Filastiniya* (February 1974), in *Journal of Palestine Studies* III (Spring 1974):202 [emphasis the author’s].

<sup>65</sup> *An-Nahar*, August 18, 1974. See also *al-Hadaf*, August 3, 1974, and September 28, 1974.

<sup>66</sup> INA, October 4, 1977 (statement by PFLP spokesman Bassam Abu Sharif).

people but instead consecrated the existence of the Zionist entity against our legitimate rights."<sup>67</sup>

These comments were aimed at Arafat as well as at the Soviet Union, for the Rejection Front claimed that Arafat had in fact accepted the Soviet position regarding the idea of two states and that part of resolution 242 which would provide for recognition of Israel, while in fact Arafat and various Fatah spokesmen expressed disagreement with Moscow on these same points. Indirectly, it was disagreement on the issue of two states or the locale of a Palestinian state that prompted the vague wording of the 1975 Soviet-PLO statement in which Arafat finally agreed to a Soviet call for a Palestinian state "on Palestinian territory."<sup>68</sup> More directly, in its draft program for the 1974 PNC session, Fatah included a clause calling upon "friendly states" not only to maintain a break in diplomatic relations with "the Zionist entity" but to withdraw recognition, as well, of the State of Israel.<sup>69</sup> Similarly, the political resolution of the 1977 PNC session expressly ruled out "peace or recognition of Israel."<sup>70</sup>

It might be argued that the PNC position, and possibly even that of Fatah, was a compromise stand forced on Arafat by the pressures of the Rejection Front, which were indeed great.<sup>71</sup> Fatah also argued through its paper *Free Palestine* that PLO withholding of recognition was a tactical weapon.<sup>72</sup> Whatever the reason for or even validity of these proclaimed positions, there were innumerable informal as well as formal statements by persons identified with various strands of Fatah—including its most moderate wing—which stipulated the differences between the Soviet and the Palestinian views regarding the recognition of Israel. Most important were the comments by PLO Political Section chief Qaddumi in a number of interviews in which he said that although the Soviet Union "is

<sup>67</sup> Baghdad radio, October 7, 1977.

<sup>68</sup> Moscow radio in Arabic, November 28, 1975.

<sup>69</sup> *An-Nahar*, March 10, 1974.

<sup>70</sup> *Journal of Palestine Studies* VI (Spring 1977):189.

<sup>71</sup> See, for example, Habash remarks to *al-Jihad* (Tripoli), September 13, 1977.

<sup>72</sup> *Free Palestine* 10 (September 1977):5 on the PLO-Central Council August 26, 1977, session that, in response to urgings on the part of the United States, rejected Security Council resolution 242, because it "implies recognition of Israel." See also p. 1 of the same issue on the PLO memo sent to President Carter.



our friend, . . . they recognize [resolution] 242 and accept it; we don't,"<sup>73</sup> or "But, of course, it [the USSR] accepts resolution 242, and therefore we disagree with it,"<sup>74</sup> or "It is known that the USSR, like . . . the Arab countries, recognizes resolution 242. The position of the USSR has not changed."<sup>75</sup> Commenting on the January 26, 1976, Afro-Asian, Soviet-supported draft resolution defeated in the Security Council, Qaddumi pointed out that although the PLO had wanted this resolution, it objected to its call for secure and recognized borders for all, including Israel.<sup>76</sup> As distinct from this, Qaddumi has also pointed out that China, another source of PLO support did not recognize Israel,<sup>77</sup> and a *Free Palestine* article explained that a high-level PLO delegation to China led by Qaddumi, in June 1976, could be interpreted "as a reminder" to Moscow that the PLO "is not dependent on the Kremlin and that there are other world forces to which it can turn. *The Soviets accept U.N. resolution 242 and recognize Israel, and urge the PLO to do the same. . . .*"<sup>78</sup> The more radical Fatah leader Abu Iyyad, answering an interviewer with regard to the contradiction between the PLO's refusal to recognize Israel and Moscow's willingness to grant safeguards to all states in the Middle East, including Israel, said: ". . . the Soviet Union is our friend and ally. You do not ask a friend to agree with you on all viewpoints. You may disagree with him on some points."<sup>79</sup> Another Fatah leader, Khalid al-Hassan (Abu Said), pointed out that there was Soviet-U.S. agreement regarding both resolution

---

<sup>73</sup> *France-Pays Arabes* (Paris) (November 1977):18, in answer to a question regarding rumors that the Soviets had told the PLO delegation in Moscow in August to postpone acceptance of resolution 242; see for example, *an-Nahar*, August 24, 1977.

<sup>74</sup> MENA, February 26, 1977.

<sup>75</sup> *Voice of Palestine*, September 15, 1977, interview on the August trip to Moscow.

<sup>76</sup> Faruq Khaddoumi and Abdel Mohsen Abu Maizar, "The Crux of the Middle East Crisis," *World Marxist Review* 19 (July 1976):35.

<sup>77</sup> *Palestine Digest* 5 (February 1976) on Qaddumi interview to *Newsweek*, January 5, 1976.

<sup>78</sup> *Free Palestine* (June 1976):5 [emphasis in original]. In fact, the PLO-Chinese relationship deteriorated after Camp David and China's positive attitude to Egypt; see *MEED Arab Report* (February 28, 1979):5. Seeking to capitalize on this, the Soviets even claimed that the 1979 PNC was critical of China—see *Sotsialisticheskaya industriia*, February 17, 1979; Y. Tyunkov, "Palestine Unity," *New Times* (February 1979):15.

<sup>79</sup> *Free Palestine* 9 (April 1976):5. See the same comment in speech in Cairo, *Free Palestine* 10 (February 1977), p. 6.

242 and Israel's right to exist, while the PLO rejected resolution 242.<sup>80</sup>

Other PLO leaders also pointed out the differences with the Soviet Union on this matter, including not only the Syrian-backed Sai'qa leader, Zuhair Mohsen, but also the Marxist Nayif Hawatmeh, often praised by Moscow for his moderation.<sup>81</sup> Mohsen, as well as other Arab and Western sources, claimed the Soviet Union had tried to persuade them during the April 4-8, 1977, PLO visit to the USSR to recognize Israel. This was not a new effort; there were reports that during Arafat's two visits in 1975 the Soviets tried to gain his agreement to a recognition of Israel in hopes of paving the way for a Soviet resolution in the Security Council in 1976 calling for mutual Israel-PLO recognition.<sup>82</sup> *As-Sayyad*, a Beirut weekly, reported on May 18, 1977, that these Soviet efforts had continued throughout 1976 and were increased in the spring of 1977 so as to permit Gromyko to announce PLO agreement on this matter at the Gromyko-Vance meeting scheduled for May. The *New York Times* of May 19, 1977, did report that U.S. Secretary of State Vance planned to discuss with Gromyko the possibility of Soviet assistance in convincing the PLO to recognize Israel so as to facilitate the reconvening of Geneva. In fact, the same paper, as well as Agence France Presse, claimed that the Soviet Union had in fact informed the United States of PLO agreement—obtained, reportedly, during Arafat's April 1977 visit—provided Israel simultaneously recognized the Palestinians' right to a homeland.<sup>83</sup> The PLO and Arab accounts, including those

---

<sup>80</sup> *Monday Morning*, September 12, 1977, p. 9. INA, March 24, 1977, and the Fatah representative in Kuwait (according to QNA, March 23, 1977) said that the PLO was not happy with Brezhnev's March 21, 1977, trade union speech (despite, according to INA, the fact that Brezhnev had given Arafat prior notification on its contents), presumably because it called for recognition of Israel. Similarly, the PLO delegation in New York reportedly responded negatively to the Soviet-U.S. October 1977 statement because of its call for peaceful relations with Israel following Israeli withdrawal; see Leon Keshishian, "PLO at the U.N.," *The Middle East*, No. 37 (November 1977), p. 31.

<sup>81</sup> Hawatmeh: *as-Siyassah*, May 7, 1977; Aloton (Kuwait), April 22, 1977. Mohsen: *Akhbar al-Yom*, April 23, 1977; *al-Asuba al-Arabi*, May 9, 1977.

<sup>82</sup> *Le Monde*, April 30, 1975, May 3, 1975; *as-Siyassah*, January 12, 1976. That this demand was indeed made in 1975 was borne out by subsequent inner-PLO debates and criticism by Habash (see *an-Nahar*, May 15, 1975, and *al-Hadaf*, May 17, 1975). Arafat's refusal during both his 1975 visits was said to have contributed to the fact that only a report, rather than a communiqué, was issued at the end of the visits.

<sup>83</sup> *New York Times*, May 10, 1977; AFP, May 9, 1977.

of Palestinian participants in the April 1977 talks with Moscow, however, denied any such agreement, although they confirmed that the issue was discussed.<sup>84</sup> Both Hawatmeh and Sai'qa leader Mohsen, who participated in the talks, said that Gromyko had explained that there was clear Soviet-U.S. agreement on Israel's right to continue to exist, and the Soviets urged the PLO to recognize Israel, arguing, according to Mohsen, that the dream of a number of extremist elements amongst the Palestinians believing in the destruction of Israel was unrealizable.<sup>85</sup> Mohsen's account of the April meeting contained a point that might have been intended by the Soviets as blackmail, with hints of divided opinion in the Kremlin: Mohsen said that Gromyko demanded Palestinian recognition of Israel, raising the possibility of renewed Soviet-Israeli relations. Gromyko reportedly added that the Soviets had never withdrawn their recognition of Israel but that they might use renewed relations as a lever to gain Israeli recognition of the PLO. Gromyko reportedly added that the Arab states might well recognize Israel one day. Mohsen said that there were "certain important elements" in the Soviet Union that wanted renewed Soviet-Israeli relations so as to permit a greater Soviet role in the Middle East, especially in view of the success of the United States with some Arab states, particularly Egypt. Mohsen said that the PLO-Soviet dialogue on the recognition issue was to continue, and that a common PLO-Soviet position, or at least one as close as possible, was still being sought.<sup>86</sup>

The increased Soviet pressures at this time may well have been connected with Soviet-U.S. talks regarding the reconvening of Geneva and declared U.S. agreement to PLO participation provided it changed its attitude toward Israel. The fact that on April 9, 1977, TASS reported this U.S. statement in a relatively favorable tone was open to the interpretation that Moscow too saw PLO recognition

---

<sup>84</sup> Official PLO denial of May 10, 1977, reported in *An-Nahar Arab Report and Memo* 1 (May 30, 1977):8; PLO executive statement, Voice of Palestine, May 14, 1977. *Al-Watan* (Kuwait), May 21, 1977, quoted Abu Iyyad that the PLO would "never" recognize Israel. According to DPA, May 17, 1977, Qaddumi told Swiss television the same, and Voice of Palestine, May 11, 1977, said that Qaddumi denied PLO readiness to recognize Israel or resolution 242. The Rejection Front made a similar announcement: Baghdad radio, May 10, 1977. *Alziad* (Beirut), June 9, 1977, quoted U.S. State Department sources that the Soviets had *not* received PLO agreement.

<sup>85</sup> Hawatmeh: *as-Siyassah*, May 7 and 8, 1977; *Aloton*, April 22, 1977. Mohsen: *Akhbar al-Yom*, April 23, 1977; *al-Asubua al-Arabi*, May 9, 1977.

<sup>86</sup> Mohsen, see footnote 85.

of Israel as the major stumbling block toward the reconvening of the Geneva Conference and, therefore, worthy of intensified Soviet efforts. That Soviet pressures did exist was undisputed, but it is not known—nor was it even rumored—whether Brezhnev raised the issue himself in his half-hour meeting with Arafat in Moscow. This meeting itself, the first occasion on which Arafat was received by the Soviet leader, was most likely designed to counter the recently positive U.S. attitude regarding the Palestinians. However much the Soviets may have welcomed the change in Washington insofar as it promised a return to Geneva and Soviet participation, they had to prevent a possible PLO drift toward the United States. This was the reason not only for the Arafat audience with Brezhnev but also for criticism and belittling of the U.S. line in Soviet propaganda, as well as certain temporary additions to the Soviet settlement formula at this time.<sup>87</sup> It is all the more significant, therefore, that, despite what was probably genuine Soviet concern over U.S.-PLO possibilities, Moscow persisted in its basic line regarding recognition of Israel, at this time specifically in hopes of reconvening Geneva, even to the point of stepping up its pressures on the PLO. It may have been in compensation for these pressures that Gromyko made certain commitments to the PLO, in these talks, with regard to Soviet participation in the Geneva Conference, as we shall see below. In any case, Soviet pressures would appear to have continued, for accounts of Arafat's August 1977 visit to Moscow also mentioned them, and once again there were rumors that the Soviets had gained PLO agreement to recognize Israel.<sup>88</sup> Following the Soviet failure to persuade the PLO on this point, however, there were signs that the Soviets were trying to find another way out; a Hebrew-language broadcast and, later, an article in *New Times* expressed the idea that the very acceptance of the PLO to sit with Israel at Geneva would constitute recognition and that "international practice shows that the absence of mutual recognition need not be an obstacle to joint participation in international conferences and other negotiations."<sup>89</sup> Moreover, following the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Accord,

---

<sup>87</sup> In this connection, the Soviet media made much of U.S. comments regarding defensible borders for Israel, claiming that this proved that the United States did not intend to press Israel to withdraw from *all* the 1967 territories.

<sup>88</sup> See, for example, *An-Nahar Arab Report and Memo* (September 5, 1977):5; Israel radio, September 17, 1977 (Wilner statement on his return from Moscow).

<sup>89</sup> Radio Peace and Progress, July 17, 1977; Blishchenko, "The Pales-

in a period when Moscow became particularly concerned over PLO-U.S. contacts, the Soviets adopted a less positive stand regarding recognition. Inasmuch as the United States was pressing for PLO recognition of Israel so as to be able to open direct U.S.-PLO talks, there were occasional disparaging comments in the Soviet press regarding such a demand, some saying, for example, that it was pure cynicism to demand that the Palestinians "shake and kiss the hands that are stifling them."<sup>90</sup> But such comments usually took the form of warnings not to trust promises that Washington would deliver Israeli concessions in exchange for such recognition.<sup>91</sup> That is, the Soviets did not themselves abandon their own position on the recognition of Israel, but rather they strove to maintain their own role and importance for such a change in the PLO position.

The Soviet line on Israel's right to exist remained, indeed, a consistent one, the standard Soviet formula for a settlement usually containing the need for guaranteeing or securing the independence, and occasionally the sovereignty and territorial integrity, of all the states in the area. This formula often specified Israel as one of the necessary beneficiaries and, upon occasion, even linked this phrase with Soviet willingness to provide such guarantees. Aside from Gromyko's pronouncements to the Geneva Conference opening in December 1973 and to the United Nations, reiterating Moscow's continued recognition of Israel's right to exist,<sup>92</sup> some notable examples of official Soviet willingness to recognize and even participate in guarantees of this situation were Gromyko's speech honoring visiting Syrian Foreign Minister Khaddam in April 1975, in which Moscow expressed its willingness to offer Israel "the strictest guarantees,"<sup>93</sup> Brezhnev's speech to the 1976 CPSU Congress,<sup>94</sup> the Soviet government statement of April 1976,<sup>95</sup> Gromyko's speeches

---

tinians' Rights," p. 21. That the pressures for recognition nonetheless continued was suggested by the Israel Communist Party message published by *Pravda* to the January 1979 PNC session, urging the forum to recognize Israel's right to existence and to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict through the Geneva mechanism. (*Pravda*, January 31, 1979.)

<sup>90</sup> *Izvestiia*, May 15, 1979.

<sup>91</sup> *Izvestiia*, November 17, 1979. See also Chapter Three for the 1979 attempt to change resolution 242.

<sup>92</sup> *Pravda*, September 25, 1974.

<sup>93</sup> *Pravda*, April 24, 1975.

<sup>94</sup> Moscow radio, February 24, 1976.

<sup>95</sup> TASS, April 28, 1976.

to the U.N. General Assembly in September 1976 and 1977,<sup>96</sup> Brezhnev's speeches in January and March 1977,<sup>97</sup> and on the occasion of Assad's visit in April 1977,<sup>98</sup> as well as the Soviet-U.S. statement of October 1977,<sup>99</sup> Brezhnev's *Pravda* interview in December 1977 and his speech in Baku on September 22, 1978, and Gromyko's June 1979 press conference.<sup>100</sup> The wide variety of occasions upon which such statements were made, including also *Pravda* commentaries on "Israel's right to independence and secure existence" just as Arafat was visiting,<sup>101</sup> as well as reminders in the Soviet media, in addition to the above-mentioned pressures on the PLO itself on this issue, all belied the simple explanation of Soviet tactical maneuvers. It was of course very likely that the timing or platform for some statements was chosen with tactical considerations in mind: to please or reassure Israel in hopes of gaining agreement to Soviet participation in talks, to impress the United States with Moscow's reasonableness, to clarify to the Arabs, particularly the Syrians, the limits of Moscow's belligerence toward Israel, or, to the PLO, the limits of Moscow's support. Yet the very consistency of this position and, even more important, the fact that it was maintained even in the face of opposition from various Arab allies of Moscow, notably Iraq and also Libya,<sup>102</sup> and of consternation within the PLO strongly suggested that—as the Soviets told the Syrian Communists in 1971—this was a position of principle. This need not reflect a moral or any other kind of commitment to Israel's existence but, more probably, the simple realization that Israel was indeed a fact and that any real threat to its very existence would most likely

---

<sup>96</sup> TASS, September 29, 1976, September 27, 1977.

<sup>97</sup> *Pravda*, January 19, 1977 (Tula speech); TASS, March 21, 1977 (trade union speech).

<sup>98</sup> TASS, April 18, 1977.

<sup>99</sup> TASS, October 2, 1977.

<sup>100</sup> *Pravda*, December 24, 1977; *Pravda*, September 23, 1978.

<sup>101</sup> *Izvestiia*, July 30, 1975; *Pravda*, April 2, 1977.

<sup>102</sup> *Le Monde*, December 11, 1976, reported problems during Qaddafi's December 6-9, 1976, Moscow visit over this issue. For Iraqi reservations see comments by Iraqi Ba'ath leader Saddam Husayn, Baghdad radio, June 5, 1974; *as-Siyassah*, October 31, 1974. See also *Pravda*, November 7, 1977, for reporting of an Iraqi view different from that of Moscow—a situation reflected in almost all Soviet encounters with the Iraqis, such as Kosygin's May 1976 visit.

invite U.S. intervention, with all that such a development might entail, including the threat of superpower confrontation.<sup>103</sup>

This is not to say that the Soviets acknowledged the legitimacy of Zionism, that is, of the ideology that expressed the Jews' national aspirations. Moscow's position continued to be that Zionism was not a national liberation movement of the Jewish people as a whole but rather the bourgeois racist ideology of a small clique that had taken over Israel, operating to the detriment of the interests of the Jewish people.<sup>104</sup> An *Izvestiia* commentary, for example, claimed that the "progressive forces of the world do not identify Zionism with the Jewish nation," defining the former as harmful, "deadly dangerous to the Jewish nation itself" and to the "real interests of the Israeli nation."<sup>105</sup> Yet the Soviets had upon occasion denied even the existence of a "Jewish nation" or people, referring rather to the "Israeli" people, explaining even that a "Hebrew nation" was being formed in Israel.<sup>106</sup> In any case, with the arbitrary separation between the State of Israel and Zionism, the ideology upon which it was founded and based, the Soviets occasionally argued that while peace was in Israel's interests, Zionism would perish in a condition of peace, as there would be neither outside money nor immigration if Israel could not be presented as a beleaguered fortress.<sup>107</sup> Although there had been those in Israel who had argued that Israel should be seen as a state like any other, devoid of any Jewish—or other national—

<sup>103</sup> This was, in fact, the way the Soviets put it to the Syrian Communists in 1971: "The existence of Israel is a fact. The idea of annihilating it as a way of achieving self-determination for the Palestinian Arab people is self-contradictory; this can only be solved by a world war." See "Special Document," p. 200.

<sup>104</sup> *Prauda*, November 15, 1974; Moscow radio, October 19, 1975; *Izvestiia*, December 2, 1975; TASS, November 12, 1975; Y. Primakov, "Israel Versus the Arab States," *International Affairs* (November 1976):44-52.

<sup>105</sup> *Izvestiia*, December 2, 1975.

<sup>106</sup> E. Dimitryev and V. Ladeikin, *Road to Peace*, pp. 70-72, russifies the Hebrew word for Hebrew "Ivri" to speak of a Hebrew people. See also Y. Shraiber, "Zionism: Myth and Realities," *International Affairs* (July 1970): 44-45; Y. Primakov, "Israel Versus the Arab States," pp. 46-49; "Special Document," pp. 191, 199. Lenin's comment that the Jews do not form a separate nation was quoted in a review of M. B. Mitlin, Y. D. Modrzhinskaya, and Y. S. Yevseyev, *Ideologiya i praktika mezhdunarodnogo sionizma* [The Ideology and Practice of International Zionism] (Moscow: Politizdat Publishers, 1978), written by N. Pavlov, "Zionism in the Service of Imperialism," *International Affairs* (April 1979):75.

<sup>107</sup> TASS international service in Russian (roundtable), September 25, 1977; Moscow radio, September 30, 1977.

content or characterization,<sup>108</sup> this amounted almost to a type of doublethink when coupled with the Soviet position *opposing* the liquidation of the State of Israel in order to create a secular democratic state in Palestine, even drawing upon the 1947 U.N. partition decision as justification for the demand for a Palestinian state to be formed *alongside* the Jewish state formed then by the Jews in their allotted territory.<sup>109</sup>

It has been argued that the Soviet position regarding the right of the Palestinian refugees to return contradicted the Soviet position on Israel's right to exist, inasmuch as such a return, just as the halting of immigration and outside Jewish support, including financial support, might well end in the collapse of the state. Indeed, the PLO argued that the fact that the refugees' return would disrupt the Jewish nature of the state was a good reason for the state to be secular.<sup>110</sup> And a 1970 Soviet publication appeared to imply the same thing when it argued that Israeli "fulfillment of international obligations [read, return of the refugees] could threaten only the rule of clerical Zionist circles in Israel, but not the existence of the State of Israel."<sup>111</sup> Nevertheless, the Soviet position on the Palestinians' right to return was not entirely clear or devoid of contradictions. For many years Moscow did not speak of the "right to return" as such but, rather, called for "a just solution" to the refugee problem—and even this was not often mentioned in official statements.<sup>112</sup> Thus, Gromyko made no such reference in his Geneva Conference speech in December 1973. Even after the public Soviet position regarding

---

<sup>108</sup> Such Israelis were known as Caananites, and their views were expressed in the paper *Aleph*, published in the late 1940s, in the poems of Ahron Amir and Jonathan Ratosh, and Uri Avnery's *Israel without Zionists* (New York: Macmillan, 1968).

<sup>109</sup> The reference to 1947 carried several meanings, but its use as justification for a Palestinian state *alongside* the territory allotted for the Jewish state could be found on numerous occasions, including commentaries that appeared just as Arafat was visiting Moscow; see, for example, *Pravda*, April 2, 1977; Radio Peace and Progress in Arabic, April 7, 1977. The 1947 plan will be discussed below.

<sup>110</sup> *Free Palestine* 9 (March 1976):2, editorial.

<sup>111</sup> I. P. Blishchenko and V. D. Kudryavtsev, *Agressiia Izraelia i mezhdunarodnoe pravo* [Israeli Aggression and International Law] (Moscow: International Relations Publishers, 1970), pp. 39-40.

<sup>112</sup> See, for example, resolution 242 itself and the superpower negotiations in 1969-70; see L. L. Whetten, *The Canal War* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT University Press, 1974); Soviet communiqué with Egypt, Radio Moscow, July 17, 1970; or the Soviet government statement of October 31, 1969.



a Palestinian state changed in 1974, references to the refugees and/or their right to return were somewhat unclear, as well as sparse, appearing primarily in journals rather than the more popular media.<sup>113</sup> An exception to this was the April 28, 1976, Soviet government statement, which did mention that a settlement might make it possible for the refugees to leave their camps and to build their own state. This was not, however, the more precise Palestinian formulation that spoke of the refugees' return to their original homes, and, indeed, within the context of the statement, the implication was to a more limited "return," that is, to those territories—the West Bank and Gaza—on which the Palestinian state was to be founded. This implication was clarified somewhat in an article that amplified the April statement: the refugee problem was one that would be solved by the creation of a Palestinian state, the "return" being to that part of Palestine in which the state was to rise rather than to Israel.<sup>114</sup> Typical of the ambiguity, however, was the appearance, within a few months of each other, of two articles by leading Soviet spokesmen on the Middle East. The first, by the somewhat more extremist journalist Viktor Kudryavtsev in *Izvestiia* on March 22, 1978, spoke of the Palestinians' right "to return to their homes," while the second and more authoritative article, by Yevgeny Primakov in *Pravda* on July 26, 1978, chastised Israel for refusing to recognize the Palestinians' "right to return Palestinian refugees to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip." Exactly the same pattern occurred again in 1979, when Kudryavtsev again spoke of the refugees' return to their homes while *Pravda's* correspondents Glukhov and Demchenko both referred to the West Bank and Gaza as the area to which the refugees should be allowed to return.<sup>115</sup> This official vagueness was most probably designed to avoid annoying Israel or even confronting

---

<sup>113</sup> See, for example, Landa, "The Palestinian Question," p. 6; Dimitryev, "An Important Factor," p. 103; Primakov, "Zionism and Israel," Part I, p. 9.

<sup>114</sup> Landa, "The Contemporary Stage," pp. 24–25. See also a talk by the Soviet ambassador in Amman on March 5, 1974; according to the Soviet version of the talk—Moscow radio in Arabic, March 23, 1974—as in the April 1976 statement, Israel was to withdraw from the territories taken in 1967 "so as" to give the Palestinians the opportunity to return to their land. The Syrian version—SANA, March 6, 1974—spoke of the Palestinians' returning to their land "and" obtaining their right to self-determination "from Israel" (this statement appeared in the context of a condemnation of the idea of the destruction of the State of Israel).

<sup>115</sup> *Izvestiia*, May 15, 1979; *Pravda*, March 30, 1979; Y. Glukhov, "Arab Interests Betrayed," *International Affairs* (June 1979):83.

the issue in all its aspects before clear formulations were absolutely necessary. It may be that the Soviets thought, although they never spelled it out, that Israel would be sufficiently reassured by the usual mention, in this context, of the relevant U.N. resolution—U.N. General Assembly resolution 194 on December 11, 1948—which spoke of the right to return for “the refugees wishing to return to their homes *and live at peace with their neighbors.*” This was also the wording of the draft resolution presented to the Security Council on January 26, 1976, although the 1974 U.N. General Assembly resolutions on the Palestinians’ right to self-determination carried no such caveat.<sup>116</sup>

In the summer of 1977 there seemed to be a shift in the Soviet position, as the idea of the Palestinians’ right to return suddenly began to appear quite frequently in the Soviet media; it even found its way into the communiqué issued at the close of Egyptian Foreign Minister Fahmi’s visit in June 1977 and in the TASS statement on Arafat’s August 1977 visit.<sup>117</sup> Indeed, during the summer of 1977 a clause to this effect appeared to be a relatively regular component of the Soviet formula on the Palestinians’ rights, suggesting that the Soviets were now clearly supporting this traditional Palestinian demand,<sup>118</sup> with all the suspicions and concern it had always aroused in Israel. Yet this did not necessarily mean that Moscow and the PLO saw eye to eye on this matter. Soviet formulations almost always included the phrase “in accordance with U.N. decisions.” Even Hawatmeh, the Moscow-cultivated Marxist within the PLO, added this phrase, although he made it clear that he was referring to the rights of the 1948 refugees to return to their “original homes and properties;”<sup>119</sup> other Palestinian leaders and spokesmen usually

---

<sup>116</sup> The draft resolution of January 1976 spoke of return “or” compensation for those not wishing to return; the 1948 resolution said “and” compensation. Soviet sources tended to use the “or” formulation but were not entirely consistent on this. *Middle East International* 77 (1977):17-20 has the major U.N. resolutions regarding the Palestinians; *The Middle East* (October 1977):42, has the January 1976 proposal. [Emphasis the author’s.]

<sup>117</sup> TASS, June 11, 1977; *Prauda*, September 1, 1977.

<sup>118</sup> TASS international service in Russian (roundtable), 6 March 1977, was an earlier reference. See Moscow radio in Arabic, June 3, 1977; *Prauda*, June 12, 1977, *Izvestiia*, July 3, 1977; TASS, September 1, 1977; *Izvestiia*, September 10, 1977; *Selskaya zhizn’*, September 11, 1977, TASS, September 20, 21, 1977; Y. Tyunkov, “Firm Support,” *New Times* (September 1977):8 (on Arafat’s visit).

<sup>119</sup> Moscow radio in Arabic, August 13, 1977.

omitted any reference to the U.N. resolution even when speaking in the Soviet Union.<sup>120</sup> The following incident strongly suggested that there was a difference between the PLO and Soviet attitudes on this matter, despite the new formulations. At the October 1977 Moscow-backed World Peace Council-sponsored conference on peace in the Middle East held in Paris, a PLO representative, Abdullah Hourani, secretary of the PLO Peace Committee, proposed a resolution that included the demand for the Palestinians' return to their homes. An Israeli Communist, Eliezer Feiler, objected that inclusion of such a demand would be counterproductive, but Hourani remained adamant. A second Israeli Communist, Tawfiq Toubi, then proposed the addition of the phrase "according to the resolutions of the U.N.," explaining privately to non-Communist Israelis present that this was designed to moderate the PLO position inasmuch as the U.N. resolution specified those refugees willing to live in peace.<sup>121</sup> And, indeed, the final resolution, carried also by *Pravda*, included the full formulation.<sup>122</sup> If one wanted to press, however, or if necessary in the face of Palestinian criticism, the Soviets could claim that the phrase "according to U.N. decisions" was meant not specifically as a reference to U.N. General Assembly resolution 194 but rather to 3236, in 1974, which did not say anything about living in peace. Thus far, the Soviet explanation was in the other direction, claiming that this right need not infringe on Israel's rights.<sup>123</sup>

Even with the sudden upswing, however, in Soviet references to the refugees' right to return, the formulation was conspicuously absent from the more official and important Soviet statements such as Brezhnev's or Gromyko's speeches and statements and the joint Soviet-U.S. statement in October 1977.<sup>124</sup> Nor was it to be found in more than a few official communiqués throughout the late 1970s. This hesitancy to give the demand full official endorsement, as

---

<sup>120</sup> See, for example, Arafat, Moscow radio in Arabic, April 1977.

<sup>121</sup> Private interviews with Paris conference participants. This was also the formulation used by Tawfiq Toubi in his interview to *New Times* (March 1977): 6. Despite this position of Rakah, the Arab Communist parties were not entirely consistent about adding this phrase—see, for example, Jordanian Communist Party, *Les Communistes*, p. 10; Bagdesh comments in *Pravda*, August 6, 1977; Azziz Mohammed, "Tasks of the Revolutionary Forces," p. 5.

<sup>122</sup> *Pravda*, October 18, 1977.

<sup>123</sup> See, for example, Blishchenko, "The Palestinians' Rights," pp. 20–21.

<sup>124</sup> The absence from the Soviet-U.S. statement was indirectly pointed out by the Rejection Front (Bassam Abu Sharif, PFLP spokesman), according to INA, October 4, 1977).

well as the specific occasions upon which it did appear officially,<sup>125</sup> would suggest the tactical nature of what apparently was a temporary hardening of the Soviet position. The causes would appear to have been, first, the U.S. utterances regarding the Palestinians' rights, specifically their mention of the refugees' rights, and secondly, perhaps connected with this, the PLO's insistence on this point. The Soviet response to the U.S. statements was to disparage what was called the U.S. attempt to reduce the Palestinian issue to one of refugees only, ignoring the national-political aspect of their problem. But even while doing this, Moscow apparently felt obliged to state forcefully its own position on the refugee issue in response to Washington. That this move was also prompted by PLO pressures was suggested by the fact that although the right to return had long been a standard part of the PLO position, the PLO pressed Egypt, for example, to add this demand to its "working paper" in August 1977, which may explain its appearance in the Fahmi-Gromyko and Arafat-Gromyko statements during the summer; the PLO also included it in a memo—sometimes called the PLO "Peace Plan"—sent to President Carter in May 1977 via the Saudi Arabians.<sup>126</sup> This need not mean that the Soviets would not return to this demand upon other occasions or, eventually, elevate it to the status of an integral part of the official Soviet position, but in view of the extremely numerous and official reiterations of Moscow's position on the continued existence of the State of Israel, its opposition to its liquidation, and the limitation of a Palestinian state to one alongside Israel, even in opposition to PLO views, the refugee issue would appear to have remained a purely tactical one.

#### **BORDERS WITH ISRAEL:**

##### **1947 PARTITION PLAN OR 1949-67 BORDERS**

The major issue was not only that raised by the Palestinians of the continued existence of a Jewish state, even next to a Palestinian one, however, but the "mini-state" idea itself, that is, the borders of each state, or, from the Soviet-Israeli point of view, the 1967 versus the

---

<sup>125</sup> It was present, for example, in Soviet communiqués with Syria and Arafat in 1978 and 1979.

<sup>126</sup> *Free Palestine* 10 (September 1977):1, 6; MENA, August 7, 1977. PLO emphasis may have been in response to U.S. comments that large-scale return of refugees was to be ruled out; see *Middle East International* (May 1977):9.

1947 partition plan borders. On this point the Soviet position was not entirely unambiguous. Over the years, the standard Soviet position recognized only the 1947 partition plan lines as the borders of Israel. Official Soviet maps always indicated these borders as well, usually adding the 1949-67 lines, designated as "armistice lines," and the post-Six Day War lines as "cease-fire lines." Official statistical references also made these distinctions, while any discussion of Israel's borders over the years usually referred to the 1947 lines, expanded when Israel conquered an additional "6,700" square kilometers, sometimes "7,000," in the 1948-49 war, and an additional 68,700 square kilometers in 1967. Indeed, some of the more esoteric journals or antisemitic publications even referred to places such as Akko, Beersheva, Ramle, and Yaffo as areas taken by Israel in 1948, which would have to be returned, this being a clear reference to the 1947 lines as the only legitimate borders.<sup>127</sup> As the issue of Palestinian statehood emerged after the Yom Kippur War, and particularly in conjunction with the 1974-75 U.N. debates on the Palestinian issue and on Zionism, even the central Soviet press began to make references to the 1947 partition plan as the basis for the Palestinians' claim to a state.<sup>128</sup> By 1976, references to the 1947 partition plan became quite frequent, although in most cases the decision was cited as legitimization of the idea of a Palestinian state, some commentators explaining that the Jewish state had been founded, but the Arab part of the resolution was yet to be realized, avoiding any comment on territories added to the Jewish state.<sup>129</sup> Ambiguity arose, however,

---

<sup>127</sup> J. D. Zvyegelskaya and G. J. Starchenko, "Israel: The Army and the State," *Narody Azii i Afriki* (April 1974):27-37. See also V. V. Grigoryev, "International Zionism and Mandated Palestine between the Two World Wars," *Ukrainskii istorichnyi zhurnal* (August 1974) or *Zaria vostoka*, December 11, 1974.

<sup>128</sup> *Izvestiia*, September 26, 1974, December 22, 1975. See also Alexandr Ignatov, "The Palestinian Tragedy," *New Times* (August 1974):26-31.

<sup>129</sup> See, for example, V. Vladimirsky, "Middle East: Need for an Immediate Settlement," *International Affairs* (July 1976):99-103; *Selskaya zhizn'*, February 12, 1977, May 22, 1977; Radio Peace and Progress, April 7, 1977 (on Arafat visit); Moscow radio in Arabic, May 22, 1977; *Pravda*, June 12, 1977; *Nedelya*, July 14, 1977; A. K. Kislov, "Urgent Problems of a Middle East Settlement," *S.Sh.A.* (July 1977), pp. 22-33; *Za rubezhom* (October 14-20, 1977): 12-13. A particularly obscure reference to this issue was to be found in E. D. Prylin, "The Palestinian National Liberation Movement and the Middle East Settlement," *Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo* (October 1977), pp. 100-1, which spoke of Morocco and Tunisia as Arab states willing to compromise, and to accept the existence of Israel, through a return to the 1947 partition plan,

when the references to 1947 added that Israel had, at that time, occupied much of the territory intended for the Arab state in Palestine, this being a reference to claims regarding Israeli annexation of 6,700 square kilometers in 1949, explaining that in 1967 still more land intended for the Arab state was occupied. There were quite a few such references in 1979 in response to the autonomy plan and Israeli settlements on the West Bank. *New Times*, for example, published three articles with maps indicating the location of Israeli settlements, maps that had a dotted line for the "boundary" decided by the U.N. in 1947, within a shaded area that was *not* defined but was in fact the area of Israel in its June 4, 1967, borders, and then a third category of lightly shaded area indicating the areas occupied in 1967.<sup>130</sup> In some cases, the same article would then more or less clarify matters by specifying the 1967 territories as those allocated for the Palestinian state,<sup>131</sup> but some commentators,<sup>132</sup> most frequently Viktor Kudryavtsev of *Izvestiia*, deputy chairman of the Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee, tended to mention the 1947 annexations and then specify the 1967 territories as "necessary" for the new state, leaving unanswered the question of whether or not these territories would be "sufficient."<sup>133</sup> An important Soviet volume on the Palestinians that appeared in 1978 was similarly ambiguous when it used the term "first of all"—whether in the meaning of time sequence or logical sequence being unclear—when speaking of a state within the 1967 territories.<sup>134</sup> This position, which seemed to leave the door open to a second stage, that is,

---

although the only other territorial reference in the article was to the need for Israeli withdrawal from the 1967 territories.

<sup>130</sup> A. S., "The Face of Expansion," *New Times* (February 1979):13; A. Stepanov, *New Times* (April 1979):15; A. Stepanov, "The Colonialist Face of Zionism," *New Times* (June 1979):21.

<sup>131</sup> See, for example, a particularly vitriolic attack on Israel and its "premeditated violations" of the 1947 plan, which then goes on to specify the West Bank and Gaza as the locale for the future Palestinian state in *Krasnaya zvezda*, August 28, 1979.

<sup>132</sup> Gherman, "Tel Aviv's Calculations," pp. 7 and 9; Dimitryev, "The Middle East," pp. 99-105; Landa, "The Palestinian Question," pp. 6-8; Landa, "History of the Palestinian Movement," pp. 18-31; Tolkunov, "The Middle East Crisis," pp. 97-105; Y. Primakov, "Israel Versus the Arab States," *International Affairs* 11 (1976):44-52.

<sup>133</sup> *Izvestiia*, July 30, 1974, April 12, 1975, May 20, 1976, July 31, 1976, February 8, 1977, April 5, 1977, September 10, 1977, January 12, 1978, July 22, 1978, May 15, 1979.

<sup>134</sup> Dimitryev, *Palestinian Knot*, p. 214.

Israeli return to the 1947 lines following the return to the 1967 lines, was closer to the PLO position as expressed by Hawatmeh<sup>135</sup> and Qaddumi,<sup>136</sup> for example, both of whom advocated the creation of a Palestinian state on the West Bank-Gaza Strip as a first step.<sup>137</sup> At least one Arab source claimed that Moscow had indeed left the 1947-67 question open, and some Arab Communist parties, while generally endorsing the limitation of Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 lines, occasionally were more ambiguous or even implied that a second step might subsequently be demanded.<sup>138</sup>

If this were the whole picture, one might conclude that the very ambiguity cited above indicated an over-all Soviet tendency toward the 1947 lines as Israel's final borders. However, as early as 1970 the Soviets began publicly to emit a new line on Israel's legal borders. In that year, as part of the Soviet position presented to the United States in the two-power talks and in response to the Rogers Plan, the two senior Soviet commentators on Middle East affairs, Yevgeny Primakov and Igor Belyaev, presented a new position. Recalling the 1947 lines as the only legally recognized border of Israel,

---

<sup>135</sup> For Hawatmeh, see INA, November 24, 1974; *Free Palestine* 9 (March 1976):6; *ar-Ra'y al-Amm*, March 19, 1977 and March 23, 1978.

<sup>136</sup> *Palestine Digest* (March 1977) on Qaddumi interview to *Newsweek*, March 14, 1977, in which he spoke of three stages: first, Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 lines; then to the 1947 partition plan lines; then a Palestinian state in all of Palestine. See also *Shu'un Falastin* (June 1977).

<sup>137</sup> According to one interpretation of the PLO "Peace Plan," this was indeed the interpretation intended. Sameer Abraham, "The PLO at the Crossroads," *MERIP* (September 1979):7, quotes the pertinent passage of the plan.

<sup>138</sup> According to *as-Siyassah*, January 12, 1976, Gromoko had told Arafat in November 1975 that the PLO should recognize Israel within the 1967 or the 1947 lines, the important thing being to recognize it, explaining that a Palestinian state in all of Palestine was out of the question. Another Arab source, on this same meeting, however, quoted Gromyko as expressing Soviet preference for the 1967 lines—*An-Nahar Arab Report* 6 (December 8, 1975). According to *Akhbar al-Yom*, April 23, 1977, Gromyko told Arafat in April 1977 not to discuss borders, that the important thing was that a Palestinian state be created, emphasizing that Israel must be recognized and that its liquidation was unrealizable. For Communist ambiguities see Azziz Mohammed, "Revolutionary Tasks," and Jordanian Communist Party, *Les Communistes et la Question Palestinienne*. The latter clearly called for a state in the territories occupied in 1967, but the addition of the following phrase might raise some ideas for the future: "It [creation of a state in these territories] is also a step towards the creation of new and favorable conditions in the fight for the whole of [the Palestinians'] national, legitimate rights, recognized and accepted by the overwhelming

Belyaev concluded his detailed program for a settlement with the statement:

The parties involved in the conflict should proceed from the assumption that the secure and acknowledged boundaries between the Arab countries and Israel are those that existed on June 5, 1967.<sup>139</sup>

In the description of a plan that, he said, the Soviet government had conveyed "to all the parties involved,"<sup>140</sup> Yevgeny Primakov said:

Were the present Israeli leaders really concerned about anything other than expansionist projects for territorial "acquisitions," Tel Aviv would pay closer heed to proposals guaranteeing the frontiers of the states in the area, including the frontiers of Israel, which could accord with the demarcation lines that existed on 4 June 1967.<sup>141</sup>

The same year a less important commentator reiterated this theme even more explicitly:

The withdrawal problem is directly linked with that of the Israeli-Arab frontiers. The Soviet Union recognizes the legitimate rights and aspirations of every state in the area. This naturally presupposes as an essential condition the establishment of secure and recognized frontiers between Israel and the Arab states. The Security Council resolutions (22 November 1967), in that part which refers to the establishment of such frontiers, condemns the seizure of territory by force of arms. In conformity with this, the Soviet Union proposes formalizing the lines that existed on June 5, 1967, as the permanent and recognized frontiers between Israel and the neighboring Arab states party to the June conflict. The Arab states agree to this, though it means a certain concession on their part. For it is known that the June 5, 1967 frontiers are more favorable for Israel than

---

majority of the countries of the world, noted by numerous resolutions of the U.N." (p. 21).

<sup>139</sup> Igor Belyaev, "Middle East Crisis and Washington's Manoeuvres," *International Affairs* (April 1970):31, 35; Russian version in *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'* 3 (1970).

<sup>140</sup> According to Whetten, *The Canal War*, p. 115, this was the plan presented to the U.S. on July 23, 1970.

<sup>141</sup> *Pravda*, October 15, 1970.



those defined by the U.N. decision on the creation of the State of Israel in 1947.<sup>142</sup>

While these were indeed explicit and quite new formulations clearly acknowledging the 1967 borders as Israel's legal borders, they remained in the realm of unofficial statements, though the pronouncement in *Pravda*, purporting to be the official Soviet position conveyed in the negotiations—which, apparently, was indeed the case—did give the idea certain authority.

Official expression of this new idea came with the Geneva Peace Conference in December 1973 in the form of Gromyko's plan for a settlement as outlined in his address to the conference. After directly affirming Israel's right to exist, and adding a word on the inadmissibility of "protecting one's frontiers" by seizure of others' territories, Gromyko said:

It is only the legitimate frontier recognized by those who are on its both sides that is really safe. In the specific Middle East situation such are the demarcation lines that existed on June 4, 1967.<sup>143</sup>

That Gromyko was in fact saying that Israel's legitimate borders were the June 4, 1967, lines was confirmed by a *Pravda* reference to this speech, which singled out this phrase saying: "In connection with the border question, it is possible to see only the lines which existed June 4, 1967, as the legal borders."<sup>144</sup> And Gromyko made a point of repeating this phrase in his conversation with Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban during the Geneva Conference.<sup>145</sup>

This was the mini-state position the Soviets presented to the PLO leaders in their October 1973 memorandum and advocated by the Palestine National Front, in the case of the former as part of Soviet urgings that the PLO adopt a "realistic and constructive" position.<sup>146</sup> This kind of limitation on the Palestinians' demands to a state on the West Bank and Gaza, only, was the position for which

<sup>142</sup> Victor Laptev, "Middle East Divide," *New Times* (February 10, 1970): 5, repeated in an article by Laptev and V. Alexeyev, "The Middle East: Time for Decision," *International Affairs*, (March 1971):43.

<sup>143</sup> TASS, December 21, 1973.

<sup>144</sup> *Pravda*, December 23, 1973.

<sup>145</sup> Abba Eban, *Abba Eban* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1978), p. 554.

<sup>146</sup> *Le Monde*, October 31, 1973, November 6, 1973; *New York Times*, November 2, 1973, *The Guardian*, November 6, 1973; Moscow radio in Arabic, February 26, 1975, September 3, 1975. See also INA, November 24, 1974, on

Moscow praised Hawatmeh and the 1974 Palestine National Council session,<sup>147</sup> and over which Habash challenged the Soviets.<sup>148</sup> For example, regarding Gromyko's speech honoring Khaddam in April 1975, in which the Soviet Foreign Minister offered "strictest guarantees" to Israel, Habash's newspaper *al-Hadaf* called it a "declaration of the Arabs' ally [the Soviet Union] to guarantee the borders of Israel, as defined by the 1967 frontiers."<sup>149</sup> That Habash's interpretation, echoed by other Palestinian sources, was indeed correct, was confirmed by a Soviet radio round-table discussion in comments by *Izvestiia* commentator Matveyev on the importance of Gromyko's statement on guarantees.<sup>150</sup> It was reportedly also presented to Israel in some of the rumored talks held through various emissaries between the two countries.<sup>151</sup> While no other high-level Soviet official was to reiterate this position for another few years, it was nonetheless repeated even as Rabat—but also the Vladivostok Soviet-U.S. summit—was approaching and at the time of Kissinger's unsuccessful efforts to negotiate a second Israeli-Egyptian agreement in the spring of 1975. Because of the scarcity and yet obvious significance of the expression of this new Soviet position, as distinct from its more generally known—and continued—references to the 1947 partition plan, it is worth noting the post-Geneva statements. *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'* of October 1974 comments as follows:

Recognition of the lines of demarcation existing prior to the June 1967 conflict as the final borders between Israel and the Arab countries constitutes the only reasonable basis on which a settlement in the Middle East can be reached. If one considers that from the point of view of international law there are no recognized borders between Israel and Arab countries at all so far, then their establishment along the lines defined would signify great progress in Arab-Israeli relations, and would considerably improve the entire political situation in the Middle East.<sup>152</sup>

---

the Soviet plan and *an-Nahar*, May 10, 1974, Arafat on talks with Gromyko; Voice of Palestine, October 30, 1973, against such a Soviet plan.

<sup>147</sup> *Izvestiia*, July 30, 1974; Moscow radio in Arabic, February 26, 1975; Bukharkov, "PNC Session," p. 13; "Yasser Arafat," *New Times*, p. 11.

<sup>148</sup> *Shu'un Filastiniya*, February 1974, in *Journal of Palestine Studies* III (Spring 1974):202.

<sup>149</sup> *Al-Hadaf*, May 17, 1975.

<sup>150</sup> *Journal of Palestine Studies* (Summer 1975):145 (for Palestinian interpretation); Moscow radio, April 27, 1975.

<sup>151</sup> *Le Monde*, April 12, 1975.

<sup>152</sup> V. Vladimirov, "A Peaceful Settlement for the Middle East," *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'* (October 1974):109.

Thus, for the first time since 1970, the full significance of Gromyko's Geneva remarks was spelled out. Two later articles in *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'* reiterated this position, in February 1975:

. . . it would be greatly in the interests of the people of Israel to use the present opportunity for a stable settlement of the territorial dispute by way of withdrawing Israeli troops back to the borders that existed prior to June 5, 1967, in compliance with resolutions 242 and 338 of the Security Council, borders that would become secure and recognized.<sup>153</sup>

and in March 1975:

The Israeli expansionists should not forget that their refusal to withdraw their troops from all the Arab territories occupied in 1967 deprives the State of Israel of any real chance of having the Arab states recognize its existence within the boundaries which existed prior to June 5, 1967, that is, of confirming the territorial demarcation between the Arab countries and Israel which resulted from the Palestine war of 1948-1949 and which has not yet been formally endorsed by anyone anywhere.<sup>154</sup>

There was also a Moscow Radio broadcast in Arabic on October 8, 1975, which said that the solution to the Palestinian problem should be found in the Israeli withdrawal from the territory occupied in 1967, with the Palestinian state to be founded "in the end" on the territories liberated from Israeli occupation. And in August 1977, *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'*, mapping out the demands for a settlement, stated:

The main thing, of course, is that the borders between Israel and her Arab neighbors that are party to the conflict, should be clearly established along the lines that existed on June 4, 1967. These borders must be final and inviolable.<sup>155</sup>

Similar statements had appeared in this journal in March and

---

<sup>153</sup> English version: V. Vladimirovsky, "The Doomed Policy of Israeli Expansionists," *International Affairs* (March 1975):49.

<sup>154</sup> English version: E. Dmitriyev, "The Struggle for Peace in the Middle East," *International Affairs* (April 1975):38.

<sup>155</sup> English version: O. Alov, "Paths to a Mideast Settlement," *International Affairs* (September 1977):64.

June of 1977, while other commentaries in *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'*, *New Times*, and *S.Sh.A.: Ekonomika, Politika, Ideologia* explained that Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied in 1967 would not only provide the possibility for the establishment of a Palestinian state but provide Israel security "within recognized borders," *New Times* adding that the last was "that goal to which Israeli politicians profess to adhere."<sup>156</sup> The head of the CPSU delegation to the Rakah congress in December 1976 declared that the Soviet Union supported the existence of Israel "within its 1967 borders," and *Pravda* quoted at length Rakah chief Meir Wilner's explicit comments on the June 4, 1967, borders as Israel's "borders of peace," "secure and recognized borders."<sup>157</sup> A Moscow radio commentary in Hebrew, trying to convince Israeli audiences of Arab moderation, quoted Egyptian Foreign Minister Fahmi that the Arab states were willing to recognize Israel and live with her within recognized borders, provided these borders were those of June 4, 1967.<sup>158</sup>

At the close of 1976 and increasingly from then on, Soviet commentaries specified the West Bank and Gaza Strip as the locale for the proposed Palestinian state. While these references came first as praise for the Palestinians' realism, later as criticism of support by the United States for "defensible borders" for Israel (not necessarily identical to the 1967 borders) and Israeli settlements on the West Bank and, particularly the Israeli government's various plans for self-rule rather than return of the West Bank, this was, according to the Soviets, the area upon which a Palestinian state "should" be established.<sup>159</sup> The most concise, clear, and perhaps authoritative

---

<sup>156</sup> V. Vladimirovsky, "Middle East: Need for an Immediate Settlement," *International Affairs* (July 1976):101; Gherman, "Tel Aviv's Calculation," p. 10; Kislov, "Urgent Problems," p. 25.

<sup>157</sup> Israel radio, December 23, 1976; *Pravda*, December 17, 1976.

<sup>158</sup> Radio Peace and Progress in Hebrew, October 2, 1977.

<sup>159</sup> See, for example, Oleg Alov, "The Settlement Issue," *New Times* (May 1977):5; Belyakov, "Grief and Hopes," p. 25; Y. Primakov, "A Balanced Course in the Middle East or the Old Policy by New Methods," *Mirovaya ekonomika a mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia* (December 1976):50; *Pravda*, January 21, 1977, May 14, 1977, June 12, 1978, July 26, 1978, November 1, 1978, January 18, 1979; *Selskaya zhizn'*, February 12, 1977, July 23, 1977, September 9, 1978; *Krasnaya zvezda*, May 13, 1977; Moscow radio, September 9, September 30, 1977; *Izvestiia*, April 14, 1977 (which added "two small enclaves"); June 10, 1978; Moscow radio in Arabic, August 2, 1979. The inclusion of Jerusalem will be discussed below.

pronouncement came in an article by Middle East specialist Primakov in *Aziia i Afrika Sevodnia* in April 1977, in the concluding section of a two-part series on the Palestinians. Arguing that solution of the Palestinian problem was central to a Middle East settlement, he explored the possible solutions:

One of the most probable ways is the creation of a Palestinian state on the West Bank of the Jordan River and in the Gaza region.<sup>160</sup> . . . There are plans for the return to the U.N. General Assembly resolution of 1947 on two states in the territory of Palestine—Israel and the Arab-Palestinian [state]. It must be said that the harsh and uncompromising position of Israel in relation to the right of the Palestinians to statehood expands the circle of the adherents of the restoration of such a map, proposed by the U.N. thirty years ago. There are extremist ideas, put forward by individual groups of Palestinians who demand the creation of a Palestinian state not side by side with Israel, but instead of it.<sup>161</sup>

And such comments, which indeed became so frequent even in *Pravda* as to obviate the need for further quotation,<sup>162</sup> were accompanied by language that referred to demonstrations on the West Bank as distinct from “Israel proper” or the “state’s own territory” as distinct from “the lands occupied in June 1967,” or “occupied Palestine, that is, the West Bank and Gaza,” and other fine points, implying Soviet acceptance of Israel as an integral unit within its 1967 borders.<sup>163</sup>

---

<sup>160</sup> Primakov added, here, that the idea of a Jordanian-Syrian-Palestinian federation had also been raised; this will be discussed below.

<sup>161</sup> Primakov, “Zionism and Israel,” Part II, p. 8.

<sup>162</sup> One might note two authoritative, and highly explicit, references in *Pravda*, one on the eve of Arafat’s arrival in Moscow in November 1979—*Pravda*, January 18, 1979, and November 10, 1979.

<sup>163</sup> Moscow radio, October 19, 1975, on policies in “the territories occupied eight years ago” and policies in “Israel proper.” *Pravda*, April 6, 1976, on strikes in “occupied territories” and in “Israel proper”; *Izvestiia*, May 9, 1976, on Arabs living in the “territories occupied in 1967” and “Arabs living in Israel proper”; *Pravda* and *Krasnaya zvezda*, April 1, 1976, on the Galilee, “a region of Israel with an Arab majority” and the “Arab population of the West Bank”; *Pravda*, April 1, 1976, quote of Syrian Communist Party support for the Arabs in the “occupied West Bank and Gaza strip as well as in Israel proper”; Landa, “Contemporary Stage,” p. 28, on “occupied Palestine” being the West Bank and Gaza Strip; Landa, “The Palestinian Question,” p. 7, on the Palestinian struggle “in the seized territories and in the territory of Israel itself” (the two Landa articles were in journals particularly interested in national liberation movements

While the above were but commentaries designed perhaps to spell out the almost totally consistent *official* Soviet references to the 1967 territories as those that Israel had to vacate if there were to be a settlement, official status did appear to have been once again—after a lapse since Gromyko's 1973 speech—bestowed upon the 1967 border idea with the government statement of January 1976 and especially that of April 28, 1976. In the latter, Moscow linked “organically” Israeli withdrawal from the 1967 territories with the establishment of a Palestinian state and “international guarantees for the security and inviolability of the frontiers of all Middle Eastern states, and their right to independent existence and development.”<sup>164</sup> The April statement claimed that “this basis for a settlement” would provide: (1) *for the Arab states*, the return of their territories and their sovereignty over these territories, as well as the removal of the danger of war and the possibility to concentrate on their own economic and social problems and play a greater role in international affairs; (2) *for the Palestinians*, the possibility for the refugees to leave the camps, gain freedom of oppression from the invaders, and build their own independent state; and (3) *for Israel*, ensurance of “peace and security *within the recognized frontiers*,” the opportunity for its young people to be free from the danger of war, and for all the people of Israel “to live in conditions of confidence in the morrow” as well as to permit the State of Israel to normalize its position among the states of the world. Brezhnev's Trade Union speech of March 21, 1977, formulated it differently, calling for a Palestinian state and specifying that immediately following Israel's withdrawal from the territories occupied in 1967, with the clear definition of “appropriate border lines between Israel and its Arab neighbors, participants in the conflict . . . borders . . . to be finally established and inviolable,” the state of war between Israel and the Arab states would end and peace would be established, with all sides undertaking “mutual obligations to respect each other's sovereignty,

---

that often mentioned the 1947 U.N. resolution, as indeed they did even in these articles). I. Riabimov, “Zionist Policy,” pp. 47-59, distinguished between the Arab inhabitants of Israel and Arab population of the occupied territories; Primakov, “Zionism and Israel,” Part II, p. 8, spoke of demonstrations by Arabs living in the occupied territories and in Israel itself; *Pravda*, July 15 and 17, 1977, spoke of harsh treatment to Palestinians in the occupied territories and in prisons “located in Israel proper.” See also *Trud*, February 17, 1977; *Krasnaya zvezda*, May 13, 1977.

<sup>164</sup> TASS, April 28, 1976 [emphasis the author's].

territorial integrity, inviolability and political independence."<sup>165</sup> Lest the somewhat complicated wording of this statement be misinterpreted, *Pravda* rephrased it slightly as follows:

The U.S.S.R. proceeds from the premise that the state of war will end and relations of peace will be established between Israel and the Arab states involved in the conflict *the moment the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the territories occupied in 1967 is concluded.* Here all sides will adopt a mutual commitment to respect each other's *sovereignty, territorial integrity, inviolability and political independence* and to resolve their disputes by peaceful means.<sup>166</sup>

This line was basically repeated in the Soviet-U.S. statement of October 1977, in both instances reportedly arousing PLO consternation. Gromyko clearly implied the same borders when, in his press conference following the 1979 Vienna Soviet-U.S. summit, he specifically offered Israel assurances and called for a Palestinian state "if only small."<sup>167</sup> More explicit, and authoritative, was a reference by Brezhnev himself, in an October 1979 speech, in which he said "It is high time to realize that Israel can count on secure existence within the 1967 borders only if it liberates all the Arab territories occupied from that time on and refrains from interfering in the realization of the [Palestinians'] national rights, including their right to establish an independent state of their own."<sup>168</sup>

Recognition of Israel's 1949-67 borders remained the explicit line of Israel's Communist Party (Rakah), and a Palestinian state in the territories occupied in June 1967 remained the position of the Palestine National Front as well as the proposed site advocated by the Jordanian Communist Party and the Palestinian Communist Organization.<sup>169</sup> It was explicitly embodied in the resolution of the

<sup>165</sup> TASS, March 21, 1977.

<sup>166</sup> *Pravda*, April 2, 1977 [emphasis the author's].

<sup>167</sup> Moscow radio, June 25, 1979.

<sup>168</sup> *Pravda*, October 25, 1979. (The occasion chosen for these remarks was a ceremony honoring a visiting South Yemeni delegation.)

<sup>169</sup> *MERIP* 55, Tawfiq Toubi and *al-Watan* (clandestine), December 1976; Jordanian Communist Party, *Les Communistes*, pp. 10, 21; *Palestine Digest* 6 (October 1976):19-24; Meir Vilner, "Peace in the Middle East: A Sheet Anchor for Israel," *World Marxist Review* 20 (April 1977):28 and Tawfiq Toubi, *New Times*, p. 7 both said "The June 4 1967 borders shall be the peace frontiers." See also TASS, October 7, 1977, on Rakah position.

conference of Arab Communist and workers parties of April 1978.<sup>170</sup> According to Arab accounts, the communiqué issued at the close of the first publicly acknowledged meeting of Rakah and the Jordanian Communist Party advocated a Palestinian state in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza.<sup>171</sup> This position reportedly had caused some tension within Rakah and between Rakah and the PLO as well as between Rakah and the newly formed nationalist group of Israeli Arabs, "Sons of the Village."<sup>172</sup> Arab and specifically PLO sources themselves acknowledged that this had remained the Soviet position, on occasion criticizing it, as we have seen.<sup>173</sup> And it was this position that was firmly stated in the two major books that appeared in the Soviet Union on the Middle East crisis and, specifically, on the Palestinian problem in 1978.<sup>174</sup>

Thus, the Soviets apparently did not retreat from their position regarding the 1967 borders even while they continued to refer to the 1947 lines. They would appear to have emphasized the 1967 idea particularly when trying to present themselves as reasonable, moderate, and, therefore, acceptable participants for talks from which both Israel and the United States sought to exclude them. Indeed, one could see an almost exact corollary between Soviet efforts to resume the Geneva Conference and the expressions of moderation regarding Israel and its borders. Yet, the fact that they risked complicating their relations with the PLO by advocating the 1967 lines even in discussions with this organization suggested that this position was not merely tactical, though the continuation of

---

<sup>170</sup> TASS, April 27, 1978.

<sup>171</sup> *An-Nahar Arab Report* 7 (August 9, 1976):3. The Moscow radio in Arabic, August 30, 1976, version did not specify the locale; nor did the *Pravda* version, August 1, 1976.

<sup>172</sup> See *Free Palestine* 9 (March 1976):8; idem, 10 (August 1977):9; *Palestine Digest* 6, p. 21. Uri Davis, "Stranger in His Own Land," *Journal of Palestine Studies* VIII (Winter 1979):133-43; Michel Warschawski, "The Israeli Communist Party and the Radical Anti-Zionist Left," *MERIP* 66 (April 1978): 24-25.

<sup>173</sup> *As-Siyassah*, May 7, 1977 (Hawatmeh); *An-Nahar Arab Report* 6 (December 8, 1975); *Monday Morning*, September 12, 1977, pp. 10-15 (Khalid al-Hassan); *Rose al-Yusuf*, according to INA, January 2, 1977; Muhamed Muslih, "Moderates and Rejectionists within the PLO," *The Middle East Journal* 30 (Spring 1976):132.

<sup>174</sup> Dimitryev, *The Palestinian Knot*, p. 214; Y. Primakov, *Anatomiia blizhnevostokogo konfliktia* [Anatomy of the Near Eastern Conflict] (Moscow: Mysl, 1978), p. 20.



references to 1947 may have been designed as the stick to the 1967 carrot vis-à-vis Israel, serving alternatively as a sop to the Palestinians. It cannot be ruled out that the two positions and resultant ambiguity were due to some differences of opinion within the Soviet leadership over the Palestinian issue. Certainly, some newspapers, such as the Ukrainian press, had antisemitic overtones and a harder line on Israel than other papers, undoubtedly because of internal considerations; similarly, greater support for the Palestinians was apparent in the trade union paper *Trud* in the period during which Shelepin was head of the trade unions.<sup>175</sup> And, as already pointed out, on at least one occasion Podgorny took a more radical line on the Palestinians than did Brezhnev, indicating that such differences could be responsible for the apparent contradiction and hesitations within the Soviet line on this issue. It cannot, however, be ruled out that these differences reflected, rather, a natural—possibly even an intended—division of labor designed to present several points of view suitable to general purposes. Moreover, as long as no decision was demanded by the Middle East negotiations, it was not surprising that the Soviets wished to keep a number of options open. Indeed, there was no reason to believe that the Soviets viewed this issue of Palestinian-Israeli borders as a crucial one or one of principle. In fact, it was more likely that they were basically indifferent as to where the borders between the two were drawn. Their tendency to the 1967 lines, as evidenced by the fact that they even raised an alternative to the 1947 lines and by their arguments with the Palestinians, would appear merely to have been a function of what they themselves called a realistic approach, given Israeli strength and the U.S. commitment, as well as the generally recognized status of Israel from 1949 onwards.

### THE JORDANIAN CONNECTION

The other border of the Palestinian state, the one with Jordan, was rarely discussed by Moscow until 1977, although that there should be such a border—as distinct from a Palestinian state on all of Palestine, which would then include Jordan, or on the West Bank linked with Jordan—was implied by the same Soviet comments

---

<sup>175</sup> See Kass, *Soviet Involvement*, or Galia Golan, "Internal Pressures and Soviet Policy," unpublished paper, Jerusalem, 1973, 45 pp.

calling upon the Palestinians to accept a state within the territories occupied in 1967. In one conversation with Arafat, when defining the territories to be affected by a settlement, Gromyko specified "Egyptian territory (Sinai), Syrian (Golan Heights) and those yet to be defined, that is, the West Bank including Jerusalem, and Gaza."<sup>176</sup> Thus, the ownership or ultimate ownership of the Jordanian territories was ignored, at least in Arafat's version of his May 6, 1974, conversation with Gromyko. Similarly, before 1977, Jerusalem was rarely mentioned at all when discussing the territories or a Palestinian state. In fact, Soviet reporting of the November 1973 Algiers Conference and February 1974 Lahore Conference *deleted* the resolutions referring to Jerusalem.<sup>177</sup> Indeed, the only context in which the Soviets did mention Jerusalem during this period was apparently when seeking to please Jordan, specifically, for example, when demanding Israeli compensation for Arab losses, including losses to Jordan from lost tourism to Jerusalem, when criticizing the second Egyptian-Israeli agreement, or in connection with Hussein's 1976 visit to the Soviet Union.<sup>178</sup>

A Jordanian Communist Party official explained, in the April 1974 issue of the *World Marxist Review*, that first a Palestinian state should be set up in the liberated territories, and then its future relations with Jordan should be considered.<sup>179</sup> The March 5, 1974, talk by the Soviet ambassador to Jordan also implied that some arrangement would have to be worked out with Jordan in the effort to obtain Palestinian self-determination in the 1967 territories.<sup>180</sup> These early statements made no reference to, nor, in fact, ruled out, the Jordanian idea of a federal Jordanian-Palestinian state. Later, however, *Izvestiia* editor Tolkunov, in an article in the authoritative Party journal *Kommunist*, as well as other articles and Moscow broadcasts in Arabic, were to rule out, explicitly, Hussein's two-year-

---

<sup>176</sup> *An-Nahar*, May 10, 1974.

<sup>177</sup> TASS, February 24, 1974; TASS, November 28, 29, 1973. An exception to this was *Trud*, November 30, 1973, which did contain the Algiers Conference reference to Jerusalem.

<sup>178</sup> See, for example, Moscow radio in Arabic, March 14, 1974; *Izvestiia*, March 21, 1974; *Pravda*, *Krasnaya zvezda*, *Trud*, *Sovetskaya Rosiya*, August 27, 1975; Anatoly Repin, "Jordan Today," *New Times* (June 1976):12-13.

<sup>179</sup> Ashhab, "The Palestinian Aspect," p. 29. The same article went on to demand that Jordan declare invalid its 1950 annexation of the West Bank. Only two states, England and Pakistan, ever officially recognized this annexation, but the Soviets, as distinct from the Communists, almost never refer to this fact.

<sup>180</sup> Moscow radio in Arabic, March 23, 1974.

old proposal for a federal solution, calling it a "U.S.-inspired" plan.<sup>181</sup> It is possible that this declared opposition was meant to foil Kissinger's attempts to negotiate a Jordanian-Israeli agreement, which, it was now clear, threatened to settle such problems *without* inclusion of either the Soviets or the Palestinians. It came in the same period as the first Soviet pronouncements regarding Palestinian statehood, just prior to the Rabat Conference.

Yet, the Soviets were to express this anti-Jordanian position only briefly, and mildly. Indeed, they even demonstrated startling objectivity in reporting the PLO-Jordanian dilemma prior to Rabat.<sup>182</sup> Moreover, both prior to but particularly following Rabat they sought generally to emphasize the meeting points or cooperation between the Jordanians and the PLO rather than the dividing points. Soviet reporting of the Rabat Conference stressed in most positive terms the working out of a *modus vivendi* between the two, as a sign of voluntary and generous cooperation on the part of both.<sup>183</sup> The Palestinian appraisal of this development was not so sanguine,<sup>184</sup> but the Soviets were apparently intent upon maintaining their own options open with the Jordanians. Certainly Moscow strove to improve its relations with Jordan even while offering increased support to the Palestinians. Thus, Soviet ambassador Vladimir Vinogradov was sent to Amman several times for high-level talks, primarily connected with Soviet efforts to reconvene Geneva, and, perhaps more significantly in terms of improved relations, a Supreme Soviet delegation visited Jordan in March 1975, followed by the visit of a high-level Jordanian government delegation to Moscow in December 1975—just a few weeks after an Arafat visit to the Soviet capital. This process was climaxed by Hussein's visit to the Soviet Union in June 1976, which was given a great deal of attention and fanfare by the Soviet side. While this visit—and rapprochement—could hardly be welcomed by the PLO, it was perhaps less risky in 1976 than earlier, from the point of view

---

<sup>181</sup> See, for example, *Za rubezhom* (August 30–September 5, 1974); Moscow radio in Arabic, September 2, 24, 1974.

<sup>182</sup> TASS, October 28, 1974, explained that while the PLO wanted strict observance of the Algiers Conference resolution recognizing the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians, Jordan wanted a referendum on the West Bank so that the population could express its view as to whom it wanted.

<sup>183</sup> See, for example, *Pravda*, October 31, 1974; Moscow radio in Arabic, October 29, 1974; Radio Peace and Progress in Arabic, October 31, 1974.

<sup>184</sup> See Abu Iyyad in *an-Nahar*, November 20, 1974.

of Soviet Middle East interests. This was because of the intervening Syrian-Jordanian rapprochement and the Jordanian move closer to the radical wing of the Arab states as distinct from and against Egypt's identification with U.S.-inspired moderation, particularly in the wake of the 1975 Egyptian-Israeli agreement. As part of this Soviet effort vis-a-vis Jordan, Soviet air commander Kutachkov was sent to Amman, and Moscow made Hussein an offer for a SAM defense system as a substitute for the complication-ridden U.S.-Jordanian Hawk deal.<sup>185</sup> Thus, the Soviets were willing even to jeopardize relations with the PLO in the interest of gaining some foothold in Jordan—particularly as a blow to the influence of the United States there, but also as a means of gaining a new option in the Middle East (particularly important in view of the steady decline the Soviets had been suffering in the area since 1972). The Soviets probably estimated that they would not seriously endanger their PLO link by this move; they may have considered the increased diplomatic and propaganda support they offered the PLO at the same time—the PLO office in Moscow was finally opened just a few days before Hussein's visit—sufficient compensation. Nonetheless, this was a time of PLO-Jordanian stress because of King Hussein's decision indefinitely to postpone Jordanian parliamentary elections as long as the West Bank was occupied, an act interpreted by the Palestinians as a reassertion of the King's authority over the West Bank. Thus, Moscow tended to demonstrate its general preference for dealing with established and stable states with all that these might offer in the way of strategic and other interests. Certainly, the Palestinians, even with a state of their own, would be less desirable, even if ideologically somewhat—though not entirely—more attractive, given the clearly unstable, uncertain—with regard to political

---

<sup>185</sup> Independently of the PLO-Jordanian issue, the Soviets were not, apparently, sufficiently interested in the Jordanian connection to warrant their making an offer Hussein could not refuse. Their offer carried with it certain demands unacceptable to Hussein, particularly the stationing of some 15,000 Soviet personnel in Jordan to operate the installations—MENA, June 20, 1977, comments of Jordanian military spokesmen, who said the United States required only 3,000 men and that the cost of the two systems was the same. This may have been due to a low Soviet estimate as to their chances for actually eliminating U.S. influence there or, perhaps, to the relative decline of Soviet interest in the area of the confrontation states, inasmuch as Soviet interests further south were increasing, as were the costs of remaining in the confrontation states, with diminishing returns.

orientation—and unauthoritative character—from the point of view of status or outside influence—of the PLO, which was still far from achieving statehood in any case.

The matter was not quite so straightforward, however, given the evolving intricacies of the Lebanese situation and the increasingly entangled web of alliances that developed as a result. While the Soviet bid to improve relations with Jordan did not appear to have been affected, a change did occur in Moscow's attitude toward Jordan in the Palestinian context. By the spring of 1976, the PLO had become concerned that Syria was planning to take over the Palestinian movement and submerge it in a broad Syrian-Jordanian-Palestinian or Syrian-Jordanian-Lebanese-Palestinian confederation, which, according to the PLO, would mean the reinstatement of Hussein's authority, and the dismantling of the Rabat decisions.<sup>186</sup> The Soviets, however, do not seem to have responded to this plan until the end of 1976, possibly because they did not want to jeopardize their emerging relations, and hoped-for arms deal, with Jordan, possibly because they themselves did not become particularly distressed until the Riyadh Conference in October 1976, at which Saudi Arabia played such a large role in ending the Lebanese crisis.<sup>187</sup>

Moscow's position became more explicitly—albeit gradually—negative when Egypt proposed the idea of a Palestinian state linked with Jordan. The Soviet position was dictated not only by the PLO's opposition to the idea,<sup>188</sup> but also—and primarily—by the concern

<sup>186</sup> *An-Nahar Arab Report* 7 (May 10, 1976) and idem (July 5, 1976):2 (Qaddumi interview).

<sup>187</sup> There were hints of Soviet concern earlier: one article suggested that Jordan needed the SAM system not only because of the Israel-Egyptian Interim Agreement which freed Israel to concentrate against its eastern neighbors, but also because Syria might also succumb to U.S. offers, leaving Jordan in a difficult position. See Belyaev, "The United States and the Middle East," p. 25. At the same time (spring 1976) two articles on Palestinian rights were, albeit mildly, critical of Hussein's treatment of the Palestinians, one mentioning without comment that those territories intended for the Arab state in 1947 not taken by Israel were taken by Jordan, as was part of Jerusalem. See Landa, "From the History" and "The Palestinian Question." Only in November and December 1976 did articles appear that expressed concern over the possibility of attempts to submerge the Palestinians in a Jordanian solution: see, for example, Oleg Alov, "Middle East: Diplomatic Front," *New Times* (November 1976): 12-13 against Israeli proposals; Naim Ashhab, "For an Overall Settlement in the Middle East," *World Marxist Review* 19 (December 1976):8. The PLO expressed its concern at this time: *Free Palestine* 9 (November 1976):2, editorial.

<sup>188</sup> *Voice of Palestine*, January 15, 1977.

that, given Egyptian sponsorship, the proposal could only mean widened possibilities for U.S. influence. Syria's espousal of the idea, even coupled with the by now well-developed Syrian-Jordanian alliance, could not counterbalance this possibility inasmuch as Syria was by no means a certain ally of Moscow's, especially in view of the Lebanese conflict, and there was no way of ensuring that a Syrian-dominated Jordanian-Palestinian relationship would protect or even consider Moscow's interests.<sup>189</sup> At this stage, the Soviet Union appeared to be more concerned about limiting Syria's growing influence on this front, especially in view of the Syrian-Egyptian rapprochement and the moves toward an Arab unity founded on Saudi Arabia.

Yet, on this issue, too, Moscow's options were not without contradictions even in the period prior to Sadat's 1977 visit to Jerusalem. Not only did Moscow continue to pursue improved relations with Jordan, but it also had to contend with the PLO decision, probably on Sadat and Arafat's urgings, to seek a rapprochement with King Hussein. Thus, while the Soviet media, especially the Arabic-language broadcasts but also the press, together with the Arab Communist parties, criticized the confederation or federation idea, Jordan itself was not directly criticized, and one Soviet broadcast even claimed that the U.S. revelation of CIA funding to Hussein was designed to torpedo the PLO-Jordanian rapprochement.<sup>190</sup> Moscow's more direct, and virulent, comments were reserved for the confederation ideas—of Palestinian autonomy within Jordan—proposed by Israel and/or the United States, rather than those of the Arabs. Thus, the Soviets also tried to avoid a situation wherein they were identified with the Palestinian Rejectionists—who opposed the PLO talks with Jordan—and estranged from the mainstream in the PLO, Fatah. Indeed, the Soviets even acknowledged the existence of a variety of opinions in the Arab world on the subject,<sup>191</sup> in what appears to have been an effort to keep future options open. There were even reports that the Soviet Union was not in fact absolutely opposed to a Palestinian-Jordanian or even Palestinian-Jordanian-

---

<sup>189</sup> Thus Primakov's list of alternative plans for a Palestinian state appeared to dismiss the "projects for the creation of a Syrian-Jordan-Palestinian Confederation" with the comment that such plans were being worked out mainly in Damascus and Amman (though he did not say Cairo). See Primakov, "Zionism and Israel," Part II, p. 11.

<sup>190</sup> Moscow radio in Arabic, February 22, 1977.

<sup>191</sup> *Izvestiia*, April 14, 1977.

Syrian confederation;<sup>192</sup> but, given the consistently negative thrust of Moscow's statements on the matter even if couched in quotations from non-Soviet sources, one might conclude that the Soviets were satisfied with the PLO's general rejection of the idea, at least as a matter to be decided upon *before* statehood.<sup>193</sup>

Following Sadat's visit to Jerusalem in November 1977, the idea of a Syrian-Jordanian-Palestinian confederation appeared to be dropped as the Egyptian proposal for a return of the West Bank to Jordan became most topical. Given this context, it was clear that Moscow would oppose the idea of a Palestinian-Jordanian confederation, encouraging the PLO-Jordanian rapprochement more than ever as part of an effort to solidify the Arab bloc, which opposed Sadat's moves. So long as Jordan remained outside the peace initiative, this task was apparently not difficult, as evidenced by Crown Prince Hassan's consultations in Moscow following the 1978 Camp David accords. Yet, not only the Rejectionists within the PLO but also Moscow's favored Hawatmeh opposed this rapprochement for fear that it would in fact develop into a cover for a later Jordanian and even Jordanian-PLO move toward Sadat.<sup>194</sup> From another point of view, stepped-up Soviet support for the PLO in the wake of the Sadat initiative and the Camp David accords could but highlight the fragility of the budding Soviet-Jordanian relationship and its inherent contradictions. Both these problems will be discussed below, in the context of the autonomy plan.

It was probably in connection with the debate over the Jordan-Palestinian confederation issue, including the U.S. proposals and Israeli statements regarding the West Bank and Jordan prior to

---

<sup>192</sup> According to *An-Nahar al-Arabi al-duli*, May 7, 1977, Assad and the Soviets saw no contradiction between the expression "independent Palestinian state" and the state being part of a federal union with Syria and Jordan. See also comments made by Soviet officials to Karen Dawisha in "Soviet Union in the Middle East: Setback or Comeback?" *The Middle East* (July 1977):27. According to *Arab Report and Record* (May 1-15, 1977):375, AFP claimed that Arafat had told the Soviets in April 1977 that he was prepared to accept confederation with Jordan, but this was denied by PLO sources. An earlier, somewhat dubious, account claimed that "one prominent PLO leader" stated that the Soviet Union was not interested in an independent Palestinian state—*Monday Morning* (November 1-8, 1976).

<sup>193</sup> *Pravda*, July 15, 1977, quoted PLO official Yasir Abd-Rabo's negative response to Sadat's July 1977 proposal of a Jordanian-Palestinian link on the grounds that the matter could not be decided a priori. This was also the stand of the Jordanian and Palestinian Communists: Jordanian Communist Party, *Les Communistes*, pp. 21-22.

<sup>194</sup> *Ar-Ra'y al-Amm*, March 23, 1978 (Hawatmeh interview).

Sadat's initiative, that the Soviet Union became more explicit in its references to the West Bank and Gaza as the locale of the Palestinian state, emphasizing the *Palestinians'* claim to these areas. For example, the major papers reporting an Arab League decision all carried the same TASS commentary, which said that for the first time the Arab League had made a clear delineation "between Palestinian and other Arab territories" because the Palestinians wanted "to emphasize that the West Bank of the Jordan River and the Gaza sector are Palestinian."<sup>195</sup> This rejection of any Jordanian claim to the West Bank became still more explicit in response to Sadat's initiative and the negotiations for an Israeli-Egyptian agreement, culminating in the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Accord. A new formulation found its way into Soviet-Palestinian communiqués, referring to "occupied Arab territories, including Palestinian territories."<sup>196</sup> The Soviets hastened to emphasize that Jordan agreed with this distinction, supported the PLO's claims, and rejected the Egyptian—and Israeli—proposals, but it is not certain that they themselves were absolutely convinced of this.

It may also have been part of such a distinction between Jordan and the Palestinian territories that the Soviet Union began to mention Jerusalem somewhat more frequently, even occasionally specifying its inclusion in the proposed Palestinian state, although upon occasion the references seemed to be designed, as in the past, to please Jordan.<sup>197</sup> The Egyptian paper *Rose al-Yusuf* claimed that in response to an Egyptian query the Soviet Union had expressed its support for the idea of the return of the Arab part of Jerusalem to the

---

<sup>195</sup> TASS, September 6, 1977, in *Pravda, Krasnaya zvezda*, September 7, 1977, *Izvestiia*, September 8, 1977. One article even acknowledged that Jordan had not abandoned its claim to the West Bank, but this was an unusual comment, in a somewhat esoteric journal: Prylin, "The Palestinian National Liberation Movement," p. 100. According to a more broadly distributed journal, *International Affairs*, Jordan had taken over the territory in 1950 "pending" final settlement of the Palestinian problem, though a *New Times* article, possibly making a slip, merely said that the West Bank was "part of Jordan" prior to 1967—*International Affairs* (January 1979):137; *New Times* (February 1979): 13.

<sup>196</sup> Communiqué following Abu Maizar visit, Voice of Palestine, August 21, 1979, and communiqué following Arafat's November 1979 visit, *Pravda*, November 15, 1979.

<sup>197</sup> See, for example, *Pravda*, January 12, 1977, and TASS, September 23, 1977, which spoke of Israeli development of Jerusalem; Moscow radio in Arabic, February 22, 1977; TASS, October 15, 1977, spoke of the Arab part of Jerusalem.



Arabs.<sup>198</sup> While rarely specified, this would indeed appear to be a consistent point in the Soviet settlement plan. Hawatmeh, at any rate, claimed that the Soviets saw East Jerusalem as part of the territories to be included in the Palestinian state,<sup>199</sup> and the communiqué issued at the close of the Rakah-Jordanian Communist Party talks in May 1976 listed the Arab sector of Jerusalem, along with the West Bank and Gaza, as the locale of the Palestinian state.<sup>200</sup> Following the PLO plan sent to President Carter in May 1977, which reportedly called for East Jerusalem to be the capital of the Palestinian state,<sup>201</sup> the Soviet media, at least occasionally, explicitly included East Jerusalem in the territories upon which a Palestinian state "should be established."<sup>202</sup> One *Izvestiia* commentary, admitting that the Jerusalem question "stands somewhat apart," listed the different points of view on the issue, including "a French proposal" that the city remain Israeli, with a "small zone" under Arab sovereignty. The commentary expressed no preference, stating only that the "Arabs" proposed a return to the former situation, that is, "the partition of the city," nowhere mentioning Jerusalem as part of the Palestinian state, the territories of which *were*, in fact, specified.<sup>203</sup>

It was Sadat's visit to Jerusalem which occasioned unprecedented Soviet attention to this subject, providing as it did an opportunity to please the Jordanians, the Palestinians, or any other Arab group that objected to Israel's presence in Jerusalem or opposed Sadat's bold initiative. Thus, while repeatedly referring to the city, as a whole, as "occupied Jerusalem," Moscow condemned Israel's claim to Jerusalem (the implication was, *any part* of Jerusalem) as its capital.<sup>204</sup> This

---

<sup>198</sup> INA, January 2, 1977.

<sup>199</sup> *As-Siyassah*, May 7, 1977.

<sup>200</sup> *An-Nahar Arab Report* 7 (August, 9, 1976):3—though this was *not* in the Soviet version of the communiqué.

<sup>201</sup> *The Guardian*, August 2, 1977.

<sup>202</sup> See, for example, Moscow radio, September 30, 1977; *Pravda*, January 18, 1979. E. Dimitryev, *The Palestinian Knot*, p. 192, did not specifically refer to Jerusalem when discussing the borders of the proposed state, but in its detailed discussion of the "Jerusalem problem," it stated that the Soviet position clearly saw East Jerusalem as part of the territories from which Israel had to withdraw. This followed a lengthy discussion of the illegality of Israel's claim to West Jerusalem.

<sup>203</sup> *Izvestiia*, April 14, 1977. The same article later spoke of a Palestinian state in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and two enclaves, without mentioning Jerusalem.

<sup>204</sup> TASS, November 12, 1977, in all central dailies of November 13, 1977; Radio Peace and Progress in Arabic, November 23, 1977; *Pravda*, November 15,

was not the first time that the Soviets attacked the failure to abide by the U.N.'s 1947 decision to internationalize the city and Israel's declaration of Jerusalem as its capital, but it was the first time that the central press returned to the subject repeatedly. While the tactical purposes were patently obvious—another point upon which to condemn Sadat's visit and, later, Israel's autonomy plan—the emphasis in the press on the occupation of Jerusalem in 1967 (combined with earlier treatment of the question) suggested that Moscow's basic position favored a redivision of the city rather than a return to the internationalization idea.<sup>205</sup> With the relative toughening of the Soviet line in response to the Camp David accords of October 1978, however, the Soviet press again raised the internationalization idea or at least the claim that Israel was "occupying" West Jerusalem as well.<sup>206</sup> Yet, this line did not become a regular feature of Soviet statements, and the absence of any reference to the Jerusalem problem in official Soviet statements or high-level speeches further suggested that the Soviets did not believe it necessary to adopt a firm position on the question as yet.

#### THE AUTONOMY PLAN

The "autonomy plan," as presented by the Israeli government after Sadat's visit to Jerusalem and spelled out in a more detailed form in the Camp David accords of September 1978, was variously interpreted. In Israel persons of differing political persuasions criticized it, some because they believed it would lead to the creation of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza, others because they saw it as a "gimmick" designed to perpetuate Israeli control over these areas.

---

1977; Moscow radio in Arabic, November 16, 1977; Moscow radio, December 2, 1977; TASS international service in Russian (roundtable), December 4, 1977; *Selskaya zhizn'*, December 3, 1977; *Pravda*, December 4, 1977.

<sup>205</sup> *Izvestiia*, December 29, 1977; TASS, January 30, 1978; Radio Peace and Progress in Arabic, July 1, 1978 (in response to U.S. Vice President Mondale's visit to East Jerusalem); Moscow radio in English to Africa, February 6, 1978; Blishchenko, "The Palestinians' Rights," p. 21. A relatively authoritative interview by Y. Primakov to an Arab paper spoke only of the Arab part of Jerusalem, when referring to the occupied territories; see *Monday Morning*, July 2-8, 1979. See also Glukhov in *Pravda*, February 15, 1979.

<sup>206</sup> *Pravda*, November 1, 1978; *Izvestiia*, November 14, 1978, August 23, 1979; Moscow radio in Arabic, March 17, 1979; "East Jerusalem Under the Invaders' Heel," *New Times* (May 1979):24-26.

Inasmuch as the plan itself called for self-government for a period of five years, during which negotiations regarding the future status of these territories would be opened between Israel, elected representatives of the Palestinians, Egypt, and Jordan, there were those in the PLO who saw the plan not only as an Israeli device to maintain these areas but, alternatively, as an effort to return the West Bank to Jordan and the Gaza Strip to Egypt. While Jordan refused to join the Sadat initiative and rejected the Camp David accords, there were still elements within the PLO—the Rejectionists—who feared a Jordanian change of mind, adding this, as we have seen, to their already adamant opposition to the PLO-Jordanian rapprochement. On the other hand, there was at least one instance when Qaddumi expressed a certain PLO flexibility, when he told a group of people from the United States that with certain modifications the PLO could accept the autonomy plan.<sup>207</sup>

The Soviet preference for a Palestinian state limited to the West Bank and Gaza, and its gradually apparent opposition to a federal solution with Jordan, by no means implied Soviet support for the “autonomy plan” proposed by Israel in 1978. Moscow saw the plan only as a “fiction” intended to perpetuate Israeli rule over the areas. The Soviet choice of this interpretation of the future outcome and ramifications of the plan was dictated primarily by the fact that the proposal had come within the context of the “separatist” talks, namely, the Egyptian-Israeli negotiations under the sponsorship of the United States to the total exclusion of the Soviet Union. The fact that the PLO—and other Arab states—also rejected the idea was undoubtedly a contributing factor to the Soviet line, and indeed the Soviets emphasized the plan’s exclusion of the PLO as a major part of their argument against the Camp David accords. Yet the Soviets totally ignored any idea of “adjustment” of the plan, such as that suggested by Qaddumi, or any encouragement of local Palestinian cooperation with the plan (also hinted at by Qaddumi), which might conceivably, in fact, steer the autonomy framework in the direction of a Palestinian state and/or bring in the PLO gradually or indirectly. Rather, just as the Palestinian Rejectionists feared that Jordan might opt for the United States and accept the Camp David accords, the Soviets became increasingly concerned that the PLO itself was headed in this direction. The key to the Soviet position,

---

<sup>207</sup> *Yediot Ahronot*, January 29, 1979.

therefore, was not the substance of the proposed plan but its origin and patrons. And the Soviets probably estimated that its failure would put an end to the exclusively U.S.-Egyptian initiative.

Thus, the Soviets adopted a totally negative approach to the autonomy idea, calling it "so-called autonomy," "meagre regional autonomy," the pushing of the Palestinians into a "reservation," or "virtually a protectorate," and a "South African-type" solution. It launched a campaign on the West Bank against the plan through the creation, by local Communists and the Palestine National Front, of Committees for National Guidance whose task it was to organize and propagandize West Bank residents against cooperation with the autonomy plan. As we have seen, the Soviet response to the autonomy plan also occasioned increased references to the West Bank and Gaza—that is, the areas for the proposed autonomy—as precisely those earmarked for an independent Palestinian state, as well as increased references to Jerusalem as a subject ignored by the proposal. Similarly, in response to what was called Israel's attempt to find quislings to replace the PLO in "ruling" the territories, there was a step-up in Moscow's recognition of the PLO as the Palestinians' sole legitimate representative.<sup>208</sup> In conjunction with the emphasis on the PLO in an effort to capitalize on the plan in order to improve Moscow's position with the PLO and the Rejectionist Arab states, the Soviets also took pains to discredit the United States, explaining that the proposal was a clear indication of the abandonment by the United States of its claim to support the Palestinians' right to a homeland in favor of perpetuating the Israeli occupation.<sup>209</sup>

In addition to these arguments, the Soviets took issue with the provisions to maintain Israeli military units—and "militarized settlements"—in the area during the five-year period, which, some Soviet accounts implied, would be even longer.<sup>210</sup> One TASS release

---

<sup>208</sup> See Chapter Seven.

<sup>209</sup> See, for example, R. Ovinnikov, "The Middle East: The Shifting Sands of Separate Agreements," *International Affairs* (December 1978):37; *Izvestiia*, October 28, 1978. *Izvestiia*, January 12, 1978, quoted Carter's statement against an independent Palestinian state between Jordan and Israel.

<sup>210</sup> Ovinnikov, "The Middle East," p. 38; Oleg Alov, "Illusions and Reality," *New Times* (February 1978):7; Fyodor Yugov, "Reanimation of Separate Diplomacy," *idem* (July 1978):8; D. Volsky, "The Camp David Deal," *idem* (September 1978):8; Dmitry Volsky, "Who Occupied the Fourth Chair?" *idem* (October 1978):6; TASS, May 20, 1978; Moscow radio in Arabic, June 19, 1978.

spoke of the plan as the creation of a "puppet state" which would have no armed forces of its own.<sup>211</sup> While Moscow had in the past supported the general concept of demilitarization as part of a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict,<sup>212</sup> the idea of a demilitarized Palestinian state, so as to allay Israeli fears for the future, had on at least one occasion been specifically ruled out. Primakov had rejected what he called Zionist proposals that "part of the West Bank and of Gaza . . . should be demilitarized."<sup>213</sup> This rejection was, of course, in line with PLO positions as proclaimed not only by Habash in 1974 but also by Qaddumi, for example, in 1976.<sup>214</sup> Yet this was an isolated reference; the Soviets in fact rarely approached the issue of the military side of a future Palestinian state. Nor did they respond directly to various comments by Arafat, who spoke of superpower guarantees or U.N. forces for a Palestinian state.<sup>215</sup> Most probably, the Soviet leaders simply deemed it premature to commit themselves on such an issue, particularly as long as the borders of such a state, its relationship to Jordan and to Israel, were so far from being worked out. Soviet flexibility on this issue, however, would probably be dependent upon the likelihood of actually achieving a settlement, that is, the essentiality of this issue to the prospects for a settlement and the constellation of forces—international and inter-Arab—at the time. In any case, the Soviet Union did not choose to debate such substantive issues more than peripherally in the context of its response to the autonomy plan.

For all that the Soviet Union opposed the autonomy plan and its various components, and for all that Moscow identified with and encouraged both the PLO and Jordanian rejection of the plan, the political context and ramifications of the negotiations for its implementation occasioned a serious cooling of PLO-Soviet relations *and* Soviet-Jordanian relations, as well as some confusion in Moscow's Palestinian policies. As noted, part of the Soviet response to the

---

<sup>211</sup> TASS, January 30, 1978.

<sup>212</sup> Most notably in Gromyko's speech to the Geneva Peace Conference and Brezhnev's trade union speech, March 1977.

<sup>213</sup> Primakov, "Zionism and Israel," Part I, p. 11.

<sup>214</sup> Habash in *Journal of Palestine Studies* III (Spring 1974):202; Qaddumi, *Le Monde*, December 1, 1976.

<sup>215</sup> Arafat did tell a visiting U.S. congressman that the new state would not be fully independent in the beginning, suggesting the stationing of U.N. forces there (if necessary, exclusive of the superpowers)—*Jordan Times*, January 15, 1978. On another occasion he suggested superpower guarantees—*New York Times*, May 2, 1978.

autonomy plan was increased emphasis on the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians. At the same time, however, Moscow sought to cultivate its own direct contacts with possible future parties to the proposed autonomy negotiations. Thus it maintained high-level contacts with Jordan and indeed took every occasion to emphasize Jordan's (new) loyalty to the Rejectionist opposition to autonomy and the United States.<sup>216</sup> The Soviets also invited a group of West Bank mayors and political leaders to the Soviet Union in what was presumably an effort to cultivate direct contacts.<sup>217</sup> Neither the pro-Jordanian step nor even the step toward the mayors need have contradicted PLO interests at the time or damaged Soviet-PLO relations, but, as the PLO-Jordanian rapprochement deepened, signs of a Soviet dilemma and Soviet-PLO tensions began to appear, signs that gave the Soviet approach to the West Bank mayors another possible dimension and significance.

Initial Soviet enthusiasm for the PLO-Jordanian rapprochement began to wane sometime in the late spring of 1979, as Soviet concern over both PLO and Jordanian contacts with Egypt and the United States intensified.<sup>218</sup> Thus Hawatmeh's earlier fears that Jordan would lead the PLO to the West were now, apparently, accepted by Moscow; the ambivalent Soviet response to Arafat's meetings with West European leaders was just one indication of this fear.<sup>219</sup> What ensued was not only a negative Soviet attitude toward PLO-Jordanian cooperation and a cooling in Soviet-PLO relations, to which the issue of the lack of Soviet aid in Lebanon was also a contributing

---

<sup>216</sup> Particular attention was given to the visit of State Minister Hassan Ibrahim, "special envoy" of King Hussein, to Moscow in May 1979.

<sup>217</sup> The delegation arrived during the Jordanian representative's visit and was given even more publicity than Ibrahim.

<sup>218</sup> The change of position was detectable in an interview given to a Beirut paper by Primakov who, in answer to a question on the rapprochement, said only that the Soviet Union viewed it with "understanding"—*Monday Morning*, July 2-8, 1979. But, in fact, the issues themselves and the ramifications for the Palestinian movement's Communist and anti-Communist elements were debated in the winter of 1979 (at the PNC in January and after). For a summary see Fulvio Grimaldi and Judith Perera, "Palestine Fate Hangs on the Pan-Arab Thread," *The Middle East* (March 1979):34-35.

<sup>219</sup> At first praising the meeting—despite Hawatmeh's and other Rejectionists' immediate opposition to Arafat's move: *Le Monde*, July 13, 1979—the Soviet press reversed its position and began to disparage West European motives and speak of U.S. use of West Europeans as stooges; see, for example, *Izvestiia*, July 29, 1979; editorial, "The Middle East Vortex," *New Times* (July 1979):1.

factor, as we shall see below, but also something of a dispute and competition between local Communists and Fatah on the West Bank.<sup>220</sup> Whereas on a more general plane the differences between the PLO and the Communists on the West Bank focused on the latter's encouragement of a moderate line—recognition of Israel, a Palestinian state limited to the West Bank and Gaza, a negotiated settlement—now, although united in their opposition to the autonomy plan, the Communists found themselves supporting the Rejectionists against a Jordanian-sponsored compromise that might bring the PLO and the United States together. Another explanation of the PLO-Communist split on the West Bank was simply that the Jordanians had pressured their new allies, the PLO, to have their supporters on the West Bank cooperate with pro-Hashemite elements only, with a strengthening of the traditional, Islamic, pro-Saudi trends at the expense of the Communists.<sup>221</sup> One result of this conflict was that the Soviet-sponsored nonparty Palestine National Front more or less disintegrated as the pro-Jordanian, pro-Communist dichotomy split local PLO supporters themselves. One manifestation of the split was the response to the collective resignation of the West Bank mayors in protest to the arrest of Nablus mayor Bassam Shak'a. The Communists encouraged the mayors' move as an added means of obstructing any progress on the autonomy issue, but Fatah, apparently concerned about the alternatives if Israel accepted the mayors' resignations, urged the mayors to reverse their stand. The results of the affair are less important than the fact that it exemplified the conflict that had been going on for some months. The conflict itself was detectable only indirectly in the Soviet media and positions, both in the Soviet attitude toward the PLO and toward Jordan. Aside from supporting the mayors' action on the Shak'a affair, the Soviet media repeatedly warned the Palestinians against elements favoring a turn to the United States. Moscow also permitted the publication of derogatory comments regarding Jordan's attitude toward the Palestinians and their control of the West Bank.<sup>222</sup> None of these actions took the form of an all-out campaign, however, presumably because the Soviets had no desire to close off

---

<sup>220</sup> The dispute was publicly expressed in each faction's respective publications, the Jerusalem daily *al-Kuds* and the Jerusalem weekly *al-Talia*, notably in August and September 1979.

<sup>221</sup> *Davar* (Tel Aviv), September 4, 1979.

<sup>222</sup> See, for example, Emile Touma, "Origins of the Palestinian Movement," *World Marxist Review* 22 (August 1979).

their options, including the Jordanian option. While Arafat's November 1979 Moscow visit did not resolve the problem—as the later Shak'a affair demonstrated—it was undoubtedly an occasion for Soviet pressures on the PLO leader to promise close cooperation and loyalty to the Soviet Union on all issues concerning Middle East negotiations. One may assume that these pressures continued, but the very need for them was illustrative of the difficulties the autonomy plan presented for the Soviet Union, as well as of the types of problems Moscow might have to face in the event of the creation of a Palestinian state.

## CONCLUSIONS

For all the tactically dictated refinements and general evolution of the Soviet attitude to a Palestinian state, a certain basic, even consistent Soviet position was discernible. While the emergence and even content of this position was affected to some degree by developments within the PLO, Soviet policy was dictated by more than its specific relationship with the PLO or the wishes of the PLO itself; other factors, such as the international situation and Soviet-U.S., Soviet-Arab, and possibly even internal Soviet considerations played a larger role. For this reason a number of differences, even conflicts, were apparent between the Soviet stand and that of the PLO, as reflected not only in official statements and leadership speeches, but also in the statements of the Arab and Israeli Communist parties and Soviet-sponsored organizations such as the Palestine National Front, as distinct from those of the PLO and other PLO components.

The basic Soviet attitude toward a Palestinian state was composed of the establishment of an independent Palestinian state alongside, rather than instead of, the State of Israel, limited to the West Bank of the Jordan and the Gaza Strip, recognizing Israel, and accepting these borders as final, possibly with demilitarization on both sides, and thus providing a solution for the Palestinian refugees. Whether or not the founding of this state should be preceded by the formation of a government-in-exile was not of great importance, although such a government was not yet deemed appropriate; a formal link with Jordan was also open to later decisions but, on the whole, not favored. Similarly, the status of Jerusalem might be open to discussion, although preferably East Jerusalem should be part of the Palestinian state. The disagreements with the PLO arose over the most essential components of this position, with ambiguity—albeit tending toward disagreement—on the less essential, less urgent issues from the Soviet



point of view, and agreement on the nonessential matters. Thus, the major disagreement was over Moscow's rejection of the PLO idea of a Palestinian state *instead* of Israel, that is, a democratic, secular state in all of mandated Palestine, with all that this implied with regard to recognition of Israel. Moreover, Moscow refused even the idea of stages advocated by the more moderate Palestinians, calling for recognition and finalization of the 1967 borders of Israel. The Soviet attitude toward the refugees and the Israeli Arabs was not totally unambiguous, but insofar as these matters threatened Israel's continued existence the Soviet Union tended to differ with the PLO position, namely, the return of all the refugees to their original homes and coexistence of Arabs and Jews in a secular state, seeing the solution to both problems in the creation of a Palestinian state alongside Israel. Demilitarization, a government-in-exile, and even the status of Jerusalem were not deemed to be issues upon which decisions were necessary as yet, as suggested by the sparsity of Soviet pronouncements on them, but on the whole—with the possible exception of the demilitarization question—the Soviets apparently saw no reason to disagree with the PLO and, at least with regard to the government-in-exile issue, probably were willing to accept whatever the PLO decided. This was also the case for some time with regard to the question of a Jordanian link, the Soviet and PLO positions generally coinciding on this matter—as long as it was considered premature to reach any decision and possible to maintain open options. Yet, once the Jordanian option became associated with the possibility of U.S. influence on the PLO, the Soviets became more cautious about links with Jordan, despite the PLO's own preferences. Similarly to the Jordan issue, other issues over which there was Soviet-PLO agreement, or at least lack of disagreement, could easily become subject to dispute once concrete discussions began over the creation of a Palestinian state. If the issue of demilitarization or some special arrangements for Jerusalem were the only matters to stand in the way of such a state, Moscow might well be expected to press the PLO to change its position; by the same token tactical considerations might well influence Moscow to change its position regarding a government-in-exile and, more important, the Palestinian relationship with Jordan, depending, primarily, upon international and inter-Arab developments, and the nature as well as progress of Arab-Israeli peace negotiations, that is, how close achievement of a settlement really was and the degree of participation of the Soviet Union.

While the emergence of further PLO-Soviet differences over the Palestinian state might easily be foreseen, the experience of the

post-1973 period also demonstrated the appearance of at least temporary agreement, over issues such as the refugee problem, for example, when tactical considerations arose. By the same token, it would be impossible to foresee all the possible exigencies that might influence and even occasion a change in the Soviet position, just as no government can be said to be irrevocably wed to any given policy. Thus, there really is no answer to the argument that Soviet opposition to the establishment of a Palestinian state *instead* of Israel or Soviet preference for the 1967 borders might one day be reversed or superseded. Nor can one answer the counter-challenge that the Soviet Union might well abandon its support for the creation of any Palestinian state. One can only conclude, on the basis not only of consistency and officially declared positions, but also of the willingness to risk certain relationships and arouse opposition among ostensible allies, that there was a basic Soviet position to which the Soviet leadership appeared to be committed. This commitment was based on a sense of realism or an estimate of what the international scene would allow, from the point of view both of feasibility and of risk-taking on the one hand, and of what policy best served Soviet interests both globally and in the Middle East region on the other. An essential change in the U.S. position, particularly with regard to Israel, a total reorientation of the PLO, or shifting alliances within the Arab world or between the Arab states and the Soviet Union would seem to be the factors most likely to affect future Soviet policy on this matter.

## CHAPTER THREE

# The Geneva Peace Conference

### SOVIET ATTITUDE TO PLO WILLINGNESS TO ATTEND

The idea of the Geneva Peace Conference, from its very conception through Moscow's efforts to have it reconvened, involved some essential issues in the PLO-Soviet relationship, such as the very idea of negotiations, resolution 242, on which Geneva was based, and the two-pronged problem of Soviet commitment and PLO willingness to participate in the conference. As can be seen from the already cited arguments of Habash against the Soviet Union, the very idea of a negotiated settlement, as well as resolution 242, was to be rejected for its implied recognition of Israel as a state. This was the line of Jibril and the Iraqi-sponsored Arab Liberation Front as well, although the criticism leveled by Habash and these groups against Arafat<sup>1</sup>—as well as the image the Soviets sought to create of Arafat—suggested that the Fatah leader was more amenable on this issue; he never made any public declaration to this effect, however. Even as the

---

<sup>1</sup> As one Arab Liberation Front representative said in 1970, "This resolution . . . consecrates the Zionist presence on Arab land"—*Al-Anwar* (Beirut), March 8, 1970. The Rejectionists said, for example, that Arafat opposed attempts of "some forces" to harm a political solution—*As-Safir* (Beirut), March 26, 1974. Further examples cited below.

Yom Kippur War drew to a close, this issue appeared as a serious one in PLO-Soviet relations, for the Soviet-U.S. cease-fire proposal (resolution 338) not only called for negotiations but limited itself specifically to the implementation of resolution 242, which dealt with the Palestinian problem not as a national or political one but rather as merely a refugee problem. As a result, the PLO added its criticism of the cease-fire to that of Syria, which had also failed until then to accept resolution 242, of Iraq, Libya, and Algeria. Indeed the Soviets, finding themselves on the defensive, deemed it necessary to elucidate their interpretation of resolution 242 in such a way as to include a specific demand for the Palestinians' legitimate rights and thus, they hoped, pacify Palestinian objections to the cease-fire.<sup>2</sup>

The problem persisted in the post-Yom Kippur period, even becoming acute with the Soviets' pressure for a negotiated settlement via the Geneva Peace Conference. For their part the Soviets continued to hedge, offering definitions and interpretations of resolution 242, which at least accounted for the Palestinians' legitimate rights.<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, even the draft program submitted to the June 1974 Palestine National Council by Fatah, Sai'qa, and the PPDFLP (Hawatmeh), that is, the non-Rejection Front contingents of the PLO, argued that "the Arab political decision accepting the cease-fire resolution 338 met the requirement for ending the battle at the limits of limited war. No one loses sight of the connection this resolution has with resolution 242 and the meaning of this—namely, by-passing the core of the issue and total injustice to one people's national and historic rights."<sup>4</sup> Given this position of even the ostensibly more moderate Palestinians, the Soviets cannot have been surprised when the PNC session of 1974 explicitly rejected resolution 242 and "any action on that basis at any level of Arab and international operation, including the Geneva Conference."<sup>5</sup> Both extremes, Habash on one side and the Soviets on the other, claimed, however, that this PNC resolution was merely tactical, concealing a different set of intentions. Habash claimed that Arafat and the PLO executive

---

<sup>2</sup> Moscow radio in Arabic, October 22, 1973.

<sup>3</sup> Verging on double-think, the Soviets said, for example: "Concerning the refugee question, Security Council resolution 242 mentions this point, namely the guaranteeing of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian Arab people"—Moscow radio in Arabic, April 28, 1974.

<sup>4</sup> INA (Iraqi News Agency), June 2, 1974.

<sup>5</sup> Voice of Palestine, June 8, 1974.

did intend to participate in Geneva, while the Soviets were to cite this Council meeting as a positive turning point in the Palestinian attitude toward Geneva.<sup>6</sup> Moscow maintained that the PLO agreed at this time to attend, allowing on occasion that the condition set was that the Palestinian problem be examined at Geneva "as a political question, as a question of securing the lawful national rights of the Arab people of Palestine and is not confined to the 'refugee problem.'"<sup>7</sup>

In fact, what the PLO was to demand was an amendment to resolution 242 along the above lines.<sup>8</sup> Rumors in Arab circles during 1974 claimed that the Soviets had agreed to support such an amendment,<sup>9</sup> although, given the Soviets' undoubted awareness of the difficulties and risks involved in tampering with the hard-won minimum point of agreement between the Arab states and Israel that had been obtained in resolution 242, they apparently preferred to ignore the idea of *amendment* as such. For this reason, the Soviets continued to fail in their efforts to persuade Arafat to declare in favor of participation, the statement on Arafat's visit to Moscow July–August 1974 speaking only of the support by *the Soviet side* for PLO participation in Geneva.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, defending himself from internal attacks, Arafat continued explicitly to reject Geneva because of resolution 242, while the Soviets openly criticized Habash for "cooperating with the imperialists" in efforts to dissuade the PLO from participating.<sup>11</sup> None of this ruled out the possibility, however,

---

<sup>6</sup> For Habash, see *al-Hadaf*, September 28, 1974, in *Journal of Palestine Studies* IV:2 (1975):167. On July 19, 1974, Habash, Jibril, and the Arab Liberation Front issued a statement protesting the decision by "some officials" to participate in Geneva, and on this basis—as well as objections to Moscow's support for a "mini-state"—Habash refused to join the PLO delegation to Moscow in July 1974; see INA, July 20, 1974; *Journal of Palestine Studies* IV:2 (1975):165–70. Baghdad radio, July 6, 1974, had reported a joint Iraqi Ba'ath-Jibril statement rejecting the Geneva Conference, resolutions 242 and 338, and Hussein's federation plan.

<sup>7</sup> *Izvestiia*, July 30, 1974; Victor Bukharkov, "Palestine National Council Session" *New Times* (June 1974):13.

<sup>8</sup> *Le Monde*, June 4, 1974, March 25, 1975, April 3, 1975. According to the last, Zuhair Mohsen, following a meeting with the Chinese Ambassador to Lebanon, said that a reconvening of Geneva was impossible because the PLO would go only if 242 were amended, and the United States opposed any such move.

<sup>9</sup> *Le Monde*, June 4, 1974, referring to *an-Nahar*.

<sup>10</sup> TASS, August 3, 1974.

<sup>11</sup> *Althliad*, September 1974; *Izvestiia*, July 30, 1974; *Literaturnaya*

that Moscow had secured Arafat's agreement in principle, provided the Soviets supported the placement of the Palestinian issue before the U.N. and the chance thereby of gaining some new resolution on the issue.

This was indeed what happened, and the Palestinians did in fact gain a new resolution, at least of the General Assembly. While the Soviets actively supported this effort and hailed U.N. General Assembly resolution 3236 when it was passed in November 1974, they did not follow Arafat's example or oblige his quite clear intention to have this new resolution used as a basis for whatever negotiations, specifically at Geneva, might now be undertaken. The Soviets apparently did not deem it opportune with regard to the United States and Israel, at least in 1974 and most of 1975, even to test such a linkage. Presumably the Soviet Union was too interested in actually reconvening Geneva—and possibly hoping to be able to do so—to jeopardize such an effort with this new demand. Indeed, during Arafat's November 1974 visit to Moscow, after the passage of U.N. General Assembly resolution 3236, the Soviets not only refrained from any linkage of this resolution with Geneva, but even, reportedly, pressed the PLO leader harder than ever on the Geneva issue, arguing that the only alternative to Geneva was war.<sup>12</sup> As a result, once again the final communiqué of the visit limited support for PLO participation in Geneva to the Soviet side alone.<sup>13</sup> In the statement issued at the close of Arafat's next visit to Moscow, after Kissinger's failure to obtain an Israeli-Egyptian agreement in the spring of 1975, the Soviets were willing at least to mention the "decisions of the 29th session of the U.N. General Assembly," but they did not link this with comments further on in the statement regarding the Geneva Conference. For the first time, however, Arafat did agree to the formulation of "both sides'" recognition of the importance of the PLO's participation in all negotiations, including those at Geneva.<sup>14</sup> Nonetheless, Arafat was

---

*gazeta*, August 14, 1974. Another source of attack on such participation was Iraq. Saddam Hussein told the Rabat Conference that "if the Palestine Liberation Organization goes to Geneva, our commitment to the draft resolution [supporting the PLO] will be cancelled." See *As-Siyassah* (Kuwait), October 31, 1974. The Soviet communiqué with a visiting Iraqi Communist Party delegation, however, called for the reconvening of Geneva, in TASS, October 29, 1974.

<sup>12</sup> *Le Monde*, December 11, 1974; *an-Nahar*, December 7, 1974.

<sup>13</sup> TASS, November 30, 1974.

<sup>14</sup> See commentary in *Journal of Palestine Studies* IV:4 (1975):146 on importance of this. Habash also saw this as Arafat agreement to participate, labeling it "treason"—*Al-Hadaf*, May 10, 1975.

subsequently to deny this as a firm commitment, reverting to a formerly used vagueness in saying that the PLO would decide this issue when actually invited—one might read, when the terms of reference for the invitation were actually delineated—and PLO Information Chief Abu Mayzar claimed that Arafat had told Brezhnev that the PLO rejected any initiative based on 242.<sup>15</sup> In any case, the Soviets had apparently realized even before their round of consultations with the Arabs, including this Arafat visit in April 1975, that the positions of the parties involved, although ostensibly in alliance with Moscow, were in fact too far apart to permit the reconvening of Geneva, because as early as March 30, 1975, that is, just a few days after the suspension of Kissinger's Middle East talks, the Soviet media had begun to speak of the necessity for *preparations*, even lengthy preparations, for the reconvening of Geneva. The continuation of this line following the round of Soviet-Arab consultations indicated that Moscow had apparently not achieved agreement with its Arab friends regarding Palestinian participation and regarding other issues.

The Soviets did eventually show some willingness to accommodate the PLO demands regarding Geneva. This change did not, as might have been expected, occur in response to the success of Kissinger's effort to obtain an Egyptian-Israeli agreement in August 1975. While the Soviets did use the Palestinian issue—or rather, the neglect thereof—as part of their propaganda against this agreement and presumably also as a lever to prevent, or to try to prevent, similar negotiations for a Syrian-Israeli agreement, Moscow's decision to link Geneva with resolution 3236, coinciding with a new emphasis on Soviet insistence upon PLO participation, came only in November 1975, *after* Syria had rejected U.S. overtures for a Syrian agreement and had launched its campaign in the U.N. to place the Palestinian issue in the center of discussions, specifically in the Security Council.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> *Le Monde*, May 6, 10, 11-12, 1975. See also Arafat comments on the significance of the invitation, *Le Monde*, April 5, 1975. Also Kuwait radio, May 11, 1975 (PLO sources). Sadat also claimed that the PLO position was still unclear and that the idea of a joint Jordanian-PLO delegation was still being examined.

<sup>16</sup> There had been an unofficial linkage earlier, in June—E. Dmitriev, "For a Peace Settlement in the Middle East," *Aziia i Afrika Sevodnia* (June 1975): 7-8—but this was an isolated case. A possible hint of such a concession to the PLO may have been Ponomarev's comment to visiting U.S. Congressmen that Geneva should be reconvened "of course with due preparation and in full compliance with the well-known decisions of the U.N. Security Council and the General Assembly." This was, however, quite vague and not an entirely new

The Soviet move was apparently designed primarily to *support* the Syrian initiative, as a means both of isolating Egypt and the United States and of preserving Soviet ties with Syria. While such increased support for the Palestinians carried the risk of preventing the reconvening of Geneva and harming Moscow's broader interests regarding a settlement, the tactical calculation at the time probably placed Soviet-Syrian relations—and the related disarming of Kissinger on this front—temporarily above these wider considerations. Thus, in support of the Syrian initiative, the Soviet government note to the United States of November 9, 1975, calling for the reconvening of Geneva specifically added resolution 3236 to that of 338 as the basis for a settlement there. Reflecting the Soviet's more basic position, however, the Soviet media almost immediately omitted this mention from their various reports or substituted the much more vague, and not new, phrase "appropriate U.N. decisions."<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, even though Arafat, in an interview to TASS during his visit to Moscow later, at the end of November 1975, did specify resolution 3236, domestic Soviet coverage omitted this phrase, and neither the communiqué at the close of Arafat's talks with Gromyko nor the Soviet "report" on the visit mentioned this resolution. Indeed, the reference to Geneva was even less forthcoming than that of the May statement, stating only that the "importance" of the Soviet initiative regarding the reconvening of Geneva "was noted."<sup>18</sup> Subsequent official Soviet initiatives for the reconvening of Geneva, such as the January, April, and October 1976 government statements, also made no such linkage of resolution 3236 with Geneva, and, aside from occasional references to the resolution, particularly in U.N. speeches by Soviet representative Malik, it was not made part of the official Soviet demands for Geneva or conditions for Palestinian participation.<sup>19</sup>

Presumably, U.S. opposition to any attempt to substitute, or

---

formulation (indeed in the past such a formulation was usually seen as a reference to the 1947 partition decision)—*Prauda*, July 12, 1975.

<sup>17</sup> TASS, November 9, 1975. For example, *Izvestiia*, November 13, 1975, mentioned 3236, but *Prauda* omitted it, as did *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, November 19, 1975, Moscow radio, November 11, 1975, and Moscow radio in Polish, November 11, 1975.

<sup>18</sup> TASS, November 27, 1975 (Arafat interview); TASS, November 26, 1975 (with Gromyko); Moscow radio in Arabic, November 28, 1975 (statement on visit).

<sup>19</sup> Independently of the Geneva link, this resolution, as well as those of the following year regarding Zionism, were referred to, generally, as "the recent



even supplement, resolution 242 with the new UNGA decision, 3236, was sufficiently adamant to forestall a genuine change in the Soviet position. As a result, the Soviet Union continued in its efforts to persuade the PLO to accept resolution 242, even urging, as we have seen, PLO agreement to mutual Israeli-PLO recognition so as to pave the way for the reconvening of Geneva. By the same token, Moscow generally ignored, at least in its public utterances and media reports, PLO and other Arab requests for an amendment or addition to resolution 242, even at the time of the Syrian-initiated Security Council debate on the Palestinian question in January 1976.<sup>20</sup> Instead, the Soviets continued to claim Arafat approval of the reconvening of Geneva and PLO willingness to participate.<sup>21</sup> Given the PLO's continued public and official rejection of participation in Geneva in the then current framework, on the basis of resolution 242, these Soviet claims were often quite convoluted. Thus the failure of the PLO-Central Council session in 1976 to mention the Geneva conference caused certain problems for Moscow. A commentary on the Central Council session mentioned the failure to issue a statement on Geneva but explained that the favorable reference to recent U.N. decisions made at the meeting was nonetheless indicative of a positive position, inasmuch as one of the recent UNGA decisions had called for the reconvening of Geneva.<sup>22</sup> The same commentary

---

decisions" or simply "decisions of the U.N." In some cases the wording became so vague (where it once was clearly a reference to the Security Council, i.e., resolution 242, or when referring to the General Assembly meaning the partition plan and/or subsequent decisions on the Palestinian refugees) that one could no longer be sure what decisions were meant. For the Israelis as well as the Palestinians this was of great importance, for the broader term might well mean the 1947 decision rather than resolution 242 plus the 1974-75 decisions regarding the Palestinians, though from another point of view the new resolutions provided the possibility, via the general wording, of justifying Palestinian statehood *without* referring to the 1947 decision.

<sup>20</sup> An exception to this was the publication in the *World Marxist Review* 19:7 (1976) of a Qaddumi comment against resolution 242—Faruk Kaddoumi, Abdel Mohsen Abu Maizar, "The Crux of the Middle East Crisis," p. 35.

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, Y. Potomov, "The Middle East: An Important Initiative," *International Affairs* (February 1976):122; Y. Primakov, "A Balanced Course in the Middle East or the Old Policy By New Methods?," *Mirovaya ekonomika a mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia* (December 1976):52, Budapest Television, March 20, 1977, interview with Mohsen and Hawatmeh, which gave the impression that the PLO rather than the U.S. favored resolution 242 (albeit with reservations) and participation in the Geneva conference.

<sup>22</sup> Victor Bukharkov, "The Palestine Movement Shapes Its Course," *New Times* (December 1976):26-27.

went on to excuse the omission by explaining that perhaps the PLO could not formulate its position on Geneva more explicitly without a PNC decision on the subject, claiming, nonetheless, that the previous (1974) PNC had not "ruled out" participation "on certain conditions." That the Soviet Union was in fact pressing for a positive decision to be taken by the 1977 PNC session was evident not only from Palestinian reports of Soviet pressures regarding resolution 242 and recognition of Israel,<sup>23</sup> but by such actions as the sending of a memo to the PNC session by the Jordanian Communist Party-Palestinian Communist Organization directly criticizing the hesitation to come out clearly in favor of participation.<sup>24</sup> The explicit unconditional decision of the 1977 PNC session rejecting resolution 242 and any talks based on it, therefore, stood in direct contradiction to Moscow's position—and claims—occasioning another convoluted interpretation, which ignored the explicit decision and implied acceptance of Geneva.<sup>25</sup>

This failure to change the PLO position was indicative of the Soviets' lack of control over the organization; they apparently had as little influence on the Palestinians—despite Soviet aid and training—as they had on the Arab states themselves. And this obvious dearth of influence did not help Moscow in its effort to persuade the United States of the essentiality of Soviet participation in Middle East

---

<sup>23</sup> See previous chapter.

<sup>24</sup> Jordanian Communist Party, *Les Communistes*, 1977, p. 23. This was also the position taken by an editorial in the Fatah organ *Free Palestine* (London) 10 (February 1977):11.

<sup>25</sup> Moscow radio in Arabic, March 23, 1977; *Izvestiia*, April 5, 1977; Victor Bukharkov, "The Palestinians' Stand," *New Times* (April 1977):10. These accounts and the TASS, March 21, 1977, version of the PNC's political resolution ignored the explicit decision regarding resolution 242 and Geneva, citing, rather, the decision reaffirming the right of the Palestinians to participate in all conferences and talks on their problem and against any decision taken without their participation. The resolution actually said, in its first clause:

The Council stresses that the Palestine cause is the core and basis of the Arab-Zionist conflict, and that Security Council Resolution 242 ignores the Palestinian people and their inalienable rights, and therefore the Council reaffirms its rejection of this resolution and of action taken on the basis of it, at either the Arab or international levels.

negotiations as the factor that could render the PLO reasonable. The Soviets were, of course, hampered in their efforts by the lack of unity within the PLO itself, as we shall see below, for even Arafat's position was challenged on this issue and on others, not only by the Rejection Front, which criticized the failure of the PNC resolution for not expressly *forbidding* participation in Geneva, but even from other, more extreme elements in Fatah, such as Abu Iyyad.<sup>26</sup> It is difficult to know how well informed the Soviets were of the consensus within the PLO prior to the PNC session; presumably they did know there was little likelihood of a favorable decision on Geneva or resolution 242, given the December 1976 PLO-Central Council decision and numerous Palestinian statements prior to the PNC.<sup>27</sup> Publicly, at least, Moscow preferred to ignore or distort the actual PLO position, rather than admit the existence of this difference in approach. Moreover, the Soviets may well have believed that no matter what the formal decisions—which nonetheless they sought to influence—Arafat would be both willing and able ultimately to bring the PLO to Geneva in some form *if* their participation became an absolutely essential factor for its reconvening.

While there were often rumors, or Palestinian claims, that Moscow was willing to support a bid for amendment of resolution 242,<sup>28</sup> such reports were greatly multiplied at the end of the summer of 1977, at the time of U.S. Secretary of State Vance's Middle East trip, and following Arafat's late August 1977 visit to the USSR. The sources of these rumors were Arab, often Palestinian, and they generally claimed that the Soviet leadership had advised the PLO to refrain from accepting resolution 242 during Vance's visit.<sup>29</sup> This message was presumably intended to influence the PLO-Central Council meeting on August 25 and 26, 1977; similar urgings were

---

<sup>26</sup> Baghdad radio, April 3, 1977. Even Qaddumi appeared to disagree with Arafat, at times, on the Geneva question. See *Arab Report and Record* (September 16-30, 1977):806; *An-Nahar Arab Report and Memo* 1 (May 9, 1977).

<sup>27</sup> Voice of Palestine, December 23, 1976, ARNA (Algeria), February 2, 1977; *Free Palestine* 9:12 (1976):7.

<sup>28</sup> See the conflicting reports (previous chapter) on this in connection with Arafat's Moscow visit in April 1977; according to *Al-Dastur* (Paris), May 15, 1977, the Soviets expressed willingness to demand a change in 242 at the Geneva conference so that the PLO could then be invited.

<sup>29</sup> *An-Nahar*, August 24, 1977, carried by *Free Palestine* 10 (September 1977):5. *An-Nahar Arab Report and Memo*, 1 (September 5, 1975):4; idem (September 12, 1977):8-9; idem (September 19, 1977):9; *Al-Mastakbel* (Paris), September 10 and 13, 1977.

also opened by the Rejection Front at this time.<sup>30</sup> Such Soviet advice was reportedly followed by specific Soviet assurances during Arafat's Moscow visit a few days later, during which Gromyko reportedly told Arafat that Soviet-U.S. talks were already underway regarding resolution 242 and that the USSR supported the PLO's request for a new resolution.<sup>31</sup> According to one account, Gromyko added that a draft had already been sent to Washington and that France and England agreed with the Soviet efforts.<sup>32</sup> The new resolution, according to the same source, would virtually reflect the official Soviet position, that is, recognition of the Palestinian right to a national homeland—and opposition to Israeli settlements in the occupied territories—recognition that the central problem was that of the Palestinians, and that there could be no solution without the Palestinians and withdrawal of Israeli forces to the 1967 lines, followed by peace and security within recognized borders for all states. This version was similar to the U.S.-vetoed resolution sent to the Security Council in January 1976, which, because of the last clause, had been unacceptable to the PLO. It omitted the clause regarding the return of refugees and used the term "homeland" to make it more palatable to Washington,<sup>33</sup> but basically it was meant to be acceptable to the PLO if not to the United States. The authenticity of these reports, however, was very much in doubt, and it is not known whether the Soviet proposal, if there indeed was one, took the form of a draft resolution or another statement of principles such as those issued by Moscow on previous occasions.

There were some Soviet signs that the Arab reports were accurate, at least as to a shift in the Soviet attitude toward 242. In addition to criticism in the Soviet press of the interpretation by the United States and Israel of the resolution and their demands on the PLO regarding acceptance of the resolution, at least two Soviet broadcasts in Arabic argued that the Geneva Conference was to be based not

---

<sup>30</sup> INA, August 9, 10, 15, 22, 1977; ARNA, August 10, 1977 (Hawatmeh). The PLO-Central Council meeting rejected resolution 242—Voice of Palestine, August 26, 1977.

<sup>31</sup> *An-Nahar Arab Report and Memo 1* (September 5, 1975):4 and *idem* (September 12, 1977):8-9.

<sup>32</sup> *Al-Mastakbel*, September 10, 1977. On September 13, the same paper carried a report to the opposite effect.

<sup>33</sup> Arafat told *an-Nahar* that this was agreed upon between him and Gromyko in order to embarrass the United States and prevent them from vetoing the resolution—*An-Nahar Arab Report and Memo I* (September 19, 1977):9.

only on resolution 242 but on 3236 as well, and another presented as "just" the Palestinians' refusal to negotiate on the basis of 242 alone.<sup>34</sup> Yet there were also signs to the contrary. For example, the Soviet Union did not report the Rejection Front or even Hawatmeh's statements against PLO acceptance of 242; it did not even report that part of the PLO-Central Council August 26, 1977, decision. During the September-October UNGA discussions both the Polish and the East German representatives referred to resolutions 242 and 338 positively, as distinct from the Yugoslavs, who proposed that a new resolution be adapted.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, the Soviet Union was said to have had mixed feelings about the December 1977 Tripoli meeting of the PLO and most Arab states, which opposed Sadat's peace initiative specifically because of that meeting's rejection of resolution 242.<sup>36</sup> From the Arab side, PLO political chief Qaddumi expressly stated that there had been *no* change in the Soviet attitude toward 242, the difference of opinion remaining between the PLO and Moscow on this issue.<sup>37</sup> Khalid al-Hassan of Fatah also stated this, claiming that it was a point on which the Soviet Union and the United States agreed, and to which the PLO objected.<sup>38</sup> That this difference continued was expressly stated by Arafat in an interview he gave in the USSR following his meeting with Brezhnev in March 1978.<sup>39</sup> Yet the Soviets became increasingly willing to acknowledge this PLO position once it could be "justified" as a response to Sadat's peace initiative, that is, as a "disillusionment" on the part

---

<sup>34</sup> *Izvestiia*, July 3, 1977, August 14, 1977, September 10, 1977; Moscow radio in Arabic, August 10, 11, 1977; Radio Peace and Progress in Arabic, October 12, 1977. See also Igor Blishchenko, "The Rights of the Palestinians," *New Times* (January 1978):21, and MIS (Tel Aviv) 5 (November 1-15, 1977): 118.

<sup>35</sup> The East German representative said that these resolutions were not perfect but that their passage had been a positive step.

<sup>36</sup> MIS 5 (December 1-15, 1977):136.

<sup>37</sup> *France-Presse Arabes* (Paris) 72 (November 1977):18 (interview); Voice of Palestine, September 15, 1977 (interview). Habash criticized the PLO command again in November 1977 on the grounds that it *had* accepted resolution 242 and was willing to go to Geneva—INA, November 20, 1977.

<sup>38</sup> *Monday Morning* (Beirut), September 12, 1977, p. 9 (interview). *Al-Mastakbel*, September 13, 1977, also said this, but on September 10, 1977, it had reported the opposite.

<sup>39</sup> Moscow radio in Arabic, March 9, 1978; Yuri Tyunkov, "Yasser Arafat: The Palestinians Are Closing Ranks," *New Times* (March 1978):9.

of the Palestinians at the Egyptian-U.S. attempt to exclude them from the peace process.<sup>40</sup>

If there was, nonetheless, a change in the Soviet attitude on this issue, it was presumably motivated by a number of considerations, most of which were connected with the emerging change in U.S. policy regarding both Geneva and the Palestinians. The U.S. position under Carter began to include the explicit demands for PLO acceptance of resolution 242 and recognition of Israel; it became particularly clear and direct at the time of Vance's Middle East visit in August 1977, when there were rumors of possible PLO agreement.<sup>41</sup> The Soviets probably sought to counter the appeal of the U.S. overtures to the PLO by pointing out, at least implicitly, the negative aspects of resolution 242, such as the limited interpretation given the withdrawal clause by the United States—and Israel.<sup>42</sup> Thus, at the very least, they appeared to be saying that resolution 242 as the United States demanded the PLO should accept it was quite a different resolution from the 242 that Moscow supported. Whatever the meaning, the over-all message of criticism of the U.S. interpretation could place in doubt the advisability of accepting the resolution at all. The idea then would have been not only to discredit the position of the United States but to counter it by now promising, or appearing to promise something better in place of resolution 242. Such a Soviet position need not have meant that Moscow was willing to jeopardize the reconvening of Geneva in order to prevent a pro-U.S. shift on the part of the PLO. The context and timing of this "debate" over resolution 242 suggested another possible Soviet motivation. Having agreed with the United States to the reconvening of Geneva without PLO participation *in its first stage*,<sup>43</sup> Moscow may have been offering the PLO compensation, in the form of Soviet agreement to propose a change in resolution 242, even at the Geneva Conference itself. The Soviets may well have concluded, finally, that the PLO

---

<sup>40</sup> TASS international service in Russian (roundtable), January 10, 1978.

<sup>41</sup> A 1979 Arafat interview revealed that there had been U.S.-PLO negotiations on the 242 issue via Saudi Arabia, but the PLO insisted on acceptance of U.N. General Assembly resolutions 3236 and 3237 as their condition for accepting 242; the United States rejected this—Voice of Palestine, June 2, 1979, quoting interview in *al-Hawadess*.

<sup>42</sup> *Izvestiia*, July 3, 1977, September 10, 1977; *Izvestiia*, August 14, 1977, said that the United States was "flirting" with the Palestinians and hinting that if they agreed to come to Geneva on the basis of 242, Israel would agree to Palestinian representation in the conference.

<sup>43</sup> To be discussed below.

would not recognize Israel—and, therefore, would not accept resolution 242—and for this reason Moscow decided to argue instead that PLO willingness to sit with Israel at the conference table would constitute sufficient recognition; they would thus inform the United States that there was no need for the PLO to accept 242, eliminate its relevance for Geneva, while nonetheless promise the PLO to encourage its amendment. The only concrete result of the Soviet position at this time was not, as the Soviets had reportedly promised the PLO, an effort for a new resolution from the Security Council, but rather the Soviet-U.S. joint statement of October 1, 1977. On the one hand, this statement reconfirmed resolution 242 by repeating many of its points, including the controversial, more limited clause demanding Israeli withdrawal “from territories [not ‘the’ territories and not ‘all the territories’] occupied in 1967” and, on the other hand, it added the one point advocated by the PLO: “resolution of the Palestinian question including the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.”<sup>44</sup> If this statement were accepted by the respective Geneva participants as the basic framework for reconvening the Conference, which apparently was the intention of both superpowers, acceptance or rejection of resolution 242 would indeed become irrelevant, and the way would be open for PLO participation—at least from the point of view of the PLO and its standard demand. Certainly the Soviets hastened to present it this way, both in propaganda and, for example, in their report of comments made by the PLO representative in Moscow to the effect that the statement marked a change in the U.S. position as previously outlined in resolution 242.<sup>45</sup> Yet, however the Soviets—or the United States—intended the joint statement and its relationship to resolution 242, it was a long way from being accepted by all participants as the new basis for Geneva; some Arabs, including Palestinians, went so far as to claim that the statement constituted a Soviet retreat regarding PLO participation in Geneva.<sup>46</sup> In any case, within the PLO itself

---

<sup>44</sup> TASS translation, October 2, 1977.

<sup>45</sup> Moscow radio in Arabic, October 3, 1977. See also O. Alov, “For a Middle East Settlement,” *International Affairs* (January 1978):93, and TASS, October 4, 1977, on the idea that the joint statement was a basis for Geneva.

<sup>46</sup> *Le Monde*, December 6, 1977; QNA (Qatar), December 7, 1977; Baghdad radio, October 7, 1977; MENA, October 2, 1977; Leon Keshishian, “PLO at the U.N.,” *The Middle East* (November 1977):31; SANA, October 16, 1977; INA, October 4, 7, 1977, November 20, 1977; “The Dominoes of Extremism,” *Israel and Palestine* (Paris) (December 1977):8-9, 20-21. For Soviet admission of this, see Moscow radio in Arabic, November 15, 1977.

opposition continued to participation in Geneva, as evidenced by the PLO statement issued at the Tripoli Conference at the end of 1977 expressly rejecting the Geneva forum, and as acknowledged by the Soviets themselves.<sup>47</sup>

The issue of resolution 242 arose again in the wake of the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Agreement signed in March 1979, and in many ways the PLO, the U.S., and the Soviet Union responses at this time were similar to those of 1977. The circumstances in 1979 were quite different, for, as we have seen, this was a period of growing Soviet concern over a PLO shift toward Washington and a decline in the possibilities for a multilateral Geneva-like conference. Both the United States and the PLO had initiated steps for the introduction of a new Security Council resolution, to "correct" or supplement resolution 242, so as to enable the two parties to communicate, or even cooperate. Indirect contacts between the PLO and the United States were undertaken and endorsed by the August 12, 1979, PLO-Central Council session, while PLO personnel reportedly participated in the formulation of a resolution to be tabled by Kuwait.<sup>48</sup> The PLO's own proposal reportedly included the following points: (1) resolutions 242 and 338; (2) the Palestinian people's right to self-determination; (3) solution of the refugee problem by the return of the 1967 refugees to the West Bank and Gaza, and solution of the 1948 refugees' problem, in accordance with the U.N. resolutions, under the auspices of an international conference sponsored by the U.N.<sup>49</sup> The Kuwaiti resolution did indeed follow these lines, including a clause "reaffirming" resolution 242. There were reports that Washington was willing to accept this formulation, although such agreement began to break down when Washington's Middle East negotiator Robert Strauss encountered Egyptian as well as Israeli opposition.<sup>50</sup>

The Soviet response to these developments, specifically the preparation for the proposed August 23, 1979, Security Council session was, per force, a mixed one. The Soviets had by now abandoned the idea of a renewed Geneva Conference, advocating instead a more

---

<sup>47</sup> Voice of Palestine, December 5, 1977, in *Journal of Palestine Studies* VII (Spring 1978):188, and TASS international service in Russian (roundtable), January 10, 1978.

<sup>48</sup> *Arab Report and Memo* 3 (August 6, 1979):2-3; idem (August 20, 1979):2-3; idem (September 3, 1979):2-3; MIS 7 (August 1-15, 1979):1.

<sup>49</sup> *Al-Kifah al-Arabi* (Beirut), August 19, 1979.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, and MIS 7 (August 16-31, 1979):75-76.



vague formulation for multilateral talks, that is, Soviet participation in Middle East negotiations presumably—and primarily—at the superpower level. The Geneva forum itself had few hopes, not only because the United States, Egypt, and Israel all opposed its reconvening, but also because Moscow was far from certain of its own strength at such a confrontation with the United States, flanked by Egypt and Israel, plus Jordan or a Jordanian-PLO bloc, and even the ever-independent Syria. Thus Soviet chances appeared best in some kind of superpower talks on the Syrian and Palestinian issues in which the Soviets could hope to appear as spokesmen for or at least allies of the Arab partner. It was to achieve this that the Soviets apparently gave their agreement to Washington to cooperate in the effort to achieve a new Security Council resolution. Indeed, according to at least one Arab version, the Soviets had actually presented the United States with a proposal that was then passed on to the PLO, calling for the following “additions” to the existing resolution: (1) the rights of all states in the area to live in peace in their borders; (2) the rights of the Palestinians to self-determination and recognition of their legitimate rights; (3) total Israeli withdrawal from all the territories conquered in 1967.<sup>51</sup> Nonetheless, even more than in the summer of 1977, the danger was that U.S. success would pave the way for PLO-U.S. cooperation, with little assurance that the PLO would remember its former ally. Therefore, as in 1977, the Soviets accompanied their support for a new resolution with an increasingly volatile propaganda campaign against U.S. motives, culminating in explicit warnings to the PLO not to be deceived. Indeed, so great was Soviet concern over U.S.-PLO contacts in the weeks preceding the U.N. debate, that one cannot escape the conclusion that Moscow was decidedly relieved by the strange turn of events that removed the proposed resolution from the agenda, namely, President Carter’s replacement of Andrew Young in what was interpreted—and propagandized by the Soviet Union—as a U.S. concession to Israel. For all that the Soviets had sought PLO acceptance of resolution 242 or a new formulation—such as the Soviet-U.S. joint statement—so as to bring the PLO into the negotiations, the time was hardly favorable to the Soviets at this juncture. In fact, now that the issue of resolution 242 had become so identified with the possibility of U.S.-PLO

---

<sup>51</sup> Indeed it was Jordan, and reportedly the PLO, which expressed an interest in reconvening Geneva in late 1978 and 1979—*Arab Report and Memo* 2 (December 25, 1978), and King Hussein to U.N., September 1979.

cooperation, Moscow became increasingly attached to the Soviet-U.S. statement as a formula that would, on the one hand, go a long way toward satisfying the PLO, while, on the other, ensuring Soviet participation.

### SOVIET POSITION ON INCLUSION OF THE PLO

If the Soviets had problems over PLO willingness to attend the Geneva Conference and PLO demands in this connection, they had equal if not greater problems in enabling the PLO to attend by convincing the other parties involved. Moreover, the Soviet position itself was not a totally fixed one, the Soviet demand for Palestinian participation as such being subject to numerous transformations, exhibiting many inconsistencies and tactical maneuvering. The Soviets totally ignored the Palestinians in their reference to negotiations in the cease-fire resolution of October 1973, and they were most willing to convene the Geneva conference without them, agreeing to the highly noncommittal formula that further Middle East participants would be decided at the conference itself.<sup>52</sup> Indeed there appeared to be a Soviet effort in 1973 and 1974, if not to organize, at least to support a solution to the problem of participation by means of a combined Jordanian-Palestinian delegation.<sup>53</sup> In time, this position, too, underwent a change as the constellation of forces in the Middle East shifted in the wake of the Lebanese war. Thus, in time, the indicators of the Soviet position became (1) demand for Palestinian participation at all; (2) demand for participation of the PLO as such; (3) participation on an equal footing with the other delegations; (4) participation from the outset. Connected with (2) and (3) was the issue of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, but this highly significant issue of Soviet recognition will be discussed in a separate chapter.

Following the Geneva Conference opening, and as the Soviets began more consistently to speak of the Palestinians' national rights, they also began officially to call for "Palestinian participation" in

---

<sup>52</sup> *Le Monde*, December 20, 1973.

<sup>53</sup> Moscow radio, December 7, 1973, reported without comment Jordanian efforts to work out a common position for Geneva with the PLO; TASS, December 9, 1973, reported also without comment the PLO's refusal of a Jordanian proposal for a joint delegation. Moscow did not report a later PLO refusal carried by *an-Nahar*, May 5, 1974.

Geneva. The use of this demand appeared to be connected with U.S. successes in the Middle East, Moscow increasing its mention of the Palestinians and specifically the need for them to participate in Geneva just prior to Kissinger's arrival in the Middle East for the Syrian-Israeli disengagement talks, for example. On this occasion the Soviets pointed out U.S. opposition to Palestinian inclusion as "proof" that the United States could not be trusted.<sup>54</sup> Moscow returned to this point upon the successful completion of the disengagement talks in May 1974, though the increase in Soviet support for the Palestinians at this time was connected not only with combating U.S. successes but also with the convening of the Palestine National Council in June 1974.<sup>55</sup> Yet, the Soviets' efforts, during the June 1974 Nixon-Brezhnev talks, to persuade the United States to agree to an immediate reconvening of Geneva led to a Soviet retreat on the Palestinian issue. The communiqué issued at the close of these talks used the pre-Geneva compromise formula stipulating that additional participants from the region would be worked out at the conference itself.<sup>56</sup> Presumably to compensate for this apparent abandonment of the Palestinians, and reflecting perhaps the actual Soviet proposal to the United States, a TASS commentary of July 4 claimed that Brezhnev had in fact pressed Nixon to agree to Palestinian participation "from the outset." This point was not, however, repeated or emphasized at this time.<sup>57</sup>

One sign that the Soviets might not have given up their hopes to solve the problem by means of a PLO-Jordanian delegation was the premature enthusiastic response made by the Soviets to the Sadat-Hussein communiqué of July 18, 1974. Apparently grossly miscalculating the overwhelmingly negative response this communiqué would provoke in the Arab world because of its division of responsibility for the Palestinians between the PLO—said to represent the Palestinians outside Jordan—and Hussein—by implication considered the legitimate representative of those within Jordan—the Soviets welcomed it as a sign of a Jordanian shift in the direction of the

---

<sup>54</sup> Moscow radio in Arabic, April 25, 27, 28, 29, 1974.

<sup>55</sup> Moscow radio in Arabic, May 29, 1974. A specific demand for Palestinian participation in Geneva was not, however, included in the call for Geneva contained in Brezhnev's note to Assad upon conclusion of the Syrian-Israeli disengagement agreement—*Pravda*, May 31, 1974.

<sup>56</sup> TASS, July 3, 1974.

<sup>57</sup> With the exception of a Moscow radio broadcast to Poland, July 19, 1974.

PLO, Egypt, and other Arab countries.<sup>58</sup> The Soviets emphasized the role such an arrangement provided for the PLO at Geneva, which, they said, would thwart Israel's attempt to deal only with Jordan and exclude the Palestinian issue from Geneva. Since this was a time of intensive Soviet efforts to reconvene Geneva as a substitute for Kissinger's efforts to work out an Israeli-Jordanian agreement, and the Soviets were well aware of Israel's refusal to agree to Geneva with the PLO, Moscow may well have seen this new development as a basis for a joint Arab or Jordanian delegation that could include the PLO.<sup>59</sup> To compensate for their mistaken interpretation—and probably meant as a denial of any sympathies for a compromise with Jordan—the Soviets included in their statement at the close of Arafat's Moscow visit on August 3, 1974, the stipulation that the PLO should participate “with equal rights with the other participants” in Geneva.<sup>60</sup> This coincided with a Soviet shift also in the communiqué in the direction of recognition—though not actual recognition—of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians.<sup>61</sup>

These steps were not, however, merely recompense for the earlier mistake; rather, they were probably forerunners of the significant increase in Soviet support for the PLO—the idea of statehood, recognition of the PLO—and in criticism of Jordan, which was to come as the United States pressed their step-by-step plans—including for Jordan-Israeli talks, without Geneva—and as the Rabat Conference approached.<sup>62</sup> Thus, in his Kishinev speech of October 11, 1974, as Kissinger once again journeyed to the Middle East, Brezhnev called for Palestinian participation in Geneva. Once again commentaries on the speech pointed out the desire by the U.S. for partial agreements excluding certain parties from the negotiations, demonstrating that at least one of the Soviet purposes in increasing support for the Palestinians was a tactical move to impede U.S. gains in the Middle

---

<sup>58</sup> Moscow radio in Arabic, July 20, 1974.

<sup>59</sup> With the PLO criticism of the Sadat-Hussein communiqué, the Soviets caused their embarrassingly warm response, limiting themselves thereafter to descriptions and reports provided by the Arabs—all of which were negative; see, for example, TASS, July 22, 25, 1974.

<sup>60</sup> TASS, August 3, 1974.

<sup>61</sup> See Chapter Seven below.

<sup>62</sup> Criticism of Hussein: *Za rubezhom* (August 30–September 5, 1974); Moscow radio in Arabic, September 2, 24, 1974. Criticism of Egypt for its communiqué with Hussein: Moscow radio in Arabic, September 3, 24, 1974; Radio Peace and Progress in Arabic, September 13, 19, 1974; and *Za rubezhom*, as cited above.

East.<sup>63</sup> Nonetheless, the door was left open for compromise should the reconvening of Geneva become feasible, conceivably at Brezhnev's talks with Ford in Vladivostok, for no mention was made at this time of *when* the Palestinians were to participate—although a statement with Egyptian Foreign Minister Fahmi on October 18 did stipulate “on an equal footing”<sup>64</sup> In fact, the Soviet position on these important details fluctuated greatly in this period. Indeed it was in response to the Rabat Conference that the Soviets publicly raised the idea of a joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation, again exaggerating, as we have seen, the degree of cooperation worked out between the two parties, while the Podgorny-Kosygin message to the conference called for a resumption of Geneva, without any mention of the Palestinians at all.<sup>65</sup> This relative moderation during, as distinct from prior to, the Rabat Conference may have been designed to prevent the acceptance by the conference of too strict limitations regarding the hoped-for agreement to support the reconvening of Geneva. Such limitations were certainly possible, given the position of the more radical Arabs before and during the conference.<sup>66</sup> Having significantly raised their support for the PLO and the Palestinians' more essential demands, the Soviets probably felt they were free to pursue their resumption of the Geneva goal as they saw fit.

Unlike the previous Soviet-U.S. summit, the Vladivostok talks of November 1974 did not mention the issue of additional participants in Geneva at all. Brezhnev may simply have preferred to avoid the issue altogether, given the Arab opposition he would certainly incur in the wake of Rabat if he publicly put off the participation question again. At the same time, it was most unlikely that he could obtain U.S. agreement to any other, more positive formulation. Yet, during the few weeks preceding the summit and immediately following it, official Soviet pronouncements (Gromyko, November 6, 1974, Podgorny, November 18, and Brezhnev, November 26) failed to

---

<sup>63</sup> See, for example, Moscow radio in Arabic, October 12, 1974.

<sup>64</sup> TASS, October 18, 1974.

<sup>65</sup> See *Prauda*, October 31, 1974; Moscow radio in English to Africa, October 29, 1974, even said that Rabat had agreed to PLO representation at Geneva as members of the Jordanian delegation. TASS, October 26, 1974, had the message.

<sup>66</sup> Habash and Jibril refused at the last minute to participate and called on Iraq, Libya, Algeria, and the PDRY to reject any programs aimed at a settlement, while Saddam Hussein, as we have seen, opposed the Geneva Peace Conference itself. See *Le Monde*, October 27-28, 1974; *al-Hadaf*, November 2, 1974 (Habash October 25 press conference); *as-Siyassah*, October 31, 1974.

mention Palestinian participation at all, only making the necessary concession in the communiqué of November 30, at the close of Arafat's visit, in which the Soviets called for Palestinian participation on an equal footing.<sup>67</sup>

The same inconsistencies, retreats, and increased demands persisted over the next months and the following year, although a definitely more insistent Soviet line over Palestinian participation became apparent just prior to the December 1974 CPSU-Central Committee plenum, more or less simultaneously with the new deterioration of Soviet-Egyptian relations. Inasmuch as a crucial point in this new deterioration was in fact Sadat's preference for the Kissinger approach over a return to Geneva, the Soviets may have used this new emphasis upon Palestinian participation in Geneva as added pressure on Egypt, as well as a propaganda weapon against the United States. This new line persisted throughout the period of Kissinger's January-March 1975 efforts to gain a second Israeli-Egyptian agreement, with relatively frequent references now, including one by Brezhnev, to Palestinian participation on an equal footing.<sup>68</sup> Yet, even with these, inconsistencies remained, especially when there were signs that Moscow had genuine hopes for the renewal of Geneva. For example, despite the apparent commitment to Palestinian participation, Moscow made efforts to seek Israeli and Jordanian agreement to reconvene the conference—which agreement at that time would almost certainly have had to be at the Palestinians' expense, at least at the first stages of a reconvened conference.<sup>69</sup>

In what may have been a continuation of earlier efforts to find a suitable framework for Palestinian participation through another delegation, the Soviets regarded Assad's offer of a unified Palestinian-Syrian political and military command as a possible opportunity for providing a means of Palestinian participation in Geneva.<sup>70</sup> And one of the reasons Habash opposed this proposal was that he, too, saw it

---

<sup>67</sup> TASS, November 30, 1974.

<sup>68</sup> TASS, February 14, 1975 (Brezhnev speech). Several Soviet reports at this time claimed that the PLO had agreed to participate: TASS, February 24, 1975, cited Qaddumi, though later it ignored a Qaddumi statement to the contrary; *Pravda*, February 26, 1975; TASS, February 13, 1975; *Za rubezhom* (January 17-22, 1975), and others.

<sup>69</sup> This might explain Brezhnev's omission of Palestinian participation in his March 18, 1975, speech, despite his earlier (February) reference—Moscow radio, March 18, 1975.

<sup>70</sup> *Izvestiia* and Radio Peace and Progress in Arabic, March 11, 1975.

as a measure designed to bring the PLO to Geneva.<sup>71</sup> A further clue that the Soviets were thinking in terms of linking the Palestinians to some other delegation was the correction *Pravda* made of Gromyko's comments on the occasion of his meeting with Arafat in Damascus in February 1975. According to Moscow domestic radio accounts, Gromyko called for PLO participation in Geneva "with full rights as a delegation"; the *Pravda* version omitted "as a delegation."<sup>72</sup> And, indeed, there were almost no such precise formulations in Soviet pronouncements. The Soviets apparently discussed this approach with Jordan when Vinogradov visited Amman—and then Beirut for talks with Arafat—in March.<sup>73</sup> The Soviet Union made no public mention of this trip, but Moscow's Ambassador to Beirut reportedly found it necessary to reassure at least some Palestinians that the Soviet Union supported independent PLO representation at Geneva, specifically denying reports that Moscow favored Jordanian representation of the Palestinians.<sup>74</sup> In addition, the Soviets expressed "understanding" of the Palestinians' opposition to mediation by Hussein, although the Soviet media continued to highlight any sign of PLO-Jordanian cooperation.<sup>75</sup> Moreover, despite the inclusion of the idea of Palestinian participation "on an equal footing" in all the communiqués on Moscow's 1975 consultations with Fahmi, Khaddam, Arafat, and Iraq's Saddam Hussein following the failure of Kissinger's talks, there was no mention of the timing of such participation. Further, not only was Moscow involved in approaches for inclusion of the PLO in broader delegations, but it reportedly indicated to certain parties such as the United States and Israel that it would be willing to compromise on the matter of direct PLO representation from the beginning.<sup>76</sup>

In the late summer of 1975, during a period of Jordanian-Soviet contacts on bilateral issues, including a Soviet invitation to Hussein for a visit to the Soviet Union, there was again a decline in Soviet references to Palestinian participation in Geneva altogether.

---

<sup>71</sup> *Le Monde*, March 22, 1975. Jibril said he would approve it if Syria renounced resolutions 242 and 338.

<sup>72</sup> Radio Moscow, February 2, 1975; *Pravda*, February 4, 1975.

<sup>73</sup> *Le Monde*, March 12, 1975; *New York Times*, March 16, 1975.

<sup>74</sup> *Le Monde*, March 21, 1975, reported meeting of Soviet Ambassador with Hawatmeh.

<sup>75</sup> *Pravda*, January 5, 1975, and February 14, 1975; *Izvestiia*, January 7, 1975; *Za rubezhom* (February 28–March 6, 1975).

<sup>76</sup> *Le Monde*, April 12, 1975; May 10, 1975; *Ha'aretz* (Israel), April 11, 1975.

As this came at a period not only of the Jordanian-Soviet contacts but just as Kissinger was concluding the Israeli-Egyptian interim agreement, it is possible that the Soviets believed that Kissinger's efforts, successful or not, would be followed by U.S. agreement finally to reconvene Geneva, and they, therefore, sought to prepare the compromise position necessary for such a move. It is also possible that the Soviets despaired more than ever of reaching a formula for Palestinian participation that would be acceptable both to the PLO and to the United States.

The switch back to the demand for Palestinian, indeed PLO, participation, and now specified not only "on an equal basis" but also "from the outset," came with the reference to resolution 3236, in support of the Syrian moves in the U.N. in November 1975.<sup>77</sup> Even when the Soviets dropped the reference to 3236, they continued, for some months, to demand Palestinian participation, including the stipulation "from the very beginning" and "on an equal footing" in the January 1976 Soviet government statement, which coincided with the Syrian campaign in the U.N. Yet, the April 1976 government statement returned to the milder demand, which omitted the idea of when the Palestinians should participate, stipulating only that the PLO should participate as "a" representative, according to the TASS translation. And Brezhnev in his speech to the CPSU Congress in February 1976 did not even call for Palestinian participation in negotiations. The zigzagging continued, however, for Moscow's October 1976 proposal for Geneva clearly demanded PLO participation on an equal footing, from the outset—that is, a return to the more extreme position, only to be followed by another retreat, Soviet leadership speeches and official statements refraining, on the whole, from characterizing the type and especially the timing of PLO participation. Brezhnev in particular tended to avoid the subject, often limiting himself to vague references—if any at all—to Palestinian participation in a settlement.<sup>78</sup>

One could probably find an explanation for the formulation of each and every pronouncement, but in general certain factors stood

---

<sup>77</sup> The change began to appear gradually in October 1975.

<sup>78</sup> His consistent reticence might lead one to speculate if Brezhnev were not personally lukewarm to the Palestinian issue, or at least the PLO, official Soviet statements notwithstanding; see, for example, his speech to the CPSU Central Committee, October 26, 1976; trade union speech, March 21, 1977; Tula speech, January 18, 1977; speech to CPSU Congress, February 1976; interview to *Le Monde*, TASS, June 15, 1977.



out. The Soviet position was more extreme as part of its support for the Syrian U.N. initiative on behalf of the PLO in late 1975—at a time when the reconvening of Geneva seemed much less imminent. With the end of this initiative, which itself was not entirely welcomed by the Soviet Union because of its emphasis upon the U.N. rather than the Geneva conference as the forum for the Middle East conflict, the Soviet position eased off, and more intensive efforts to reconvene Geneva were undertaken. Later in 1976, however, with the Syrian invasion of Lebanon and the resultant increase in at least diplomatic-political Soviet support for the PLO, the more extreme Soviet formulation was employed once again. Yet the time of the October 1976 Soviet proposal was also a period when there was no likelihood of a reconvening of Geneva given the imminent elections in the United States. Thus the more adamant Soviet position regarding the PLO would appear to have been a somewhat gratuitous gesture to that organization, particularly desirable in the context of the inner-Arab struggles of the time but hardly of serious consequence within the context of an Arab-Israeli settlement. In 1977 the Soviet position had to respond to two specific matters: Arab proposals for the accommodation of the PLO in some sort of combined Arab delegation to Geneva<sup>79</sup> and, more important, a change in the U.S. attitude toward Geneva and the Palestinians, with the advent of the Carter administration, resulting in general Soviet-U.S. agreement on the issue of PLO participation.

The idea of the inclusion of the Palestinians in a broader Arab delegation posed certain problems for the Soviet Union as the constellation of alliances in the Middle East kaleidoscoped. Whereas prior to 1976 or 1977 the Soviets generally favored this idea as one that might conceivably facilitate the reconvening of Geneva, once the idea had become identified with Egypt it took on a more negative color in Soviet eyes. The Soviet position did not change when in 1977 the proposal came from Syria for a unified delegation (or even a Jordanian-PLO delegation);<sup>80</sup> indeed the Soviet Union, like the PLO itself, probably saw this as an attempt to submerge the Palestinians under Syrian domination—an especially dangerous aggrandizement of Syria, especially when coupled with the Syrian-Egyptian rapprochement at the end of 1976. Thus the Soviet response resembled that to the idea of Palestinian confederation with other

---

<sup>79</sup> Sadat proposals for this were aired in December 1976.

<sup>80</sup> Assad interview to *Time*, January 24, 1977, p. 16; speech in Damascus, August 9, 1977, in IPS, August 10, 1977.

Arab states, generally following the PLO's lead but nonetheless taking on a decidedly negative tone of its own. Soviet opposition to the idea took the form of open and direct criticism when it could be cited as an Egyptian suggestion; more often the Soviet attitude was expressed by the less hostile—and less binding—emphasis upon equal and *independent* Palestinian representation.<sup>81</sup> Thus the fact that Syria advocated the idea could either be ignored or, at best, repeated without commentary or in purposely vague, sometimes misleading, terms.<sup>82</sup> The Soviet media were even cautious about castigating Jordan over the idea, one *Izvestiia* commentary claiming that there were conflicting reports from Amman as to Jordan's attitude.<sup>83</sup> Soviet cautiousness was not, however, prompted only by the delicate position in which Moscow was placed vis-à-vis Syria and Jordan, but also by the appearance of a certain ambivalence, due to internal differences of opinion, on the part of the PLO. The PLO position was occasionally declared clearly, and officially, against inclusion in any other delegation,<sup>84</sup> but, nonetheless, there were some contradictory statements and admissions that the issue was still being debated.<sup>85</sup> The Soviets themselves reported this indecision,<sup>86</sup>

---

<sup>81</sup> See, for example, *Pravda*, January 1, 1977, January 18, 1977; Radio Peace and Progress in Arabic, March 14, 1977; TASS, August 3, 1977; *New Times* (January 1977):2; Yuri Potomov, "Surveying the Political Situation," *New Times* (January 1977):6; A. K. Kizlov, "Vital Problems of a Middle East Settlement," *S.Sh.A.: Ekonomika, Politika, Ideologia* (July 1977):29.

<sup>82</sup> *Izvestiia*, April 14, 1977—at the time of Assad's visit to the USSR; *Pravda*, August 11, 1977.

<sup>83</sup> *Izvestiia*, April 14, 1977. Hussein in fact had made his position clear, stating that he had proposed a unified delegation to the PLO; see Amman radio, April 21, 1977, and *Le Monde*, April 20, 1977, interview.

<sup>84</sup> Voice of Palestine, January 15, 1977, February 28, 1977, August 30, 1977 (PLO memo to Kurt Waldheim with the conditions for its participation); *as-Siyassah*, May 7, 1977; *Free Palestine* 10:4 (1977):1 (PLO memo to Carter, though another Palestinian source later claimed that this memo in fact expressed willingness to participate in a "unified Arab delegation," provided the PLO were recognized as "the sole arbiter of the Palestinians." Sameer Abraham, "The PLO at the Crossroads," *MERIP* 9 (September 1979):8.)

<sup>85</sup> MENA, September 22, 1977 (Qaddumi); *France-Pays Arabes* (November 1977):18 (Qaddumi), *An-Nahar Arab Report and Memo* 1 (May 9, 1977):7; Voice of Palestine, May 25, 1977 (Arafat statement, which was unclear on the subject). Moscow reported a Qaddumi interview to Swiss television as negative regarding a unified delegation—TASS, May 18, 1977—while *ath-Thawrah* (Damascus) the same day quoted Qaddumi as saying the subject was open and, in fact, an internal Arab matter.

<sup>86</sup> Moscow radio in Arabic, November 15, 1977 (reporting statement by the PLO representative in Moscow, Sha'ir). PLO indecision was hinted at by Oleg Alov, "The Objective: Geneva," *New Times* (October 1977):8-9.

and most probably hoped to avoid publicly committing themselves to a position that might be at odds with some new PLO decision. And, indeed, one might conjecture that an ultimate PLO decision in favor of a unified delegation would not necessarily disturb the Soviets if it meant solution to the problem of PLO participation in Geneva. The most important factor guiding the Soviet position, however, was probably the concern over the orientation of a unified delegation. In other words, would the Soviet Union remain the PLO's patron at Geneva in the event of a unified delegation or would such a delegation in fact mean the loss of Soviet leverage or whatever control it had over the Palestinians? It was probably for this reason, therefore, that the Soviet position on balance was negative,<sup>87</sup> Moscow's most clear-cut and vehement opposition to the idea being expressed in response to what could be presented as Israeli or Israeli-U.S. proposals, in the fall of 1977, designed to neutralize the PLO.<sup>88</sup> This negative attitude was presumably fortified when King Hussein renewed his proposal for a unified Arab delegation to an international conference in September 1979, that is, at a time of Soviet concern over PLO-Jordanian cooperation in the direction of Washington.<sup>89</sup>

The Soviet defense of the PLO's right to independent participation in Geneva was often based on references to the Rabat decisions and the general recognition of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians. Yet at no time did Moscow propose that the PLO participate in Geneva *instead* of Jordan. Most Soviet proposals refrained from mentioning specific participants altogether except for the call for Palestinian representation. But the November 1975 proposal for the reconvening of Geneva did list everyone, including Jordan, as did the January 1976 government statement. Moreover, direct Soviet approaches to the participants in Geneva in efforts to have the conference reconvened always included talks with the Jordanians. And to cover itself on both its Jordanian and

---

<sup>87</sup> The memo sent to the PNC of 1977 by the Jordanian CP and the Palestine Communist Organization argued against the idea, on the grounds that it was a devious plan not only of the United States and Israel to deprive the Palestinians of their rights but also of some Arab circles—Jordanian Communist Party, *Les Communistes*, p. 22. Hawatmeh—*as-Siyassah*, May 7, 1977—and the Kuwait News Agency, October 8, 1977, both said that the Soviets had told the PLO they preferred a separate delegation.

<sup>88</sup> TASS, September 13, 20, 27, 1977; *Pravda*, October 1, 1977; Moscow international service in Russian (roundtable), October 2, 1977; Moscow radio, October 4, 12, 1977.

<sup>89</sup> King Hussein to the U.N. General Assembly, September 25, 1979—MIS 7 (September 16-30, 1979):95.

its PLO front, the Soviet press claimed that Jordan believed the PLO should be present at Geneva as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians.<sup>90</sup> Presumably this attitude was merely a sign of Soviet recognition of Jordan as a confrontation state even if, according to Soviet demands, it would no longer have a mutual frontier with Israel or negotiate for the West Bank. Yet, the continued Soviet openness toward Jordan regarding Geneva did leave options open for Moscow on the question of Palestine and negotiations over the West Bank should the PLO not participate or its status change.

The second development in 1977, the new Carter administration and policies, confronted the Soviet Union with the very real possibility of the reconvening of Geneva and, therefore, the apparent necessity of some operative decision regarding PLO participation. The idea of the combined delegation was one solution, but inasmuch as it was fraught with complications—and risks to Moscow—it was not, as we have seen, the solution preferred by Moscow. Rather the Soviets appear to have reverted to their earlier willingness to postpone the issue by retreating on the point regarding the timing of PLO participation. Inasmuch as the United States now agreed at least to the principle of Palestinian participation, such a retreat on the Soviets' part need not even be more than a temporary one nor a betrayal of Palestinian interests. In any case, this presumably was the way in which Moscow presented the matter to the PLO in the spring of 1977, for according to reports from numerous (and varied) sources, Gromyko and Vance, as early as in their March talks and more definitely in their May meeting, agreed that Palestinian participation would be put off at least to the second session of the Conference.<sup>91</sup> In a speech honoring Vance in Moscow on March 28, 1977, Gromyko reverted to the 1974 Brezhnev-Nixon formula that additional participants could be discussed at the Geneva Conference itself, and to Arafat, during the latter's April visit, he reportedly explained that during the short, purely procedural first session of Geneva an invitation would be issued to the PLO so that it could

---

<sup>90</sup> See, for example, *Izvestiia*, April 14, 1977, at a time when Jordan in fact favored a joint Arab delegation without, however, having explicitly invalidated the Rabat decision that recognized the PLO's right to represent the Palestinians.

<sup>91</sup> *Le Monde*, April 14, 1977; *Trends in Communist Media* (Washington), March 30, 1977, pp. 3-4, and April 13, 1977, pp. 10-11; MIS 5 (April 1-15, 1977):4; Keren Dawisha, "Soviet Union in the Middle East: Setback or Comeback," *The Middle East* (July 1977):27. *Rose al-Yusuf* (Cairo), had said as early as January 2, 1977, that this was the Soviet position as conveyed to Egypt.

then participate in the second session.<sup>92</sup> Neither Washington nor Moscow ever publicly stated that such a compromise had been worked out and, indeed, the exact details were hardly certain, most reports merely indicating that PLO participation would come only after the first session. Nor was it made clear whether or not the promised invitation to the PLO was still conditional to acceptance of resolution 242 or some sort of recognition of Israel. As we have seen, some Arab reports of Arafat's April 1977 meeting with Gromyko revealed not only that the Soviets persisted in this demand but even brought pressures to bear in the form of comments on Soviet intentions to renew diplomatic relations with Israel. Such talk may also have been intended to persuade Arafat to accept the Soviet-U.S. arrangement regarding the timing of PLO participation.

On the other hand, the Soviets would appear to have offered the PLO certain reassurances, for Gromyko reportedly told Arafat that the Soviet Union would refuse to take part in Geneva—that is, in the subsequent sessions—if the PLO were not invited.<sup>93</sup> Rumors of a Soviet boycott of Geneva resurfaced in August 1977, at the time of Vance's Middle East tour and following Arafat's August trip to the Soviet Union.<sup>94</sup> At this time the boycott reports may well have been designed to counter any proposals Vance might offer the PLO, in much the same way as the rumored change in the Soviet attitude toward resolution 242. The reports of an actual Soviet boycott of Geneva if the PLO were not invited continued throughout the fall and even into 1978<sup>95</sup> and were explained by one

---

<sup>92</sup> *Trends in Communist Media*, March 30, 1977, pp. 3-4 (the Soviet press version of Gromyko's speech omitted any reference to the Middle East; the *New York Times*, March 29, 1977, carried the report that Gromyko said, in his luncheon toast, "Why can't we decide on participation at the conference itself?" See also, *al-Dastur*, April 25 and May 15, 1977; *Akhbar al-Yom*, April 23, 1977 (Mohsen interview), *Alziad* (Lebanon), April 28 and June 9, 1977.

<sup>93</sup> *Voice of Palestine*, April 8, 1977, according to *Arab Report and Record* (April 1-15, 1977):276; "Three Views on the Establishment of a Palestinian State," *Beirut Events* (England), May 6, 1977, pp. 16-18; *al-Dastur*, April 25, 1977; *Akhbar al-Yom*, April 23, 1977. *Al-Akhbar* (Jordan), April 30, 1977, asked Abu Maizar about this, but his answer was not entirely clear. Moscow reportedly had made a similar commitment to the PLO as early as October 1975: *Al-Muharrir*, October 21, 1975, cited in Farouq M., "Palestine and the Soviet Union," *Palestine* (January 1977):38.

<sup>94</sup> *INA*, August 10, 1977; *Voice of Palestine*, September 3, 1977; *Filastin al-Thawra*, September 2, 1977 (Arafat statement).

<sup>95</sup> According to *An-Nahar Arab Report and Memo* 1 (November 7, 1977) a message to this effect was sent to Arafat October 19, 1977. See also, *al-Nahar al-Arabi v-Aldoli* (Paris), January 28, 1978.

Arab source as a Soviet-sponsored campaign to counter the earlier, but apparently persistent, claims that Moscow was not adamant about PLO participation and was in fact willing to postpone this participation.<sup>96</sup> This may have been the case particularly following the Soviet-U.S. statement of October 1977 inasmuch as the statement itself made no mention of the PLO or of the timing of Palestinian participation, omissions that could be—and were—easily attributed, however, to the limits of the U.S., not the Soviet, position. That the Soviets wanted the boycott line publicized was also suggested by the fact that a PNF official mentioned it in an interview to the journal *The Middle East* published in November 1977.<sup>97</sup> Oddly enough, the PLO representative in Moscow, according to the *New York Times* of September 18, 1977, actually denied the validity of the boycott reports, but the PLO itself had issued—and continued to issue—these reports of the Soviet commitment.<sup>98</sup> As the chances for a reconvening of Geneva receded after the signing of the Camp David agreement, and the idea of Geneva was more or less dropped by the Soviets following the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Agreement in March 1979, the subject of PLO participation in the negotiations took on a different form. In an effort to appear to be offering more than the United States was willing to give, Moscow centered its criticism of the U.S.-sponsored peace talks on the exclusion of the PLO. Yet the Soviets made no explicit proposals or demands regarding PLO participation, probably because it was not clear just what form future negotiations would take, especially from the point of view of preserving Soviet interests—which in actual fact demanded Soviet participation *and* disdained PLO inclusion except as partner to the Soviet Union.

## CONCLUSIONS

The over-all picture of the Soviet stand regarding the PLO and the Geneva conference was one of contradictory statements, apparent shifts and retreats, threats and compromises, be it with regard to the PLO's demands regarding its own willingness to participate or the

---

<sup>96</sup> *Al-Nahar al-Arabi v-aldoli*, August 20, 1977.

<sup>97</sup> *The Middle East* (November 1977):32.

<sup>98</sup> Voice of Palestine, October 2, 1977, according to MENA, September 3, 1977; *Free Palestine* 10 (October 1977), quoting *Filastin al-Thawra*, August 9, 1977 and September 2, 1977.

Soviet commitment to such participation. Basically, the explanation of this complex picture may be attributed to the Soviets' two-front struggle, both to persuade the PLO to agree to participation and to persuade the United States of the necessity of such participation. At another level, however, Moscow also had to juggle its desire to maintain good relations with the PLO, especially when the change in the U.S. position threatened to draw the PLO toward Washington, while nonetheless persuading the United States to bring the Soviet Union itself back into the negotiating process, particularly by reconvening the Geneva conference. This was probably the more difficult of the problems, for Moscow's interest in Soviet participation in the negotiating process, by the vehicle of the Geneva conference, outweighed its interest in the PLO—without, of course, canceling this latter interest. Thus Moscow was not prepared to sacrifice the possibility of reconvening Geneva for the sake of its relationship with the PLO, thereby accounting for the fact that the Soviets were willing to retreat, particularly on the question of the timing of Palestinian participation, during those periods when the conference appeared to be an imminent and likely possibility, while taking a more adamant stand in periods when this was not the case. The complexity of the Soviet position also necessitated, however, a certain at least verbal duplicity in the form of reassurances and promises to the Palestinians, even as Moscow was making concessions, at their expense, to Washington.

Yet the Soviet position was not totally one of duplicity or tactical maneuvering. Despite the priority of Moscow's interest in reconvening Geneva, over and above PLO interests or demands, a certain Soviet commitment to and interest in Palestinian participation did evolve. This was evidenced not only by the growing public demand for Palestinian participation but by actual efforts, specifically in negotiations with Washington, to achieve this participation in some form at least. While the sentence on the need for Palestinian representation at Geneva that appeared in the Soviet-U.S. statement was more a reflection of a change in the U.S. attitude than the result of Soviet efforts, Moscow probably did strive to obtain this document's acknowledgement of the Palestinians' rights as a new or additional basis for Geneva, thereby accommodating the major part of the PLO's demands. Moscow's very success (or at least claimed success) vis-à-vis the United States did contain certain risks, for the purpose was not to make the United States more acceptable to the Palestinians but, rather, to secure a new ally and supporter in the forthcoming negotiations. Moreover, the PLO itself was not a stable unit, its leadership being open to pressures often stronger than those emanating

from Moscow. These apparently were risks, however, that the Soviets believed they could handle—or would have to handle—inasmuch as the other Arab parties to the conference did not appear to be anywhere near sufficiently reliable allies of the Soviet Union. The PLO alone could not provide the Soviets with enough influence at a reconvened Geneva, nor were the Soviets willing to forego the conference for the sake of the PLO, or some specific framework for its participation, but if it were possible—as it increasingly appeared to be in 1977—to accommodate this group, particularly in a way that could be credited to Moscow, the Soviets were interested in exploiting the opportunity. The Sadat initiative and post-Camp David developments did not, initially, change this basic picture. The Soviet call for Geneva could be used as a means of attacking the U.S.-sponsored road that excluded the PLO and, thus, serve Moscow's effort to prevent the PLO from finding its own, independent way to an understanding with the United States. As Geneva itself, however, threatened to become a U.S.-dominated forum at which the Soviets' strength might be threatened by a possible PLO-Jordanian coalition with Egypt, the Soviets dropped the Geneva idea altogether, advocating, rather, what they called "collective efforts." The basic Soviet demands—and dilemmas—remained the same, however: the need to persuade the Palestinians to join negotiations and to persuade the United States and Israel to accept them, combined with the dual concern that such demands neither obstruct the possibility of multilateral negotiations nor lead to a PLO shift to the United States, and thus to negotiations without the Soviet Union.



## CHAPTER FOUR

# Internal Differences in the PLO

### THE PROBLEM OF UNITY

The lack of unity within the PLO was a continuous point of Soviet criticism and probably contributed heavily to the Soviets' original reservations about the organization.<sup>1</sup> This point was raised by the Soviets in their criticism of the Syrian Communists' exaggerated interest in the Palestinians, arguing that the PLO was threatened with ideological as well as organizational dissolution and that, therefore, uncritical support should not be given. Rather, the organization should be infiltrated and influence gained over its policies from inside.<sup>2</sup> The lack of internal unity not only complicated Soviet efforts to gain control over the main forces of the movement, it also added an element of instability particularly with regard to understandings reached by Moscow with the organization or with its leadership. Further, the substantive side of the internal PLO differences was of serious concern to the Soviets, focusing as they did on the central issues of goals—statehood, destruction of Israel—and means—terror, negotiations—and the like. These differences not

---

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter One.

<sup>2</sup> "Special Document: The Soviet Attitude to the Palestine Problem," *Journal of Palestine Studies* II:1 (1972):197.

only undermined the political capabilities of the organization but more often than not stood in direct opposition to policies preferred by the Soviets. This situation was further complicated for Moscow by the fact that some of the dissenting groups within the PLO were highly ideologically oriented, the more extremist having received over the years varying degrees of Chinese support, while some of these same groups were linked with and sponsored by various Arab states, such as Iraq (the Arab National Front) and Syria (Sai'qa). On the other hand, "bourgeois," "petty bourgeois," and outright "reactionary" influences were active in the more moderate groups, among whom Saudi Arabian influence was dominant.

Few were the commentaries on the Palestinians in the Soviet media that failed to mention the problem of internal PLO unity in one form or another. As the Soviets increased their support for the PLO, they did occasionally claim that the organization was succeeding in overcoming its differences; the comment was made, for example, by a Jordanian Communist Party official in the spring 1974 *World Marxist Review* that a reasonable attitude had finally gained ground among the Palestinians regarding resolutions 242 and 338 and the abandonment of the "all or nothing" principle. This comment was echoed at the end of July in *Izvestiia* and in June 1975 in an *Aziia i Afrika Sevodnia* comment on the PLO's growing maturity.<sup>3</sup> The June 1974 session of the Palestine National Council was, however, severely criticized by the Soviets for the lack of unity and, specifically, for the opposition of the more radical elements to participation in Geneva and a peaceful settlement, citing the "extremism of some of the contingents of this movement [the PLO]" as one of the two sources of the "real dangers threatening the resistance movement,"<sup>4</sup> the other source being imperialist and reactionary quarters. Similarly, the Soviets criticized this lack of unity as a barrier to the adoption of a common program to be presented in international efforts to solve the Middle East conflict.<sup>5</sup> After Arafat's

---

<sup>3</sup> Naim Ashhab, "The Palestinian Aspect of the Middle East Crisis," *World Marxist Review* 17:4 (1974):29; *Izvestiia*, July 30, 1974; E. Dimitryev, "For a Peace Settlement in the Middle East," *Aziia i Afrika Sevodnia* (June 1975):7.

<sup>4</sup> Victor Bukharkov, "Palestine National Council Session," *New Times* (June 1974):12-13.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, V. Vladimirov, "A Peaceful Settlement in the Middle East," *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'* 10 (1974):109. In what may have reflected a difference of Soviet opinions, an *Izvestiia* commentator said on Moscow radio, November 17, 1974, that the PLO had "a precise, constructive program."

July–August 1974 visit to Moscow, a Soviet commentary was to revise this by referring to the ascent of the “realists” in the PLO regarding both the issue of negotiations and the idea of a mini-state.<sup>6</sup> Yet, a comment by Arafat during his November 1974 Moscow visit suggested that he had not yet satisfied the Soviets on the issue of internal unity. Admitting the existence of differing points of view within the Palestinian movement, despite the “strengthening and improving” of relations between detachments, he argued that the expression of differing views was “a sign of the good health of the revolution.” Moreover, admitting that there were even “negative currents,” Arafat seemed to challenge the Soviets with the following: “But can there be a revolution without a negative current? Even the established states have negative currents. We cannot expect a revolution without negative currents, and especially the Palestinian revolution and the Palestinian issue.”<sup>7</sup> There were no signs, however, that the Soviets accepted this argument, and the issue of unity remained.<sup>8</sup>

The Soviets did attempt to present a positive picture of the PLO by arguing that the organization had overcome most of its internal problems, internal unity being marred only by the existence of some small extremist groups.<sup>9</sup> This effort was connected with the Soviet campaign to augment the PLO’s respectability and, therefore, acceptability on the international scene. After the Lebanese war, the same effort was designed to counter the contention that the PLO had been weakened, neutralized, even eliminated by the war, inasmuch as this view might strengthen not only the U.S. and Israeli positions but also the growing independence of Syria or the domination by even less

---

<sup>6</sup> Alexandr’ Ignatov, “The Palestinian Tragedy,” *New Times* (August 1974):26–31.

<sup>7</sup> Moscow radio in Arabic, November 28, 1974. The last part did not appear in the TASS version of the interview.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Kudryavtsev articles in *Izvestiia*, April 12, 15, 1975.

<sup>9</sup> E. Dimitryev and V. Ladeikin, *Put’ k miry na blizhnem vostokye* [The Road to Peace in the Middle East] (Moscow: International Relations Publishers, 1974), pp. 63–65; E. Dimitryev, “The Middle East An Important Factor of Settlement,” *Kommunist* 2 (1976):99–105; R. Landa, “From the History of the Palestinian Movement of Resistance 1967–1971,” *Narody Azii i Afriki* 4 (1976):18–31; R. Landa, “The Contemporary Stage in the Struggle of the Palestinian Movement of Resistance,” *idem*, 5 (1976):15–29; R. Landa, “The Palestinian Question: The Socio-Political Aspect,” *Aziia i Afrika Sevodnia* (March 1976):6–8; I. Riabinov, “Zionist Policy in an Impasse,” *Mirovaya ekonomika a mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia* (May 1976):45–46 pointed out that this gave Israel ammunition for its claims that the PLO wanted to destroy Israel.

attractive countries such as Saudi Arabia. Yet the Lebanese war did in fact seriously aggravate the differences within the PLO, occasioning increased Soviet concern, especially because the Lebanese events tended to strengthen the Rejection Front and highlight the links between the various PLO components and outside Arab states, particularly Syria.<sup>10</sup> In June and September 1976 the Soviets spoke of a lack of unity and the existence of extremists within the PLO in the Lebanese context,<sup>11</sup> but by December 1976 the point was raised as a much more serious matter, fighting between the (named) factions, the links with Arab governments, and the existence of a "Rejection Front" being openly criticized.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, one article even referred to the lack of PLO unity as the "Achilles heel" of the movement, having hampered every effort to date to forge a "single military and political leadership in the movement."<sup>13</sup> This intensified concern over the internal situation was most probably connected with the emergence—or reemergence—of various issues and proposals at the end of 1976 in connection with the long-delayed (because of Lebanon) meeting of the PLO-Central Council and the subsequent preparations for the convening of the PNC. With such important issues as resolution 242, Geneva participation, the idea of a unified Arab delegation, the establishment of a Palestinian state and its locale, and the creation of a government-in-exile to be decided, together with the growing importance (in PLO affairs) of the anti-Soviet Arab states on the one hand, and the extremist states on the other, it was small wonder that Moscow was concerned over the situation. Moreover, the lineup within the PLO was far from consistent or clear, further complicating Soviet efforts to influence decisions. One such effort—presumably there were many, at various levels and with varying degrees of publicity—was the memo sent to the PNC by the Jordanian Communist Party and the Palestinian

---

<sup>10</sup> See Chapter Five.

<sup>11</sup> *Pravda*, June 23, September 8, 1976; Moscow radio, June 8, 1976.

<sup>12</sup> See *Pravda*, December 8, 14, 1976; Victor Bukharkov, "The Palestine Movement Shapes Its Course," *New Times* (December 1976):26-27; Y. Primakov, "A Balanced Course in the Middle East or the Old Policy by New Methods," *Mirovaya ekonomika a mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia* (December 1976):52. R. Landa, "The Contemporary Stage," p. 17, also mentioned the link with Arab states, but the reference was to an earlier period. For criticism on this point see also the Palestinian Communist Organization's organ *al-Watan*, December 1976, as cited in *MERIP* 55 (1977):17.

<sup>13</sup> Bukharkov, "The Palestine Movement," p. 26.

Communist Organization.<sup>14</sup> Aside from its substantive proposals and criticism, this memo warned of the successful influence of right-wing elements on the PLO, influence that had led, the memo claimed, to a disinterest in the Communist-founded Palestine National Front<sup>15</sup> and even to signs of anti-Communism.<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, it also criticized the lack of a clear and realistic political policy as distinct from adventurist and "one-upmanship policies" that seemed to be rampant.<sup>17</sup>

Soviet concern over the PLO's internal problems became still more open with the approach and opening of the 1977 PNC session, for there was apparently a real fear that, according to rumor, personnel and policy changes might be affected. If Soviet broadcasts were to be believed, the greatest concern was over right-wing, mainly pro-Saudi Arabian and Egyptian influences, although Soviet propaganda on substantive issues at the time suggested some concern over the strength of the Rejectionists as well.<sup>18</sup> Somewhere between these two extremes was also the worry about Syria's growing influence. The speech of the Soviet representative at the PNC, journalist Victor Kudryavtsev, deputy chairman of the Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee, reflected Soviet concern inasmuch as, according to Soviet reports themselves, it stressed the need for consolidation of Palestinian unity.<sup>19</sup> While Soviet fears of a shift to the right at the PNC proved unfounded, Moscow was not entirely satisfied with the opposite, hard line that was adopted regarding such issues as, for example, that of negotiations. Admitting that the discussions had been stormy, Soviet commentaries on the PNC emphasized the issue of unity, generally claiming that this had indeed been achieved and even stating that this was the major accomplishment of the session.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Central Committee of the Jordanian Communist Party and the Directing Committee of the Palestinian Communist Organization in Transjordan, *Les Communistes et la Question Palestinienne* (March 1977):11-29.

<sup>15</sup> See below.

<sup>16</sup> Jordanian Communist Party, *Les Communistes*, pp. 16-17. Radio Peace and Progress in Arabic, March 11, 1977, echoed this theme of right-wing strength, meaning Arab reaction.

<sup>17</sup> Jordanian Communist Party, *Les Communistes*, pp. 17, 19.

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, Radio Peace and Progress in Arabic, March 11, 1977. Brezhnev's Trade Union speech of March 21, 1977, just as the PNC was working out its resolutions, certainly had nothing to encourage the Rejectionists.

<sup>19</sup> Moscow radio in Arabic, March 15, 1977, which also contained anti-rightist points.

<sup>20</sup> *Izvestiia*, April 5, 1977; *Pravda*, March 27, 1977; Moscow radio in Arabic, March 23, 1977; TASS, March 25, 1977; Victor Bukharkov, "The

The continued dissent of the Rejection Front on several issues, as well as differences of opinion between Fatah and Hawatmeh's PDFLP, were ignored or minimized. Subsequent Soviet commentaries did not raise the issue of internal unity for some time, but at the time of the November 1977 Arab Foreign Ministers' Conference in Tunis and again in connection with the Tripoli meeting of December 1977 in response to Sadat's Jerusalem visit the problem was mentioned once again.<sup>21</sup> In the latter instance, the continuation of the internal dissension was acknowledged by the claim that one of the major achievements of the Tripoli meeting had been the achievement of a PLO-PFLP (Habash) rapprochement and the resultant consolidation of PLO ranks.<sup>22</sup> Inasmuch as this unity was achieved on the basis of a more radical (Rejectionist) position, Moscow probably did not consider it a viable or necessarily a desirable development over the long run. Given the specific context, however, of the creation of what the Soviets called a "progressive" camp against Sadat's U.S.-based policies, it was not totally undesirable. It did, nonetheless, highlight a major dilemma of Soviet-Arab, and not only Soviet-PLO, relations: the two-front Soviet battle against the growth of U.S. influence on the one hand and against positions that impeded Soviet interests, and their role in a settlement, on the other. And on balance, PLO unity around the wrong policies might not prove any more beneficial to Soviet interests than did the lack of unity or infighting.<sup>23</sup>

In any case, this unity was extremely short-lived, the internal power struggle within the Palestinian movement and continued disagreement over major issues and tactics reemerging periodically as a major source of Soviet concern. Indeed, the phenomenon was difficult to ignore when rival PLO factions, with the backing of various Arab states, were actually shooting at each other. Without going into detail over the current problems, Soviet commentaries

---

Palestinian Stand," *New Times* (April 1977):10-11; Budapest television, March 20, 1977 (interviews with PLO figures).

<sup>21</sup> Moscow radio in Arabic, November 15, December 6, 1977; Moscow radio, December 8, 1977; TASS, December 5, 1977; A. Ustinov, "The Middle East," *New Times* (December 1977):12.

<sup>22</sup> Moscow radio, December 8, 1977.

<sup>23</sup> The issue of PLO infighting may have been raised again during Arafat's March 1978 visit to Moscow, for in his interview to TASS (March 9, 1978), the PLO leader defensively condemned imperialist elements for trying to harm the name of the movement and create diversions by means of assassinations and terror.

invariably referred to the long struggle to gain internal unity, often quoting PLO leaders repeatedly both on the presumed achievement of unity *and* the continued need to strive for consolidation.<sup>24</sup> At the same time, probably in response to continued U.S. inroads into the Middle East both prior to and following Sadat's Jerusalem visit, the Soviet call for unity emphasized the need for a "progressive" nature to this unification on a "democratic basis," to the exclusion primarily of "bourgeois-reactionary" but also "left-wing radical" extremes.<sup>25</sup> This call was reflected in the Soviet attitude toward various components of the PLO and the role of Communist or Communist-backed groupings, as we shall see below, but it did not result in any change in the basic Soviet line, in the direction of the Rejection Front, or otherwise. Rather, it would appear to have been a stepped-up Soviet effort to obtain some control over the organization in order to influence its policies in the direction of Moscow's own tactics as well as to prevent any kind of pro-U.S. shift. It is also possible, though less likely, that this intensified concern for the ideological character of the movement was connected with a Soviet estimate that a Palestinian government-in-exile or even state was nearing realization or, at the least, that the PLO was succeeding finally in gaining organized support in the occupied territories. In either case, the Soviets would, therefore, be all the more interested in influencing the ideological coloring of such developments.<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> Yuri Tyunkov, "Yasser Arafat: The Palestinians Are Closing Their Ranks," *New Times* (March 1978):8-9; TASS, March 4 and 9, 1978; *Pravda*, June 8, 1978, August 5, 1978; *Izvestiia*, June 10, 1978 (Kudryavtsev said the strengthening of unity was a "priority task"); Moscow radio in Arabic, August 21 and 23, 1978. See also E. D. Prylin, "The Palestinian Liberation Movement and a Middle East Settlement," *Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo* (October 1977): 100-1.

<sup>25</sup> *Pravda*, August 5, 1978, *Izvestiia*, June 10, 1978; Prylin, "The Palestinian Liberation Movement," pp. 97-98; E. Dimitryev, *Palestinskii uzhel* [The Palestinian Knot] (Moscow: International Relations Publishers, 1977), pp. 90-127.

<sup>26</sup> In early 1978 there was a spate of Arab comments to the effect that a Palestinian state would *not* be Communist—Walid Khalidi, "Thinking the Unthinkable: A Sovereign Palestinian State," *Foreign Affairs* 56 (July 1978): 711; *Jordan Times*, January 15, 1978 (Arafat); *Monday Morning* (Beirut), January 15, 1978 (Abu Iyyad); *Free Palestine* (London) 11 (February 1978):1 and 12; *The Guardian* (London), January 3, 1978 (Arafat). Rather than in connection with any Soviet efforts, these came in direct response to U.S. government remarks on the pro-Soviet orientation of the PLO. The Soviets themselves refrained from any comment on the political nature of a future state, for

The period between the 1977 and 1979 sessions of the PNC and following the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Agreement was no less turbulent than the preceding period with regard to internal PLO conflicts. Indeed Arafat's leadership was directly challenged as Hawatmeh joined forces with the Rejectionists in demanding a reorganization of the leadership bodies, while disputes among different alignments of the various groups arose over the old major issues and several newer ones, such as the rapprochement with Jordan, talks with the United States, contacts with the Lebanese right,<sup>27</sup> and others, with states such as Libya and Syria directly intervening. For the most part the Soviets sought publicly to deny any such disunity, preferring to claim that there was a unified anti-Camp David alliance that included all factions of the PLO as well. Thus, only the briefest of Soviet references could be found regarding the disputes at the PNC conference of 1979,<sup>28</sup> despite the fact that this was one of the stormiest sessions ever held, the internal discord having even prevented the holding of elections to the executive body.<sup>29</sup>

#### SOVIET PREFERENCES WITHIN THE PLO

With regard to specific groups within the PLO and their opinions, the Soviets were usually cautious, at least in publicly providing details as to their preferences and complaints. Because of their extremist views and their relatively small size, neither of the two Marxist-oriented organizations, Habash's PFLP and Hawatmeh's PDLFP, was considered a suitable partner for the Soviets in the early years of

---

obvious reasons, a notable exception being Prylin, "The Palestinian Liberation Movement," p. 96, who said that the future state should be "democratic" and allied with the "progressive forces and regimes in the Arab world." See also Chapter One.

<sup>27</sup> This was an effort initiated by Abu Iyyad in the fall of 1978 but opposed by almost all other PLO elements. See *Arab Report and Record* (November 1978):804-5; *The Middle East* (March 1979):36-37.

<sup>28</sup> Y. Tyunkov, "Palestinian Unity," *New Times* (February 1979):15. The astute listener could detect a lack of Soviet enthusiasm for the rapprochement with Jordan—or at least an admission that this was a disputed matter—in a Soviet broadcast, which said that a "majority" of the PNC favored the reconciliation. See Moscow radio in Arabic, January 24, 1979.

<sup>29</sup> Unwilling to admit the existence of internal troubles serious enough to lead to assassinations, the Soviets claimed that Mohsen's assassination in July 1979 was the work of Israeli agents.



Moscow's support.<sup>30</sup> Because of its size, dominance, and position within the Arab world, Arafat's non-Marxist nationalist Fatah organization was the logical focal point of Soviet support in an era when *real-politik* outweighed purely ideological considerations. This is not to say that Moscow expressed no reservations over Fatah's ideology or lack of ideology. As we saw in Chapter One, Soviet and Arab Communist commentators did indeed criticize the bourgeois, even reactionary, background of and influences upon Fatah, as well as its refusal to introduce a clear, ideological, Marxist<sup>31</sup> content to its nationalist position.<sup>32</sup> Nonetheless, Fatah's strength within the PLO—and Arafat's willingness to build the organization's international position on Soviet backing—was such that Moscow maintained its preference for this group. Even in the complicated period of the Lebanese war and the post-Lebanese power struggle throughout 1978, Moscow maintained its pro-Fatah position, specifically against Rejectionist and against Syrian efforts to change the leadership structure of the PLO. This Soviet loyalty may have been prompted by more than a pragmatic evaluation of Fatah's staying power. There was also a relative closeness between this organization and Moscow on the basic issues, including those that arose after the Lebanese war, namely, not just the issues of statehood, negotiations, and so forth, but also the question of the Palestinian presence in Lebanon and for some time the rapprochement with Jordan. Moreover, the Soviets were not interested in having either the independent-minded Syrians or the Rejectionists take over the PLO, while they may have calculated that the ideological neutrality of Fatah might be tactically useful—as long as it did not permit a shift to the United States or too great a Saudi Arabian influence. A clear gesture in Fatah's direction, as well as an indication of the degree of Soviet concern over the depth of the rift within the PLO, was the invitation for the first time of a Fatah delegation to Moscow, extended, apparently, in May 1978, at the height of the internal PLO struggles, and implemented between July 26 and August 4, 1978.<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> See John Cooley, "The Shifting Sands of Arab Communism," *Problems of Communism* XXIV:2 (1975):22-42.

<sup>31</sup> Dimitryev and Ladeikin, *The Road to Peace*, p. 64.

<sup>32</sup> Landa, "From the History," p. 29; Prylin, "The Palestinian Liberation Movement," pp. 96-98; *Izvestiia*, July 30, 1974. See also Dimitryev, *The Palestinian Knot*, p. 65, on lack of ideology.

<sup>33</sup> *Arab Report and Record* (May 1-15, 1978):346 reported that Abu Iyyad, on May 10, 1978, said that a Fatah delegation would visit Moscow for the first time in the near future.

Although Fatah's dominant position in the PLO was maintained throughout and following the Lebanese crisis, Fatah itself underwent trying internal struggles that *may* have evoked some Soviet political action. It was more likely that the Soviets would seek to avoid any aggravation of the inherent instability of the PLO or, specifically, of Fatah, but it was, nonetheless, conceivable that at some point in the Lebanese conflict, for example, they sought a compromise with Syria whereby a Fatah man more acceptable to Damascus might have been desirable.<sup>34</sup> Such a candidate might have been the PLO Political Department chief Qaddumi,<sup>35</sup> whose position as the PLO's *ad hoc* foreign minister had brought him into a great deal of contact with the Soviets. Particularly in the worst year of the Lebanese war it was Qaddumi, not Arafat, who visited Moscow,<sup>36</sup> and there was at least one period, August-September 1976, during which the Soviet press quoted or referred specifically to Qaddumi much more often than it cited Arafat.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, the Soviet media frequently quoted Qaddumi praise of the Soviet Union, and there were indeed rumors in the Arab world that Qaddumi was "Moscow's man."<sup>38</sup>

On the other hand, Qaddumi often expressed reservations—albeit mild ones—with regard to Soviet policies, while he tended to be complimentary of China—as distinct from the Soviet Union—particularly at the time of his visit to China on May 3, 1976.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, at the time of the Fatah split over the negotiations with Syria in the Lebanese context (July-August 1976), Arafat and Qaddumi reportedly were aligned against another Fatah leader, Abu Iyyad, the first two favoring rapprochement with Syria, in accord

---

<sup>34</sup> For rumors of Syrian pressures to remove Arafat, see *Le Monde*, September 9, 1976; *Free Palestine* 9 (December 1976):2, editorial.

<sup>35</sup> Some claimed that Qaddumi himself was to be replaced because he constituted a threat to Arafat. See QNA, January 3, 1977. Qaddumi acknowledged the difference of views within Fatah, *Voice of Palestine*, January 8, 1977.

<sup>36</sup> *Pravda*, September 18, 1976. Qaddumi not only also represented the PLO at the Soviet 60th anniversary celebrations in early November 1977 but returned to Moscow again, during the last week in November, following Sadat's visit to Jerusalem.

<sup>37</sup> See *Bulletin of the Soviet Union and the Arab-Israel Conflict* I (1976), Nos. 13, 14, 15, of the Soviet and East European Research Centre, Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

<sup>38</sup> See, for example, TASS, July 6, 1976; TASS, August 18, 1977. Arab references to Qaddumi: Maxim Ghilan, "PLO, September 1977," *Israel and Palestine* (August-September 1977):24.

<sup>39</sup> See, for example, "As the PLO Sees It," *Palestine Digest* 5:11 (1976) on Qaddumi's January 5, 1976, *Newsweek* interview.

with the Soviet position.<sup>40</sup> A study of Qaddumi statements over the years would probably reveal more instances of disagreement with certain Soviet positions than expressed by Arafat, on such issues as recognition of Israel, resolution 242, and even a Palestinian state. One Arab source even claimed that Qaddumi was not Moscow's man but rather "a mildly social-democratic opportunist,"<sup>41</sup> while more generous accounts said that he was merely an independent thinker, sometimes siding with Arafat, sometimes expressing an independent line.<sup>42</sup> None of this need rule out the possibility that Moscow hoped, particularly during the indecision of the period of the Lebanese war, to cultivate Qaddumi as an alternative to Arafat, but there was little evidence that the Soviets abandoned their firm support for Arafat at this time.

There were a number of other mooted contestants, however, to Arafat's leadership from within the Fatah, at least two of whom may have been more powerful than Qaddumi: Fatah number two man Abu Iyyad (Salah Khalaf) and senior Fatah military commander Abu Saleh (Nimr Saleh). These rivals were said to head a "left-wing" group seeking to radicalize Fatah's policies in the direction of the Rejection Front, and they were included in the Fatah delegation that visited Moscow in 1978.<sup>43</sup> The Soviets may well have been faced with a dilemma, inasmuch as they favored at least some radicalization of Fatah, and in this specific case Abu Iyyad had been rumored to be more adamantly opposed to joining the Sadat initiative than Arafat.<sup>44</sup> Yet, the Soviets still did not want adoption of a totally Rejectionist line. Moreover, Abu Iyyad had been outspokenly critical of the Soviet Union in connection with the Lebanese crisis, although he did speak positively of it in the spring of 1979 when urging the new Iranian regime to ally itself with Moscow.<sup>45</sup> In any case, Moscow

---

<sup>40</sup> MIS 4 (August 16-31, 1976):76.

<sup>41</sup> Ghilan, "PLO, September 1977," p. 24.

<sup>42</sup> *Ar-Ra'y al-Amm* (Kuwait), November 26, 1977.

<sup>43</sup> MIS 6 (August 1-15, 1978):70-71. An earlier account said Abu Iyyad was to the left of Qaddumi but spoke of an Iyyad-Qaddumi coalition—Maxim Ghilan, "The Status-Quo Congress," *Israel and Palestine* (April 1977):11. Another account spoke of Iyyad-Qaddumi disagreement over the August 1976 Lebanese accord negotiated by Qaddumi, with Arafat on the side of Iyyad—*Middle East International* (September 1976):9.

<sup>44</sup> Helen Cobban, "The PLO Faces New Pressures," *Middle East International* (May 1978):10-12; MIS 6 (August 1-15, 1978):70.

<sup>45</sup> See Chapter Five. For Iranian comment to Beirut PLO rally, see *MEED Arab Report* (March 14, 1979):15.

probably preferred to take its chances with the continuity of leadership offered by Arafat. Thus the *Pravda* "report" on the Fatah visit spoke of the need for unity. Reflecting its ideological preferences, however, particularly in view of the presence in the delegation of a pro-Saudi representative, Khalid al-Hassan, as well, the report spoke of consolidation on a "democratic basis."<sup>46</sup>

A serious challenge to Fatah's leadership of the PLO arose, again, at the January 1979 PNC session at which Fatah is said to have stood alone against a loose alliance of all the other member organizations including Nayif Hawatmeh's PDFLP, in whom the Soviets had taken an increasing interest over the years. The fact that the Soviets made virtually no reference to the power struggle going on in the PLO suggested that they foresaw continued Fatah dominance and therefore had no desire to risk their relations with this group by even appearing to support the moves against it. Yet, the relative lack of references to Arafat in Soviet reporting of the PNC, together with the fact that Hawatmeh joined the opposition to Fatah, might suggest some Soviet interest in weakening Arafat. This hypothesis became more feasible, and relevant, during the second half of 1979 when Fatah ran into opposition not only from Hawatmeh but the local Communists as well, reflecting a parting of the ways between Arafat's policies and Soviet interests.<sup>47</sup> Whether the Soviets actually sought to replace or openly challenge Arafat by means of Hawatmeh, local Communists, or even contacts with West Bank mayors is far from clear. The fact that Moscow maintained its silence on the very existence of these serious rifts, and the PNF and local Communists tried to minimize them, suggested that the Soviet Union was not yet ready to break with or openly challenge Fatah, the chances for overthrowing this group being slim indeed and the candidates to succeed it—a highly unstable coalition of varied groups, most strongly linked to other states, some far too extremist for Moscow's policies—offering only limited hopes.

Beyond the Fatah, the one PLO affiliate that particularly attracted Moscow was Hawatmeh's Marxist-oriented PDFLP, despite the group's extremism, relative at least to Fatah. Hawatmeh was much less extreme, far closer to the Soviet line than Habash's Marxist

---

<sup>46</sup> *Pravda*, August 5, 1978.

<sup>47</sup> Angry at this time over Arafat's contacts with the West, the Soviets may have been hinting at something when, in a *Pravda* article honoring Arafat's birthday in August 1979, they spoke of Arafat's and "other Palestinian leaders'" position regarding friendship with the Soviet Union; see *Pravda*, August 4, 1979.

group, and the Soviets were probably encouraged to cultivate him for future purposes. Such encouragement may have emerged from the fact that Hawatmeh as early as 1973 espoused the idea of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, for the Soviets singled out this view of his following Hawatmeh's participation in a PLO visit to Moscow just after the Yom Kippur War.<sup>48</sup> The Soviets failed to mention Hawatmeh's own comments, at the time, that this mini-state was to be only a stage and in no way indicated a renunciation of the Palestinians' "historic rights" to their "entire homeland."<sup>49</sup> Instead, Moscow generally sought to portray Hawatmeh as a moderate, *Izvestiia* editor Tolkunov, for example, praising him for his "realism"—on the idea of a limited Palestinian state instead of the destruction of Israel<sup>50</sup>—and a Soviet book distinguishing him from Habash on the grounds of Hawatmeh's alleged rejection of the use of terrorism. Similarly, the Soviets reported positively the interview Hawatmeh agreed to have published in Israel in March 1974.<sup>51</sup> Having used this event as "proof" that Zionism had failed in its attempts to push the Palestinian organizations to extremism, the Soviets must have been particularly embarrassed when, six weeks later, Hawatmeh's organization staged one of the most brutal terrorist attacks to date—the seizure of 90 Israeli schoolchildren, ending in the killing of approximately 20 of them—in answer to attacks upon his loyalty from within the PLO.

The Soviets, nonetheless, increased their support for Hawatmeh by inviting him to Moscow independently of Arafat, first in November 1974, just after Rabat and prior to Arafat's visit in which Hawatmeh, nonetheless, also participated, and again in December 1975, following an Arafat-led visit in which Hawatmeh had *not* participated. Although the first trip was granted no publicity in the Soviet media, Hawatmeh met with Gromyko, and, according to comments to *Le Monde* earlier, he had intended to discuss the issue of the political profile of a Palestinian government-in-exile.<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> Moscow radio in Arabic, February 26, 1975.

<sup>49</sup> INA, November 24, 1973. For repeat of this line, see Hawatmeh interview, *ar-Ra'y al-Amm*, March 23, 1978.

<sup>50</sup> *Izvestiia*, July 30, 1974. See also Dimitryev and Ladeikin, *The Road to Peace*, p. 63, which nonetheless classified Hawatmeh among the extremists, and Dimitryev, *The Palestinian Knot*, pp. 66–67.

<sup>51</sup> Moscow radio, March 28, 1974.

<sup>52</sup> *Le Monde*, November 6, 1974. For differing analyses of Soviet-Hawatmeh relations, see "Correspondence" in *Problems of Communism* XXIV:5 (1975):87.

Hawatmeh's position was identical to the Soviets', favoring a group that would be a reflection of the PLO executive rather than include additional bourgeois elements, so it was more or less natural for Moscow to seek to strengthen this viewpoint via Hawatmeh in the debate that was taking place in the PLO on this issue.<sup>53</sup> Thus, just before the PLO visit in May 1975, Hawatmeh was again singled out for praise as a "politically experienced and erudite figure," as distinct from reactionary elements, which threatened the progressive nature of the Palestinian state to emerge.<sup>54</sup> Of greater significance, however, was Hawatmeh's December 1975 visit, for not only did it substitute for Hawatmeh participation in Arafat's delegation, but also Moscow this time granted some publicity, even going so far as to issue a statement, though not a joint communiqué, at the close of the visit.<sup>55</sup> This last fact alone suggested a Soviet effort to cultivate Hawatmeh independently of Arafat, even though Hawatmeh's delegation was invited at a lower level, by the Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee. Indeed, Hawatmeh was more forthcoming than Arafat in the final statement, praising Moscow's initiative for reconvening the Geneva Conference.<sup>56</sup> As this visit came at a time of splits within the PLO as a result of the fighting in Lebanon and the emerging Syrian efforts to take over the PLO through their contingent, the Sai'qa, this singling out of Hawatmeh took on added meaning. Exactly what meaning is harder to say, however, for rumors were that the Lebanese events had brought Hawatmeh closer to Rejection Front leader Habash, who was still anathema to the Soviets, or at least to disagreement with Arafat, for Hawatmeh was said to have complained to the Soviets in this visit that only the PDPFLP and the Communists were fighting the battle in Lebanon. Other rumors, however, claimed that Arafat himself had drawn closer to Habash, while Hawatmeh was drawn to the Syrians.<sup>57</sup> In any case, when in the fall of 1976 the Soviets criticized the extremists in the PLO apparently for objecting to a settlement with Syria, they quoted Hawatmeh for his reasonable position in the Lebanese context.<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>53</sup> See Chapter Two.

<sup>54</sup> *Izvestiia*, April 12, 1975.

<sup>55</sup> Moscow radio in Arabic, December 19, 1975.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> *An-Nahar Arab Report* 7 (February 2, 1976):3; *idem* (April 12, 1976):3; *Free Palestine* 9 (June 1976):5. In fact a certain evolution occurred in Hawatmeh's position during the Lebanese crisis.

<sup>58</sup> *Pravda*, September 9, 1976. At least one Soviet bloc source indirectly acknowledged an Arafat-Hawatmeh difference of opinion; the Bulgarian daily

And, indeed, in an interview to *Le Monde*, Hawatmeh defended the Soviet Union's attitude toward the Lebanese crisis, opposing the Rejectionists, accepting Soviet criticism of the extremists, and urging moderation in the Lebanese context.<sup>59</sup>

The Soviet portrayal of Hawatmeh as a moderate and the special attention given him, alone, of the non-Fatah PLO leaders, remained consistent during and following the Lebanese events.<sup>60</sup> Indeed, Hawatmeh was increasingly portrayed in the Arab world as "pro-Moscow" not only because of his Marxist views but because of his general espousal of what was known as the Soviet line as distinct from the more radical Habash line.<sup>61</sup> Thus Hawatmeh was willing to call for Israeli withdrawal from the territories *occupied in 1967* and add the phrase "according to U.N. resolution," in connection with the demand for the refugees' return to their home. He was even apparently flexible on such questions as the Geneva Conference and eventual recognition of Israel.<sup>62</sup> His identification with Moscow went so far that a Kuwaiti paper even claimed that Hawatmeh was sent in June 1977 to mediate between Somalia and Ethiopia on behalf of the Soviets, reporting on this mission during a visit to the Soviet Union at the end of June.<sup>63</sup> Hawatmeh did in fact take a "vacation trip" to the Soviet Union at this time, meeting there with CPSU-Central Committee officials and Politburo member Boris Ponomarev. Similar reports regarding mediation, on behalf of Moscow, between Eritrea and the Ethiopian government also appeared in 1978.<sup>64</sup> And in the period of what may have been a Soviet effort to radicalize the PLO, Soviet media quoted a Hawatmeh statement in Moscow on the point of unifying the PLO—and the Arab liberation movement—by establishing "a serious national popular democratic front formed of all the national democratic, revolutionary democratic and

---

*Rabotnichesko delo*, December 27, 1976, included in an interview of Hawatmeh's the latter's comment that Fatah and the PDFLP had resolved their political and military questions during the Lebanese events and now worked together.

<sup>59</sup> *Le Monde*, September 28, 1976.

<sup>60</sup> See, for example, Dimitryev, *The Palestinian Knot*, pp. 66-67.

<sup>61</sup> MAP (Morocco), April 5, 1977; *Free Palestine* 9 (June 1976):5.

<sup>62</sup> *The Middle East* (May 1977):26-27; *Prawda*, May 21, 1977, June 25, 1977, December 22, 1977; Budapest television, March 20, 1977; TASS, June 24, 1977; Moscow radio in Arabic, August 13, 1977; *Rabotnichesko delo*, December 27, 1976; *as-Siyassah*, May 7, 8, 1977; *Free Palestine* 9 (March 1976):6.

<sup>63</sup> *Al-Hadaf* (Kuwait), according to AFP, June 23, 1977.

<sup>64</sup> *Al-Hawadess* (Beirut), May 26, 1978.

Communist parties in the Middle East."<sup>65</sup> That he was working in this direction on behalf of the Soviets and even asked Moscow to recognize his PDFLP as a Communist party was claimed by various Arab sources in 1979, most notably by pro-Saudi-Fatah Central Committee member Khalid al-Hassan.<sup>66</sup> Such comments appeared in the context of the internal PLO power struggle, but there is little question that the Soviet-Hawatmeh link was significantly strengthened in the late 1970s.<sup>67</sup>

There were, nonetheless, differences of opinion between the two that the Soviets chose to ignore, at least in their public statements. Beyond the probably most temporary of disagreements during the Lebanese crisis, such differences apparently revolved around the issues of terror, the mini-state as only a first step, and a later, less significant issue, of Palestinian contacts with Israelis, Hawatmeh praising such contacts with anti-Zionists, such as the Israeli Communists, but disagreeing—at least on some occasions—with Soviet-favored contacts with Israeli Zionist doves.<sup>68</sup> Later still, Hawatmeh joined the Rejectionists in their opposition to a PLO-Jordanian rapprochement, which was at first favored by the Soviets.<sup>69</sup> What is not clear, however, is whether at some point Hawatmeh's link with Moscow became so intimate that the differences in positions were merely apparent, Hawatmeh's stand representing in fact Soviet preferences or forebodings of changes to come in Moscow's positions. Such a question could be raised, for example, with regard to Hawatmeh's alliance with Habash in opposition to Fatah's domination of the PLO. On substantive issues this may have been the case, for example, with regard to the Jordanian issue, for Moscow eventually endorsed Hawatmeh's fears on the matter; similarly Hawatmeh opposed Arafat's meeting with Austrian Premier Kreisky in July 1979, before Moscow reversed its own earlier support for the move.<sup>70</sup> Soviet influence on Hawatmeh may have been detectable in the PDFLP's initial response to the Camp David accords when it

<sup>65</sup> Moscow radio in Arabic, June 4, 1978. See similar but less explicit references, TASS, February 27, 1978, March 4, 1978.

<sup>66</sup> *MEED Arab Report* (February 28, 1979):19. Similar criticism was heard from the left as well; see interview with Arab Liberation Front's Abdel-Nahhab Kayyali, *The Middle East*, (March 1979):39.

<sup>67</sup> MIS 6 (February 1-15, 1979):163-64; Maxim Ghilan, "PLO Pressure Cooker," *Israel and Palestine* (June 1978):5.

<sup>68</sup> See below. Two different Hawatmeh views were carried by Budapest.

<sup>69</sup> *Ar-Ra'y al-Amm*, March 23, 1978.

<sup>70</sup> See Chapter Two for details.



called for the type of action usually favored by Moscow—and opposed by Fatah at the time—that is, a general strike and protest demonstrations on the West Bank.<sup>71</sup> Yet it is not certain that the Soviets approved of Hawatmeh's decision to launch terrorist actions—which was Fatah's response—such as the attack on Ma'alot in January 1979.<sup>72</sup>

As the growing Hawatmeh-Soviet alliance indicated, Moscow found Hawatmeh much more acceptable than the other Marxist forces within the PLO, while ideologically more desirable than Fatah. But the relatively limited size of the PDFLP, even in its strengthened form of late 1979, dictated a cautious policy on the part of Moscow insofar as any plans for preferring Hawatmeh over Arafat were concerned.

The Soviet Union displayed a certain indifference to the Syrian-sponsored Sa'iqa organization, under the leadership of Zuhair Mohsen until his assassination in 1979, even during the Lebanese crisis. Prior to the Lebanese crisis there might well have been a Soviet interest in a greater Syrian role within the PLO, at least in the form of harnessing the Palestinians into the emerging Syrian-Jordanian alliance, especially with a view toward the Geneva Conference. And even in the early days of the Lebanese war, when the Soviets still looked favorably on Syrian mediation efforts, Mohsen was occasionally singled out for positive mention in the Soviet media.<sup>73</sup> A major Soviet commentary on the PLO at the time spoke positively, if briefly, of Sa'iqa's ideological position.<sup>74</sup> With the development of the Lebanese crisis, however, and Soviet concern over Syrian policies and independence, such references disappeared. Generally hesitant during the Lebanese fighting to admit any weakening of the Palestinian-leftist forces, the Soviets nonetheless did report that the "pro-Syrian Sa'iqa organization" was fighting alongside the Syrians,<sup>75</sup> and by the end of 1976 the Soviet press even reported the fighting between Fatah and Sa'iqa units, explaining that the problem of PLO infighting and disunity was aggravated by the fact that various organizations were linked

---

<sup>71</sup> MIS (September 1-15, 1978):84.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.; *MEED Arab Report* (February 1979):15-16.

<sup>73</sup> TASS, November 1, 3, 1975; Landa, "The Palestinian Question," p. 7. Even as late as May 7, 1976 (*Prauda*), there was a quote praising Mohsen, but this may also have been an attempt to obfuscate the Syrian-Soviet problem of that time and/or the Mohsen-Syrian connection.

<sup>74</sup> Landa, "From the History," pp. 26, 30.

<sup>75</sup> Y. Tyunkov, "The Lebanese Knot," *New Times* (June 1976):14.

with specific Arab states.<sup>76</sup> All in all, however, reports regarding Sa'iqa were rare, especially as the Soviets sought to present the PLO-Syrian problem, and the Fatah-Sa'iqa conflict, as purely transitory.<sup>77</sup>

Aside from the Lebanese-Syrian context, Sa'iqa created other problems for Moscow. Despite the fact that Mohsen was far from the Rejectionists, the Sa'iqa leader did not hide his disagreement with Moscow over certain points. Like others in the PLO, including Fatah's Qaddumi, Mohsen acknowledged the difference between his and Moscow's views regarding resolution 242 and recognition of Israel.<sup>78</sup> It was Mohsen who revealed Soviet pressure on the PLO for a more moderate line, pressures that he claimed even took the form of talk of renewed Soviet-Israeli relations.<sup>79</sup> Mohsen's comments were, nonetheless, couched in relatively cautious terms, and matters never reached the level of actual criticism or mutual polemics between Sa'iqa and the Soviet Union, as they did between Moscow and Habash. Similarly, the Soviets avoided any reporting of or alliance with the Rejection Front's violent criticism of Sa'iqa. Moscow could gain little by actually alienating the Sa'iqa inasmuch as improved Soviet-Syrian relations were a Soviet objective following the Lebanese crisis. Presumably, however, Moscow welcomed the efforts of Fatah to reassert and strengthen its dominance over the Syrian-backed group within the PLO. The Soviets' lukewarm attitude toward the Sa'iqa was apparent in the only sparse coverage given Mohsen's assassination in July 1979.<sup>80</sup> On all but one occasion referring only to his PLO title with no mention of Sa'iqa, the Soviets used the occasion more to criticize Israel, who, they claimed, perpetrated the event, than to eulogize Mohsen himself. Any suggestion that the killers were in fact from a rival Palestinian group—as was later proven—was dismissed as Israeli propaganda, inasmuch as

---

<sup>76</sup> *Pravda*, December 14, 1976; Bukharkov, "The Palestine Movement," p. 26; Budapest television, March 20, 1977; Y. Primakov, "Zionism and Israel against the Arab People of Palestine," Part II, *Azii i Afrika Sevodnia* (April 1977):10-11; Landa, "The Contemporary Stage," p. 4.

<sup>77</sup> According to Bukharkov, "The Palestinian Movement," p. 27, the very fact that the PLO-Central Council had met in Damascus proved this point.

<sup>78</sup> Budapest television, March 20, 1977; *Akhbar al-Yom*, April 23, 1977; *al-Ushbu al-Arabi*, May 9, 1977.

<sup>79</sup> *Akhbar al-Yom*, April 23, 1977; *al-Ushbu al-Arabi*, May 9, 1977.

<sup>80</sup> O. Volgin, "Another Crime," *New Times* (August 1979):12-13; Moscow radio, July 25, 1979; TASS, July 26, 1979—which was only a terse announcement, referring to Mohsen as a member of the PLO executive; only *Izvestiia*, July 26, 1979, mentioned Sa'iqa.

Moscow preferred both to deny the internecine Palestine fighting and to use the occasion as an opportunity to condemn Israel.

Moscow's attitude toward George Habash (PFLP) and the Rejection Front within the PLO, which also included Ahmad Jibril's PFLP-General Command, the Iraqi-sponsored Arab Liberation Front, and the Popular Struggle Front,<sup>81</sup> underwent a number of changes, and these were rarely in any positive direction. Soviet relations with Habash were never very good, given Habash's extreme-radical position on just about every issue of the Middle East conflict.<sup>82</sup> Even while he advocated cooperation with the Soviet Union for ideological reasons, Habash openly criticized Soviet policies.<sup>83</sup> As early as his November 1973 PLO visit to Moscow, Habash openly expressed such criticism, escalating this to the point of polemics in the summer of 1974, when he refused to join the July-August delegation to Moscow because of the latter's position on Geneva and a mini-state. On July 19, 1974, he published a joint statement with Jibril and the Arab Liberation Front against PLO participation in Geneva, explaining his refusal to join the delegation to Moscow.<sup>84</sup> Shortly thereafter Habash made the statement that "the Soviet Union's mistake is its belief that the peaceful solution is the way to settling the Middle East conflict," adding his rejection of "the proposal of a Palestinian mini-state." He added, "for the present circumstances the direct result of the establishment of such a state is the recognition of Israel as a state and the acceptance of its peace."<sup>85</sup>

The Soviets responded to this criticism by Habash indirectly at first, but, a few weeks later, by name. On August 14, 1974, *Literaturnaya gazeta* implied that Habash, mentioned by name, was cooperating with the imperialists in efforts to dissuade the PLO from participating in Geneva. Although this paper was basically oriented to domestic audiences, the naming of the PFLP leader in this nonetheless important publication marked an unusually open intervention in internal PLO struggles. While the Soviets may have simply decided

---

<sup>81</sup> During the Lebanese war, Jibril sided with Syria, causing a pro-Iraqi group to split off, under Abul Abbas. The new group subsequently took the name Palestine Liberation Front.

<sup>82</sup> In the 1971 talks with the Syrian Communist Party, for example, the Soviets were most explicit in rejecting support for or cooperation with Habash and his extremism. "Special Document," p. 197.

<sup>83</sup> See, for example, *al-Hadaf* (Beirut), August 3, 1974.

<sup>84</sup> INA, July 20, 1974.

<sup>85</sup> *Al-Nahar*, August 18, 1974. See also *al-Hadaf*, August 3, 1974, and September 28, 1974.

that they could not let Habash's attacks go unanswered, this move may also have been a sign that Moscow believed that Arafat had secured his position sufficiently to withstand an open break with the Rejection Front. Indeed, the exclusion of these radical elements was probably preferable to Moscow, which, in any case, had decided to provide Arafat with sufficient support to belie the possible attraction or justification of Habash's antinegotiation position. Thus, Moscow's reaction to the PFLP withdrawal from the PLO executive in September 1974 was only in the form of a report of a Lebanese paper's brief rebuke of the group for thereby causing delays in the PLO's struggle.<sup>86</sup> Moscow did not report any of the published details of the arguments that had led to this move, some of which had been critical of the Soviet position. Similarly, the Soviets may have welcomed Habash's last-minute refusal to participate in the Rabat Conference. Just prior to the conference the Soviets issued a warning, which may well have been directed against the Rejection Front, regarding "attempts of enemies . . . to dictate an agenda completely contrary to the peaceful aspirations of the Arab people."<sup>87</sup> Nonetheless, even during this period of open criticism, Habash—and Jibril—maintained direct contact with some East European countries, which presumably were authorized by the Soviets so as to avoid a total break in communication, leaving a door open for the future.<sup>88</sup>

During the Lebanese war there was a very slight change in Moscow's public attitude toward the PFLP, in deference to Arafat's rapprochement with Habash. While the Soviets probably altered none of their basic disagreement with this group, they did at least mention the PFLP in favorable terms on a few occasions.<sup>89</sup> This generosity was short-lived, however, for as early as June 1976 Moscow radio spoke of "extremist groups" and on September 8, 1976, as already mentioned, *Pravda* criticized "some leftist elements . . . within the PLO" for blocking the way to an end to the crisis. Subsequently, in keeping with this return to their earlier critical approach, the Soviet

---

<sup>86</sup> Moscow radio in Arabic, September 27, 1974. *As-Safir*, a somewhat dubious (Lybian-sponsored) source, claimed on October 4, 1974, that the Soviet Embassy (in Beirut) was told to cease all contact with the PFLP, in support of Arafat.

<sup>87</sup> Moscow radio in Arabic, October 24, 1974.

<sup>88</sup> Habash visited Bulgaria in August 1974, and Jibril visited Bulgaria in October 1975. There may also have been visits to East Germany, and there was frequent contact with Cuba. See AFP, August 19, 1974; AFP, October 23, 1975.

<sup>89</sup> *Pravda*, *Krasnaya zvezda*, April 7, 1976, August 31, 1976.

media referred to the "so-called Rejection Front" and its conflict with the PLO-Central Council.<sup>90</sup> The substantive side of this conflict was not explained, however; the only explanations offered for the dissent were (1) the link between some groups of the PLO and various Arab countries, (2) efforts by "Arab reaction," imperialism, and the Zionists to encourage disunity, and (3) "differences" that developed and erupted during the Lebanese events.<sup>91</sup> The tendency was, as in the past, to minimize the importance of this group, generally ignoring its various—and numerous—statements, papers, announcements, and the like, which, substantively, opposed negotiations, the Geneva Conference, resolution 242, recognition of Israel, and even PLO contacts with the Communist Party of Israel.<sup>92</sup> In this fashion Moscow mentioned but minimized the PFLP's negative position at the 1977 PNC, even acknowledging indirectly that the rest of the Rejection Front had supported the PLO resolution.<sup>93</sup> At the same time, the major Soviet commentaries and a book that appeared on the Palestinians in 1977 and 1978 explicitly criticized Habash and the various Rejectionist groups for their "leftism," extremism, and lack of realism.<sup>94</sup>

Part of the Soviet dilemma over the Rejection Front was the fact that the Front's major spokesman and component was a Marxist-oriented group, the PFLP, which nonetheless opposed almost the entire Soviet line regarding the Middle East, even to the point of open criticism. However, inasmuch as Moscow had another, more moderate Marxist, namely Hawatmeh, who did not fully adhere to the Rejection Front, this part of the dilemma probably was not too disturbing. More difficult to handle was the fact that the Rejection Front had very firm and open support from the radical Arab states, particularly from Iraq and Libya.<sup>95</sup> If the Rejection Front within the

---

<sup>90</sup> *Pravda*, December 14, 1976; Bukharkov, "The Palestine Movement," p. 26.

<sup>91</sup> Bukharkov, "The Palestine Movement," p. 26.

<sup>92</sup> See below for issue of contacts. Baghdad radio, May 11, 1977; Voice of Palestine (Baghdad), May 7, 1977; MIS 5 (May 1-15, 1977):23.

<sup>93</sup> Bukharkov, "The Palestinian Stand," p. 10.

<sup>94</sup> See, for example, Landa, "From the History," pp. 23-27; Prylin, "The Palestinian Liberation Movement," pp. 98-100; Dimitryev, *The Palestinian Knot*, pp. 67-68.

<sup>95</sup> Jibril's PFLP-GC was Rejectionist, but it was expelled from the "Front of Palestinian Forces Rejecting Capitulationist Solutions" in May 1977, presumably because of its pro-Syrian position and the split-off of the Abbas group. See INA, May 14, 1977.

Palestinian movement could be ignored, their patrons outside could not, and all the vicissitudes of inter-Arab relations and positions thus entered into the more limited realm of Soviet-PLO relations. As we have seen, the Soviet desire to minimize differences and achieve, in fact, internal PLO unity accounted for one part, at least, of the Soviet attitude toward the Tripoli meeting in December 1977. Soviet media emphasized that one of the conference's major achievements was the PLO-PFLP rapprochement, but both Arafat and the Soviets reportedly were not at all pleased with the attention accorded the Rejection Front by the host-country, Libya, nor the dominance of this group's line in the decisions of the conference.<sup>96</sup>

Having, apparently, resumed contacts with Habash in the wake of the Sadat initiative, Moscow reportedly tried to persuade him to adopt a more moderate position, especially to abandon the use of violent means in favor of political means.<sup>97</sup> Soviet reporting in August 1978 suggested that the Rejectionists had still not sufficiently complied, but, nonetheless, in November 1978 TASS briefly reported that Habash had paid a week's visit to the Soviet Union.<sup>98</sup> This reconciliation with the Rejectionists, which had begun sporadically during the Lebanese crisis, was most probably connected with the Soviet interest in consolidating—and championing—Arab opposition to the emergent U.S.-directed peace process in the Middle East. Even if Soviet intentions went no further than gaining sufficient influence within the PLO to dictate agreement to negotiations under Soviet sponsorship, at least the mutual opposition to Sadat's initiative provided a basis for renewed interest in the Soviet Union on the part of the PLO's Rejection Front. That all outstanding issues were far from resolved between them, however, was indicated by the arguments that preceded and followed the January 1979 PNC, revolving around the Jordanian-rapprochement issue but also around the power struggle occurring within the PLO itself and the basic issues of a mini-state, a negotiated settlement, and the like. On these issues and in this struggle Habash remained opposed to Fatah, joined, as we have seen, by Hawatmeh on certain points. Given the differ-

---

<sup>96</sup> Moscow radio, December 8, 1977; MIS 5 (December 1977):136; QNA, December 7, 1977; Voice of Palestine (Baghdad), December 6, 1977; *Le Monde*, December 6, 1977; "The Dominoes of Extremism," *Israel and Palestine* (December 1977):9. For the opposite view, see *al-Nahar al-Arabi ve al-Doli*, January 28, 1978.

<sup>97</sup> *Al-Manar* (London), April 29, 1978.

<sup>98</sup> Moscow radio in Arabic, August 23, 1978; AFP, November 20, 1978.

ences between Moscow and the Rejectionists on these issues, one may surmise that the Hawatmeh-Habash collaboration occurred independently of the Soviet Union, especially since Moscow appeared to be behind Fatah at the time. Yet as Fatah veered in a direction less desirable to the Soviets after the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Agreement, and also in its pro-Muslim response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Soviet references to Habash were more frequent and positive.<sup>99</sup> Thus it is quite possible that the Soviets hoped to nurture the anti-Fatah Rejectionists within the PLO in order to thwart the feared Fatah-Jordanian move toward the United States, although this tactic itself was fraught with dangers inasmuch as there was little substantial agreement between the Rejectionists and Moscow, and the former were still relatively weak politically.

#### THE PALESTINE NATIONAL FRONT, THE COMMUNISTS, CONTACTS WITH "PROGRESSIVE-ZIONISTS"

While the Soviets concentrated their support around Fatah and cultivated the PDFLP (Hawatmeh), they also created their own organization, which, they hoped, might one day encompass the major Palestinian forces and serve as a vehicle for Soviet influence in whatever Palestinian entity might emerge. Apparently a successor to the unsuccessful al-Ansar, this group was the Palestine National Front, founded by the Jordanian Communist Party in August 1973. Although registered as an affiliate of the PLO and accepted into the PLO executive at the PNC session of 1974, the idea behind its creation was most probably similar to traditional Soviet efforts to set up "national" or "progressive fronts" that encompass Communists and non-Communists alike. Such groups, as employed not only in East Europe after the second World War but even in the Arab world and other parts of the Third World, were the concretization of Leninist policy for the non-proletarian industrialized nations. This policy called for Communist cooperation with and eventual domination of local nationalist forces, via the creation of a broad roof organization—the "Front"—including as many of the existing political parties or forces as possible, which would eventually form,

---

<sup>99</sup> See, for example, *Izvestiia*, May 15, June 13, 1979; O. Volgin, "Palestinians Stand Firm," *New Times* (August 1979):15.

take over, or dominate the country's government. Provided the Communists, through Party members and sympathizers, maintained control, the Front could provide an ostensibly neutral vehicle for Soviet influence that was more attractive—or less exclusive—than the local Communist Party itself.

Thus the PNF was created by the Communists as a “non-Party” organization, designed to carry out primarily political work in the area of the West Bank and Gaza, this being the area that the Soviet Union foresaw as the locale of the future Palestinian state. Indeed, a Jordanian Communist Party official referred to the PNF as the “government” of the West Bank. The organization was portrayed as a broad group encompassing people of various political views and groupings, including the major PLO affiliates.<sup>100</sup> Nonetheless, the important role played by the Communists, both with regard to the founding of the PNF and its ongoing work, was frequently pointed out.<sup>101</sup> The PNF was not to be perceived as a separate, additional Palestinian organization or as a competitor to the PLO but rather an integral part of the PLO, created as the latter's instrument and supporter *within the occupied territories*.<sup>102</sup> Acting as what was called a link between the PLO and the masses in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the PNF was to coordinate political action, such as demonstrations, mass meetings, election activity, and propaganda. One member of the PNF told an interviewer that the PNF itself was the political arm of the PLO and as such not involved in military resistance.<sup>103</sup> Faruq Qaddumi also told an interviewer from the *World Marxist Review* that military operations were in the hands of the “fedayeen guerillas,” while political work was in the hands of the PNF.<sup>104</sup> Nonetheless, the Soviets did train people in sabotage

---

<sup>100</sup> Moscow radio in Arabic, August 11, 1976; August 14, 1977; “Interview with the Palestine National Front,” *Palestine Digest* 6 (October 1976):21.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.* (all); Moscow radio in Arabic, September 3, 1975, November 23, 1975, Bukharkov, “Palestine National Council Session,” p. 13; Landa, “The Palestinian Question,” p. 7.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, (all); Bukharkov, “Palestine Movement,” p. 26.

<sup>103</sup> “Interview with the PNF,” p. 21. For a discussion of this distinction and the history of the PNF see Amnon Cohen, “The Changing Patterns of West Bank Politics,” *The Jerusalem Quarterly* (Jerusalem) (Fall 1977):109-10 and Abraham Sela, “The PLO, the West Bank and Gaza Strip,” *The Jerusalem Quarterly* (Summer 1978):70-71.

<sup>104</sup> Faruk Kaddoumi and Abdul Mohsen Abu Maizar, “The Crux of the Middle East Crisis,” *World Marxist Review* 19 (July 1976):34. One Soviet description spoke of the use of “flexible and varied tactics” for popular resis-



and guerilla tactics so, presumably, PNF members as well might benefit from this even if the organization itself was primarily a political one.<sup>105</sup> Indeed, the creation of the PNF had coincided with the shift in Soviet policy in favor of local Communist armed action.

The policy line of the PNF clearly indicated its primary identification with the Soviet Union as distinct from the PLO. As pointed out by the Soviet Union, the PNF itself, and other Arabs, the organization had very early, in fact just after the Yom Kippur War, supported the idea of a Palestinian state limited to the West Bank and Gaza, acknowledged resolution 242, and echoed Soviet appeals for the Geneva Conference.<sup>106</sup> The Communists even stated quite clearly that the PNF "plays an important role and influence within the PLO by supporting the realistic tendencies [there]."<sup>107</sup> Its primary activities also reflected Soviet preferences; political action was indeed its major occupation, and the PNF was credited with the riots and demonstrations that took place on the West Bank in 1974 and in the late 1975-early 1976 period, during the U.N. discussions on Palestine and Zionism, and with the preparations for the 1976 West Bank elections.<sup>108</sup> This type of action, in some cases coordinated with the Israeli Communist Party, Rakah,<sup>109</sup> was far more suitable to the Soviets, particularly for international purposes, than the PLO style of terror. The PNF also actively—and successfully—participated in the West Bank municipal elections of 1976, even

---

tance but, nonetheless, spoke repeatedly of political activities only—Moscow radio in Arabic, August 14, 1977.

<sup>105</sup> See Baruch Gurevitz, "The Soviet Union and the Palestinian Organizations" in Y. Ro'i, ed., *The Limits to Power* (London: Croom-Helm, 1979), pp. 71-72.

<sup>106</sup> According to *An-Nahar Arab Report* 7 (April 19, 1976):3, the PNF, even before the PLO, had been for the principles of a peaceful settlement, a state on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and the Geneva Conference. *The Middle East* (October 1976):67 reported that the PNF was less of a threat to Israel than the PLO (because of these views), but that the PLO was *not* dependent upon the PNF in the West Bank. For Soviet references to the PNF's early positions see Moscow radio in Arabic, September 3, 1975; November 23, 1974. See also *Le Monde*, May 22, 1975. Soviet praise for the PNF's rejection of the extremist all-or-nothing position was contained in Landa, "The Contemporary State," p. 22, and Dimitryev, *The Palestinian Knot*, pp. 88-89.

<sup>107</sup> Jordanian Communist Party, *Les Communistes*, p. 9.

<sup>108</sup> *Izvestiia*, April 15, 1975; Moscow radio in Arabic, August 14, 1977; Eric Rouleau, "The Coming Palestine Compromise," *Palestine Digest* 5 (August 1975):9.

<sup>109</sup> D. Antonov, "Another Veto," *New Times* 14 (1976):16.

though Habash, though *not* the PLO, had urged a boycott of the elections.<sup>110</sup>

There was a period, however, during which the Soviet Union appeared to ignore or go beyond its claim that the PNF was not in competition with the PLO. In the fall of 1975, Moscow began to give the PNF greater publicity. Soviet broadcasts in Arabic traced the brief history of the organization, including the role played by the Jordanian Communist Party both in its creation and subsequent activities, citing, in particular, the PNF's positive position on the idea of a state in the occupied territories.<sup>111</sup> That this was part of a Soviet effort to bolster the group was evidenced by the fact that one of the Front's leaders, Abd al-Jawad Sabah, was invited at the head of a delegation to Moscow from April 5 to 12, 1976, and accorded sympathetic publicity in what was the first, at least publicly, acknowledged visit of this group, on its own, to the Soviet Union.<sup>112</sup> While this augmentation of public support from the Soviet Union occurred as the Lebanese events were entering a critical stage and the PLO was badly splitting in several directions, the move may have been still more directly connected with events—and Soviet plans—concerning the West Bank. The Soviets may have felt that the time was ripe to present this group as the leader or representative of the West Bank Arabs, not only as a cover for bringing Communists or Communist sympathizers into the local administration, but also as an alternative to the more extreme PLO.<sup>113</sup> Evidence of this was Soviet reporting of the results of the local elections, at least in the cities, as a victory for "PNF sympathizers"—without mention of the PLO—and references to the local support for the PNF.<sup>114</sup> On the other hand, this elevation of the PNF at the expense of the PLO was relatively short-lived, and

---

<sup>110</sup> *An-Nahar Arab Report* 7 (April 19, 1976):3, which also said that it was not only a PNF success but specifically a success for the Communists. This was not the only issue on which the PNF and Habash disagreed. Habash criticized the PNF and Rakah line (and cooperation) on the border issue and especially the idea of recognizing Israel. See, for example, *al-Hadaf*, May 22, 1976.

<sup>111</sup> Moscow radio in Arabic, September 3, 1975, November 23, 1975, August 1, 1976. See also Landa, "The Palestinian Question," p. 7.

<sup>112</sup> *Pravda*, April 13, 1976; *Izvestiia*, April 14, 1976.

<sup>113</sup> See Naim Ashhab, "The Balance of World Forces and the Middle East Crisis," *World Marxist Review* 19:3 (1976):42.

<sup>114</sup> On the elections and the PNF; *Pravda, Izvestiia, Krasnaya zvezda, Trud*, April 15, 1976; Moscow radio in Arabic, August 11, 1976, and August 14, 1977. *Pravda*, April 15, 1976, and *Izvestiia*, April 16, 1976, claimed victory for "leftist elements who stand for the establishment of an independent state on the West Bank." This position was not yet the official position of the PLO.

Soviet reporting returned to, and even augmented, its emphasis upon local support for the PLO and recognition of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians. The brief lapse in the Soviet attitude may indeed have been an attempt to substitute the PNF for the PLO groups, particularly in view of the strength the PNF had achieved at the time. Subsequently, however, the PNF itself suffered severe setbacks, both as a result of Israeli deportation of a number of its members and because of an anti-Communist, anti-PNF turn within the PLO.<sup>115</sup> The PNF did obtain direct support in the 1977 PNC resolution and two places in the new PLO executive, but according to earlier Soviet figures this was one less than they had originally received in 1974.<sup>116</sup> The decline in PNF strength within the PLO was not openly admitted by Moscow—indeed, in August 1977 it once again remarked the successes in the 1976 elections<sup>117</sup>—but this phenomenon was quite directly criticized by the Jordanian and Palestinian Communists on the eve of the 1977 PNC session.<sup>118</sup> While it was difficult to foresee just how permanent this eclipse of the PNF was to be, the Soviets continued to develop the group for future political purposes in the area. Although the existence of various political shadings both within the PLO and in the occupied territories would seem to spur the Soviet Union toward strengthening a national front-type group, the strength of the PLO itself in the areas probably served as a counterbalance in the direction of caution lest the PNF be perceived as a competitor. The Soviet goal with regard to the PNF, realizable or not, apparently was to fortify the organization as a desirable and, eventually, necessary asset to the PLO, while in fact consolidating the PNF's position in and hold over the West Bank Arabs. Probably irrespective of PLO preferences, the PNF itself was in fact reactivated after Sadat's visit to Jerusalem, becoming particularly active after the Camp David accords. While this reactivation was aimed at organizing and directing antiautonomy efforts, it may also have been designed to strengthen Moscow's contacts and influence should autonomy in fact be introduced. The impression that the Soviets were cultivating a local alternative to the

---

<sup>115</sup> Jordanian Communist Party, *Les Communistes*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>116</sup> Maizar in Kaddoumi and Maizar, "The Crux of the Middle East Crisis," pp. 34-35. See also Abraham Sela, "The PLO," p. 72. There is some confusion over the number, however, for some sources identify the independent Abu Maizar as a third PNF representative on the Executive. see *Arab Report and Record* (August 1978):615.

<sup>117</sup> Moscow radio in Arabic, August 14, 1977.

<sup>118</sup> Jordanian Communist Party, *Les Communistes*, pp. 16-17.

PLO, or at the least an additional avenue, was strengthened by the visit of a delegation of West Bank mayors and political figures to Moscow in May 1979. The invitation was extended at the Basel Conference on Palestinian Solidarity organized by the Soviet-front World Peace Council, and, thus, was not directly connected with the Soviet-PLO framework, although the Soviets did report the delegation's declared support for the PLO. The group, which was accorded a good deal of Soviet publicity, consisted primarily of PNF figures, including some Communists. However, presumably as gestures designed to maintain all options open, the Soviet media made mention of Habash, Arafat, and Hawatmeh, each on a different occasion during the visit or immediately thereafter.<sup>119</sup> Of broader significance, the delegation's visit coincided with one by King Hussein's special envoy Hassan Ibrahim.

Even at this time, however, the PNF was badly split and, for all intents and purposes, was eventually supplanted by the new National Guidance Committee established with Communist support after Camp David. The Committee was dominated by local Rejectionists—many of whom had been PNF members but not Communists—at odds with Fatah over its deepening rapprochement with Jordan. The Communists themselves did not achieve much influence in the Committee, even though they sided with it against the Fatah and the pro-Jordanian, often traditional Muslim elements outside the Committee. Thus, as part of the Fatah-Rejectionist split on the West Bank, a Fatah-Communist split also occurred. Indeed, the invitation of the West Bank delegation to Moscow may have been designed to resolve this conflict, but the emergence of the split in polemics between pro-Hashemite and pro-Communist elements in the fall of 1979 and in the Communist-Fatah policy difference during, for example, the Bassam Shak'a affair indicated Soviet failure.<sup>120</sup> Pro-Communist PNF figures did strive to minimize these differences, openly admitting to conflicts only with the Rejectionists; one pro-Communist PNF source even claimed that the latter were opposed by Fatah and Hawatmeh together.<sup>121</sup>

---

<sup>119</sup> *Izvestiia*, May 15, 1979; TASS, May 18, 1979; *Krasnaya zvezda*, May 27, 1979.

<sup>120</sup> See Chapter Two

<sup>121</sup> Ziad Iskandar, "A Man of the People" (interview with Hamzeh al-Natshe), *Israel and Palestine* (April-May 1979):8-11; private interviews. The rift was evident, however, in criticism expressed by local Communists regarding PLO contacts with West Europe or PLO cooperation with the Muslim countries on the Afghanistan issue (*al-Talia*, April 10, 1980).

The role of the Communists in the PNF had been vital to Soviet intentions, and, inasmuch as the PNF was to be perceived as a positive, even essential, element of the Palestinian struggle, neither the Soviets nor the Communists sought to hide or minimize this role. On the contrary, the hope was to win the sympathies of the Palestinian nationalists to the side of the Moscow-backed Communists as the latter demonstrated not only their effectiveness but their tolerance and understanding. Direct action by the Communists themselves, however, was not forsaken. If anything, such activity was stepped up, perhaps in response to a more positive image achieved via the PNF, perhaps as part of the same considerations that prompted the creation of the PNF, namely, the general effort toward a strengthening of Moscow's position in anticipation of Palestinian statehood. In any case, not only did the Soviets—and the PNF—begin openly to credit the Jordanian Communist Party, but the Palestinian Communists themselves began to emerge from obscurity. The Palestinian Communists had been part of the Jordanian Communist Party, founded in 1951, which became particularly active on the West Bank following the Six-Day War. After the Yom Kippur War in 1974 it was decided to give the West Bank section of the Jordanian Party an identity of its own inasmuch as the Palestinian movement and the idea of statehood was gaining ground. Thus, the Palestinian Communist Organization (PCO) was created, with a clandestine paper called *al-Watan* [the Nation]<sup>122</sup> and an estimated membership of approximately 100 people. In 1978, following Sadat's Jerusalem visit, the Palestinian Communists became particularly active, and visible, both in the realm of recruitment and propaganda. With the removal of Communists from the East Jerusalem newspaper *al-Fajr*, controlled by the PLO, a paper edited by the PCO leader Bashir Barghuti made a (renewed) appearance.<sup>123</sup> A flood of Communist-sponsored pamphlets also began to appear in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. This stepped-up Communist activity was probably a sign of Soviet intent to be prepared, organizationally as well as politically, for the eventuality of implementation

---

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., pp. 7-10 for history. See also Budapest television, March 20, 1977, interview with Jordan Communist leader Fayeq Warrad. The former Palestinian Communist Party had been abandoned with the creation of the State of Israel and the Jordanian annexation of the West Bank; it was succeeded by the Israel Communist Party (MAKI) and the Jordanian Communist Party itself.

<sup>123</sup> MIS 6 (May 16-31, 1978):30-31.

of the autonomy plan. By the same token, this activity may also have been a sign of the already mentioned Soviet effort to ensure a "progressive" character for the Palestinian movement in the wake of U.S. successes in the region,<sup>124</sup> and even, eventually, to counter what might develop into a Fatah-PLO move toward Washington. Indeed, we have already spoken of the Communist-Fatah rift that began to appear in the West Bank in 1979, in part, it has been said, because the Jordanian-PLO rapprochement had led Arafat to favor traditional pro-Hashemite forces over and to the exclusion of the local Communists.

The program of the PCO was identical to that of the Jordanian Communist Party and the PNF, and thus generally identical with the Soviet line. This included the demand for Israeli withdrawal specifically from the territories occupied in 1967, creation of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza, peace with Israel, and security for all states in the area. The Jordanian and Palestinian Communists tended to stress an anti-Jordan (anti-Hashemite) policy more than the Soviets; the Soviets had to temper this position because of their own state interests in improved relations with Amman. And the Jordanians and Palestinians spoke more of the return of the refugees than did the Soviets, although, as we have seen, in 1977 and 1978 this demand began to appear somewhat more frequently in Soviet statements as well. A more militant line was taken by various groups that broke off from the Jordanian Communist Party and the PLO over the years, including a group that founded itself in May 1977 as the Palestinian Communist Party.<sup>125</sup> Although it was said that the Syrian Communist Party, to the consternation of the Iraqi Communist Party, had taken over this new grouping, the new party itself was neither acknowledged nor condoned by Moscow or the "establishment" Communist authorities in the region.<sup>126</sup>

The Communist parties of the Arab states were, however, involved in the Palestinian question, even occupying a position of particular importance prior to the emergence of the Palestinian Communist Organization and in view of the fact that Iraq and Syria

---

<sup>124</sup> The inclusion of the leader of the Jordanian Communist Party, Fayeq Warrad, in the PLO delegation to Moscow, March 1978, may have reflected this interest, or the PLO's acknowledgement of this interest. There were no other similar signs of Communist success within the PLO, however.

<sup>125</sup> *Aldair* (Beirut), September 5, 1977.

<sup>126</sup> *The Middle East* (December 1977):27.

had their own faction or factions within the Palestinian movement. Insofar as there were rivalries or disagreements between the Arab Communist parties, this policy caused certain difficulties, but still greater difficulties were apparently caused by internal party factionalism, which, at least in the Syrian case, involved the Palestinian question.<sup>127</sup> The Arab Communist parties did meet together at least once yearly and did manage to produce a common statement, and even individually their over-all lines reflected the position of the Soviet Union more than that of their respective governments. Particularly striking was the difference between the Iraqi Communist Party, which itself was somewhat more radical on the Palestinian issue than Moscow, and the Iraqi government, which actually supported the Rejection Front within the PLO.<sup>128</sup> For example, just as the Rabat Conference was opening in 1974, Moscow issued a joint communiqué with a visiting Iraqi Communist Party delegation favoring a Palestinian state in the territories to be liberated and the reconvening of the Geneva Conference.<sup>129</sup> The communiqué with the visiting Iraqi Foreign Minister a month earlier had contained no such clauses, and Saddam Hussein, a powerful leader of the Iraqi Ba'th Party who later took over the reigns of government, issued a strong statement during the Rabat Conference against the Geneva Conference and against any policy not designed to liberate "the whole territory of Palestine."<sup>130</sup> Similar difficulties were caused for the Syrian Communists by the Lebanese Civil War with its polarization of the Syrian government and Sa'iqa, on the one hand, and the PLO, the Soviet Union, and the Syrian Communists on the other, but in fact the problems and mutual recriminations between Damascus and its Communists revolved around other issues and had already erupted a number of times before the Lebanese crisis and the Palestinian problem.<sup>131</sup>

---

<sup>127</sup> As we have seen, in 1971 the Soviets chastized the Syrian Communists for concentrating on the Palestinian problem and thereby risking the error of "national tendencies." See "Special Document," pp. 187-212.

<sup>128</sup> For a somewhat more radical line than the Soviets', taken by the Iraqi Communist Party, see Azziz Mohammed, "Tasks of the Revolutionary Forces of Iraq," *World Marxist Review* 19 (September 1976):3-5.

<sup>129</sup> TASS, October 29, 1974.

<sup>130</sup> Moscow radio in Arabic, September 23, 1974; *as-Siyassah*, October 31, 1974.

<sup>131</sup> *Za rubezhom* (January 29, 1976) referred to these problems. See also Bagdash message to the CPSU Congress, Moscow radio in Arabic, March 5, 1976, and *Pravda*, March 12, 1976, for hints of this. Reports of restrictions on the

Although the various Arab Communist parties had a specific role to play with regard to the PLO, the Jordanian Communist Party was allotted primary responsibility for the Palestinian issue by Moscow because of the Soviets' increasing concentration on the West Bank. A totally new element was added, however, when Moscow began to increase, and acknowledge, the role played by the Israeli Communist Party, Rakah, among the Palestinians even on the West Bank,<sup>132</sup> and, for the first time, the Soviets organized a publicized meeting between Rakah and the Jordanian Communist Party in July 1976.<sup>133</sup> This new policy may have been simply the result of expediency or, possibly, an answer to the growing sympathy for the PLO among Israeli Arabs normally affiliated with or courted by Rakah. It may also have been a logical step in view of the changing position of the Palestinian Communists, whose impending independence might open the way for a Rakah as well as Jordanian Communist Party role. In terms of policy, there did not seem to be any particular obstacle to cooperation between Rakah and the Jordanian Communists,<sup>134</sup> but it was not certain that the PLO, or some of the Arab governments, would accept any dealings with Rakah. In response to the 1976 meeting, *An-Nahar Arab Report* pointed out that the Palestinians could not condone this contact with Israel prior to Israeli recognition of the Palestinians and could not accept the joint peace plan outlined in the communiqué of the meeting inasmuch as it allowed for the "legitimate national rights of all peoples in the area," meaning the Israeli people as well as the Palestinians.<sup>135</sup> In fact, just a few weeks before this meeting the Fatah paper *Free Palestine* had published an attack on Rakah's position regarding the Palestinians identical to that of Moscow, especially on the issue of

---

Communists in Syria appeared in *An-Nahar Arab Report* 7 (January 5, 1976), which recalled earlier problems of September 1973 and April 1974. For these see Cooley, "The Shifting Sands," pp. 22-42.

<sup>132</sup> Antonov, "Another Veto," p. 16. Budapest television, March 20, 1977. Rakah was primarily an Arab party, attracting Israeli Arab voters on the basis of a nationalist rather than strictly Marxist line. In 1978 and 1979 it was challenged by a non-Communist, purely nationalist group which developed among Israeli Arabs, called "Sons of the Village." The latter's line was more radical than that of Rakah on such issues as the existence of Israel and the locale of a Palestinian state. See Chapter Two.

<sup>133</sup> Moscow radio in Arabic, July 30, 1976.

<sup>134</sup> The communiqué followed the line expressed by both parties since the Yom Kippur War.

<sup>135</sup> *An-Nahar Arab Report* 7 (August 9, 1976):3.



the return of the refugees and its ramifications for the creation of a mini-state versus a secular state in all of Palestine, as this question appeared.<sup>136</sup> This critique, written by a member of Matzpen, was in fact partially disavowed by the editorial in the same issue, which defended contacts with Rakah and even with other Israelis.

This issue of contacts with Israelis in fact became still another point for dispute within the PLO, as Rakah, operating in accord with Moscow's policies, sought contacts also with the PLO itself and encouraged or at least approved of contacts between "progressive" Israelis and Palestinians. The PLO had undertaken contacts in the early 1970s with extremist, anti-Zionist Israelis to the left of Rakah, and unofficial PLO-Rakah contacts were conducted in Moscow, but after 1974 certain Palestinians, members of Fatah who apparently had Arafat's approval, began to meet with moderate, dovish Israelis who clearly identified themselves as Zionists.<sup>137</sup> The group most involved was the non-Communist Council for an Israeli-Palestinian Peace. It was these contacts that occasioned the dispute within the PLO, leading to the decision of the 1977 PNC in favor of contacts with *anti-Zionist* Israelis.<sup>138</sup> And this decision led directly to the first official PLO-Rakah meeting, held in Prague in May 1977. The Rejection Front, both of Arab states and within the PLO, criticized even this meeting, either on the grounds that even Rakah was in fact a Zionist organization (!) or because no contact with any legal Israeli

---

<sup>136</sup> Uri Davis in *Free Palestine* 9 (March 1976):8 reports internal tensions within Rakah because of this position. See also *Free Palestine* 10 (August 1977): 9, according to which Rakah had problems with Matzpen because the former accepted resolution 242 and the mini-state idea. Matzpen was a very small group to the left of Rakah, comprised of anti-Zionist Israelis mostly resident outside Israel.

<sup>137</sup> MIS 5 (May 1-15, 1977):22-23 for history of PLO-Israeli contacts.

<sup>138</sup> *Journal of Palestine Studies* VI (Spring 1977):190 has the decision. For the debate on this issue, see *Free Palestine* 10 (November 1977); idem, 10 (March 1977); *Israel and Palestine* (April 1977); Voice of Palestine, January 15, 1977; Damascus radio, February 14, 1977; *The Middle East* (May 1977); idem (November 1977); *Middle East International* (May 1977). At the PNC session Arafat came out in favor of contacts "with all personages who recognize our rights as a people to self-determination and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state"—MENA, March 17, 1977. These remarks, which would include Zionists, were said to have received applause—*Middle East International* (May 1977):10. Qaddumi was later quoted by Tanyug to have supported contacts with any group recognizing the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people; see AP, May 5, 1977.

organization was to be tolerated.<sup>139</sup> Whatever the contention, the Soviets cannot have been pleased with this response, both because Rakah itself was a Moscow-backed Communist Party and because the Soviets had hailed the meeting and the PNC decision upon which it was based.<sup>140</sup> Yet, in fact, the issue was complicated for Moscow inasmuch as the Soviets—and Rakah—favored not only contacts with anti-Zionists but with Zionists, such as the Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace, as well. Rakah leader, Meir Wilner, wrote in the *World Marxist Review*, for example, that “there are Zionists who take up a correct and realistic position on concrete political and social issues. Hence, the possibility of establishing a peace front . . . [which] should comprise all those who are prepared to struggle against the occupation, against the prevailing policy, and for a just and stable peace. . . . it must unite organizations and individuals, Jews and Arabs, people of different ideological views—Communists, Zionists, religious—all who support a just and real peace.”<sup>141</sup> In October 1977 TASS reported a Rakah decision to contact “realistically minded” leaders of other Israeli parties, including not only the left-wing (but Zionist) Sheli party, but also the Israel Labor Party, in order to wage a joint struggle for “implementing existing possibilities for peace,” which, it was claimed, had been opened up by the Soviet-U.S. joint statement.<sup>142</sup> Budapest television also reported Hawatmeh comments favoring PLO contacts with Israeli Zionists such as the Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace, although following the PNC session *Pravda* quoted the same Hawatmeh as favoring contacts *only* with anti-Zionists, condemning the contacts with the above group.<sup>143</sup>

A further sign of Soviet support for the idea of contacts with Zionist Israelis was the October 1977 Paris Conference on a Just

---

<sup>139</sup> AP, May 5, 1977; Baghdad radio, May 11, 1977; INA, May 10, 12, 1977; Voice of Palestine (Baghdad), May 7, 1977.

<sup>140</sup> “The Middle East,” *New Times* 20 (May 1977):7; *Pravda*, March 27, 1977. *Pravda*, May 21, 1977, quoted Hawatmeh that the decision was a victory for the “democratic forces within the Palestinian Resistance Movement over various chauvinistic reactionary ideas.”

<sup>141</sup> Meir Wilner, “Peace in the Middle East: A Sheet Anchor for Israel,” *World Marxist Review* 20 (April 1977):31. The Jordanian Communist Party and the Palestinian Communist Organization came out for contacts with “progressives in Israel,” but were not clear if these could be Zionists. (Jordanian Communist Party, *Les Communistes*, p. 25.)

<sup>142</sup> TASS, October 7, 1977.

<sup>143</sup> Budapest television, March 20, 1977; *Pravda*, May 21, 1977.

Peace in the Middle East organized by the Moscow-backed World Peace Council. Both Rakah and the Moscow-sponsored World Committee for a Just Settlement in the Middle East acted directly, the latter via a delegation sent to Israel for the purpose, to ensure the participation in the Paris Conference of Israeli Zionists, specifically the Council for an Israeli-Palestinian Peace, but also of individuals from the Labor and Mapam Parties. They even went so far as to send these Israelis personal invitations, although the Israelis requested to be observers rather than formal participants, provided they nonetheless be permitted to speak.<sup>144</sup> The granting of this last condition became the subject of open conflict at the conference, occasioning an Iraqi walk-out. Despite these Soviet-backed efforts, and the relatively moderate line taken by Soviet bloc and Rakah delegates to the conference, even in support of some of the Israeli demands, the Soviet media made no mention of this Zionist participation in its reporting of the conference.<sup>145</sup>

Following the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Agreement, however, the Soviet position regarding PLO contacts with Zionist Israeli doves apparently changed—though contacts with Rakah were still encouraged.<sup>146</sup> With their growing concern over a PLO move to the West, especially over PLO talks with U.S. officials, the Soviets became somewhat cautious regarding all PLO contacts with non-Communists. Thus the decided Soviet ambivalence with regard to Arafat's meeting with Bruno Kreisky and Willy Brandt in July 1979 and the apparent change in their attitude regarding talks with Israelis. In May 1979 a PNF spokesman spoke against such contacts, claiming that most PLO members—including Arafat—had always opposed them.<sup>147</sup> The last piece of information had some truth in it for, despite Arafat's own endorsement of the contacts, the issue was reportedly too strongly opposed within the PLO even to be raised at the January 1979 PNC.<sup>148</sup> It was this opposition that

---

<sup>144</sup> This account is based on private interviews. Most of the details can also be found in "Time of the Conferences," *Israel and Palestine* (October 1977):24.

<sup>145</sup> *Pravda*, October 18, 1977; *New Times* (October 1977):2; TASS, October 15, 1977.

<sup>146</sup> Moscow radio in Arabic, May 2, 1979, carried a long justification of contacts with Rakah, including quotations from Hawatmeh.

<sup>147</sup> Ziad Iskandar, "A Man of the People," p. 9; the PNF spokesman interviewed said that only reactionary, Saudi-supported elements favored such contacts.

<sup>148</sup> Fulvia Grimaldi and Judith Perera, "Palestine Fate Hangs on the Pan-Arab Thread," *The Middle East* (March 1979):35.

reportedly accounted for another retreat on this issue, in connection with the World Peace Council's Conference on Solidarity with the Palestinian People, held in Basel in early May 1979. Invitations to the conference extended to Israeli Zionists such as Sheli member Dr. Naomi Kies, who had formerly participated in such contacts, were canceled on the grounds that no supporters of the Egyptian-Israeli agreement should be invited. Whether this indicated a decisive change in Soviet policy, however, is not entirely clear, for Rakah people in Israel continued to seek the participation of Zionists in such contacts and took a favorable position when such meetings occurred again at a conference in Rome in the fall of 1979.

## CONCLUSIONS

The persistent problem of internal PLO unity was a source of Soviet concern, particularly when these differences included opposition to Soviet views and could be traced to various Arab governments. Indeed, the links of the Palestinian organizations with specific Arab states seriously complicated any Soviet effort to intervene or express preferences. This was the case during the Lebanese war and with regard to the Rejection Front particularly at the time of Sadat's visit to Israel. Nonetheless, Moscow was usually, if not always, willing to ignore and even criticize the Rejection Front, while it sought to cultivate the PLO organization of Hawatmeh because of its Marxist orientation. Soviet preferences for Hawatmeh were muted and cautious, however, for the Soviet Union nonetheless placed its weight behind the dominant group in the PLO, Fatah, and its leader, Arafat. While the Soviets most probably preferred a Marxist such as Hawatmeh and found themselves in agreement with Habash, more than Arafat, on such matters as the PLO relationship with Jordan or the situation in Afghanistan, there was no evidence that Moscow in fact abandoned its support for Arafat, most probably because the leader himself demonstrated impressive staying power throughout the internal and external vicissitudes of the PLO. Moreover, for all his concessions both to objective circumstances such as the war in Lebanon and to internal PLO pressures, Arafat was still more amenable to Soviet opinion than were most of his colleagues.

As Soviet support for the idea of a Palestinian state grew, Moscow increasingly emphasized its own more direct instrument, the Palestine National Front, as the nucleus and framework for an eventual Palestinian government. With the cultivation of this

organization came also greater Soviet emphasis upon and use of the Communist parties, particularly the Jordanian Communist Party. This development brought with it, for the first time, a new and significant role for the Israeli Communist Party as well, and contacts between this group and other Communists, as well as with the PLO itself, were encouraged. While the Soviets were extremely cautious in their upgraded use of the Communist parties, the new attention accorded them may have indicated a Soviet appraisal of the imminence of Palestinian success—that is, their participation in formal peace talks and even the creation of some Palestinian entity—which dictated the need for a stronger Soviet channel of influence within the Palestinian movement. Any Communist-PNF takeover of the movement had to be extremely subtle and gradual, however, for not only did the PLO—and its main force, Fatah—enjoy a great deal of popularity and strength, but the PNF itself suffered definite setbacks within the PLO and in the occupied territories once the Rejectionist-led National Guidance Committee supplanted it on the West Bank, on the one hand, and the Fatah-sponsored PLO-Jordanian rapprochement weakened Communist appeal, on the other. Indeed, the Soviets appeared to be quite far from achieving sizeable influence in the PLO through their chosen channels, and the internal PLO web of positions, arguments, ideologies, and power struggles continued to complicate Moscow's relationship with and perhaps even hopes for the organization in terms of the Soviets' own interests.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# The Lebanese Crisis

### SOVIET POLICY

The 1975-76 Civil War in Lebanon, and the continuing problems in that country, were of a most complicated nature; they presented extremely difficult and complex policy dilemmas for the Soviet Union. It is not the purpose of this chapter to analyze Moscow's attitude toward the war itself or the entanglements it occasioned between three different Soviet "clients": the Lebanese leftists, the PLO, and Syria.<sup>1</sup> Rather, an attempt will be made to examine the Soviet-Palestinian relationship and Soviet policies with regard to the PLO insofar as these were affected by the events in Lebanon. Basically, Moscow supported the Palestinians, allied with the Lebanese left, throughout the conflict, but this position was far from simple and

---

<sup>1</sup> For analyses of the Soviet attitude toward the war in Lebanon, see Ilana Kass, "The Lebanon Civil War 1975-1976," *Jerusalem Papers on Peace Problems*, 26-27 (1979), Jerusalem; Robert O. Freedman, "The Soviet Union and the Civil War in Lebanon," paper presented to the Middle East Association Conference, New York, 1977. For Soviet-Syrian relations in the Lebanese context, see Galia Golan, "The Soviet Union and Syria since 1973," *Orbis* 21 (Winter 1978):794-801, and Morris Rothenberg, "Recent Soviet Relations with Syria," *Middle East Review* X (Summer 1978):5-9.

straightforward. Soviet motivation for this support varied somewhat as the war itself underwent changes, while the difficulties and nuances connected with this support were similarly affected. Moreover, changes within the Palestinian movement, its policies, and its perceptions of the Soviet role—insofar as there was a “Soviet role”—in the conflict, further complicated the Soviet-Palestinian relationship.

The first period of the war, late 1975 up to the massive, second Syrian intervention in June 1976,<sup>2</sup> did not on the surface appear to pose serious problems for Soviet policymakers. Moscow could and did support the Palestinian-Lebanese leftist front without any apparent dilemma over Syria, inasmuch as all these parties initially agreed on the basic issues. Specifically, they all opposed the idea of partitioning Lebanon, and at least the Palestinians, together with the Syrians, shared Moscow’s desire to see the conflict end quickly. Indeed, the Soviets even responded positively to the first Syrian intervention, in January 1976. Officially, they portrayed the war as an imperialist-Israeli effort to have the Palestinians ejected from Lebanon and/or actually destroyed. Thus, their arguments for a swift settlement without outside interference were presented in the defense of the Palestinians and against possible “imperialist” or Israeli—or even Egyptian—action.<sup>3</sup> On another level, however, Moscow had little to gain from prolongation of the Lebanese crisis, inasmuch as it in fact suited U.S., and Israeli, tendencies to postpone further action on the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the reconvening of the Geneva conference. More important, perhaps, the ongoing crisis created complexities that could be of benefit to the United States. These complexities consisted of the split that occurred during the

---

<sup>2</sup> The second and massive Syrian intervention in Lebanon began during the night of May 31–June 1, 1976. My division into periods is purely arbitrary; it is based on the Soviet attitude toward Syria, although many more periods or sub-periods could be delineated with regard to the war itself as in, for example, Michael Hudson, “The Palestinian Factor in the Lebanese Civil War,” *The Middle East Journal* 32 (Summer 1978):261–78.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, *Izvestiia*, January 14, 22, 1976, February 4, 1976, March 19, 1976; *Pravda*, January 23, 1976, April 8, 1976; V. Peresada, “Syria: A Land Renewed,” *International Affairs* 4 (1976):114; V. Nikolayev, “Trying Days in Lebanon,” *New Times*, 16 (April 1976):10–11; Alexander Klimov, “Ancient Syria Today,” *New Times* (April 1976):25. According to *Pravda*, December 26, 1975, the Lebanese right was trying to involve Syria in fighting so as to provoke Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon and thus achieve partition of the country. For a similar line on rightist efforts to drive a wedge between Syria and the Lebanese left, see *Pravda*, March 21, 1976, and V. Nikolayev, “Trying Days.”

winter and spring of 1976 between Syria and the Lebanese left as well as between Syria and the PLO. The former provided the Syrians with a point in common with the United States, while the latter led to a PLO-Egyptian rapprochement just as Egypt was abrogating its friendship treaty with Moscow and moving still closer to the United States.

Thus, at this stage of the war, the Soviet interest in a return to stability outweighed its other concerns. Moscow's hopes for a swift end to the crisis prompted it to support the Syrians' intervention in January 1976 despite whatever benefits might accrue to Syria in the process. This interest remained so prominent that Moscow publicly ignored the emerging reservations regarding Syria of the Lebanese left and of the Palestinians. Even when Arafat and Fatah were complaining bitterly of Syria's actions in Lebanon, particularly the Syrian attempt to take over the PLO via Sa'iqa, the Soviets sought to ignore the PLO-Syrian issue.<sup>4</sup> As late as in March 1976 the Soviet press found reason to single out and praise Sa'iqa leader Zuhair Mohsen for his role in the Lebanese events.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, Syrian mediation was still praised even when Syria had cut off arms supplies to the PLO in order to prevent the PLO from arming the Lebanese left.<sup>6</sup> It was little wonder then that the PLO itself, or at least many of its leading figures, were wary of Moscow's position and suspicious that the Soviet Union did not oppose Syrian efforts to bring the PLO under its wing and had even encouraged Damascus to invade Lebanon.<sup>7</sup> The arrival in Damascus of Soviet Premier Kosygin just as the June invasion was getting under way could but strengthen this impression, especially when followed by Soviet media support for the Syrian move.<sup>8</sup>

While Palestinian apprehensions regarding the Soviets in this

---

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, in *as-Siyassah* (Kuwait), February 23, 1976, or Baghdad radio, March 21, 1976.

<sup>5</sup> In R. Landa, "The Palestinian Question: The Socio-Political Aspect," *Aziia i Afrika Sevodnia* 3 (1976):7. At this time Moscow also generally ignored anti-Communist measures taken in Syria.

<sup>6</sup> Freedman, "The Soviet Union," p. 13.

<sup>7</sup> See below and Farouq M., "Palestine and the Soviet Union," *Palestine* 3 (January 1977):40. Kass argues that Qaddumi's April 27-May 3, 1976, trip to China was meant to pressure the Soviet Union with regard to Lebanon. The Chinese foreign minister's speech during Qaddumi's stay did attack the Soviets' "sham aid" to the Palestinians (NCNA, April 28, 1976).

<sup>8</sup> TASS, June 5, 1976; *Pravda*, June 6, 1976; *Pravda, Izvestiia*, June 7, 1976.



first stage of the Lebanese war were relatively easy to comprehend, such apprehensions during the period that followed were both less apparent to the outside observer and, at the same time, seemingly less comprehensible. Even in the pre-June period, Moscow had tried to bring pressure on Syria to refrain from cooperating with U.S.-sponsored peace attempts, such as the dispatch of Dean Brown to Lebanon.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, the Soviets had tried to prevent Syria from participating in Saudi Arabian efforts to bring Syria and Egypt back together, specifically at the Riyadh conference of June 1976.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, these pressures, together with concern over Syria's growing conflict with Moscow's allies in Lebanon, may have been the reason for the dispatch of Kosygin for a visit to Syria (following one in Iraq) at the end of May, beginning of June 1976.<sup>11</sup> A hint of Soviet dissatisfaction appeared in the communiqué issued on May 31, 1976, after Kosygin's talks in Baghdad, for this statement said that "Both sides stressed that the right solution to the Lebanese crisis can be reached by the Lebanese people themselves."<sup>12</sup> This seemed to be more inclusive than the customary condemnation of imperialist intervention, which was also mentioned. Indeed, Assad was to tell an Arab paper based in Paris, *Al Mostakbel*, that both the Soviet Union and the United States had warned Syria not to intervene in Lebanon.<sup>13</sup> Yet, although delayed until Kosygin's return, the Soviet response to the Syrian invasion of that night was initially positive,

---

<sup>9</sup> See anti-U.S. comments in *Pravda*, April 1, 2, 4, 1976; *Izvestiia*, April 2, 11, 1976; *Komsomalskaya Pravda*, April 15, 1976, TASS, April 29, 1976; *Radio Peace and Progress in Arabic*, May 13, 1976. The April 28, 1976, Soviet Peace Plan was strongly anti-United States, in the Lebanese as well as Arab-Israeli context; see TASS, April 28, 1976.

<sup>10</sup> *As-Safir*, according to the *New York Times*, May 26, 1976, claimed that the Soviets had persuaded Syria not to attend what was to be a reconciliation conference with Egypt. See *Moscow radio in Arabic*, May 12, 13, 20, 1976, for propaganda against Saudi efforts.

<sup>11</sup> The primary reason for his visit was probably Soviet efforts to iron out inter-Arab differences in hopes of promoting Moscow's latest bid for a reconvening of the Geneva Conference, as well as to thwart a Syrian-Egyptian rapprochement.

<sup>12</sup> *Pravda*, June 1, 1976.

<sup>13</sup> *Le Monde*, June 26-27, 1977. The reference may, however, have been to efforts on the part of the Soviet Union and the United States at the end of March 1976, which were reported in *An Nahar Arab Report* 9 (April 5, 1976), according to which Syria had notified the United States on March 29, 1976, that it would intervene, and the United States (via Dean Brown) and the Soviet Union (via Soviet ambassador to Beirut Soldatov) sought to prevent the move.

indicating continued Soviet support for Syria as the only means of gaining a swift halt to the crisis.<sup>14</sup> Within a few days, however, the Soviet position shifted to one of clear opposition to Syria.

On June 8, 1976, Soviet reporting began to reflect certain reservations, and on June 9 TASS issued a statement to the effect that the Syrian invasion had not only failed to end the bloodshed in Lebanon but had even contributed to it.<sup>15</sup> While the Soviets were subsequently to distinguish between the Syrians' positive motives for intervening as distinct from the negative results of their move, their criticism became quite direct.<sup>16</sup> This criticism explicitly referred to the fact that the Syrian army was fighting *with* the Christians *against* the Palestinians,<sup>17</sup> one Soviet commentary complaining that this intervention was seen as a "veritable godsend" by "the enemies of the Arab people."<sup>18</sup> A brief visit to Moscow by Syrian Foreign Minister Khaddam in early July 1976 apparently failed to placate the Soviets, for criticism of Syria, although temporarily suspended during the visit, resumed with increasing vigor.<sup>19</sup> An important *Pravda* commentary on July 16, 1976, referred to Syrian activities in Lebanon as "a knife in the back" of the Palestinians,<sup>20</sup> while the Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee issued a statement calling on all progressive forces to aid the Palestinians, asserting that the Syrian involvement had "further aggravated the situation."<sup>21</sup> On July 11, 1976, Brezhnev

---

<sup>14</sup> TASS, June 5, 1976; *Pravda*, June 6, 1976; *Pravda* and *Izvestiia*, June 7, 1976. An exception to this, which suggested possible Soviet reservations, was an anti-Syrian demonstration that was held by Arab students in Moscow on June 3, 1976—without interference from Soviet authorities; see *Le Monde*, June 5, 1976.

<sup>15</sup> See *Pravda*, *Izvestiia*, *Krasnaya zvezda*, June 8, 1976.

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, Moscow radio, June 13, 1976.

<sup>17</sup> *Pravda*, June 10, 11, 12, 1976; *Krasnaya zvezda*, June 10, 1976; *Izvestiia*, June 12, 1976.

<sup>18</sup> INA, June 20, 1976. Criticism was also launched at this time over the Syrian regime's treatment of the Syrian Communist Party; see Moscow radio in Persian, July 1, 1976.

<sup>19</sup> Only a terse report (TASS, July 7, 1976) rather than a joint communiqué was issued on the visit; none of the speeches during the visit were even mentioned, much less published, and almost no publicity was given by the Soviet press, with the exception of *Izvestiia*.

<sup>20</sup> *Pravda*, July 16, 1976. See also Moscow radio in Arabic, July 12, 1976; *Pravda*, July 15, 1976; *Krasnaya zvezda*, July 18, 1976; *Trud*, July 22, 1976; TASS, July 12, 13, 1976.

<sup>21</sup> *Pravda*, July 10, 1976.

sent Assad a letter that was shown to Arafat and Lebanese leftist leader Jumblatt by the Soviet ambassador to Lebanon, Soldatov, in which the Soviet leader reportedly demanded the withdrawal of Syria's troops.<sup>22</sup> This letter apparently was accompanied by Soviet manipulation of its arms deliveries to Syria as a means of pressuring Damascus.<sup>23</sup> Within Lebanon itself, the Soviet ambassador was in almost daily contact with the PLO leadership, assisting the Palestinians, according to an official complaint from the Lebanese government, in their combat plans.<sup>24</sup> Thus, the Soviets appeared to be fully supporting the Palestinians even to the point of openly opposing Syria's moves.

Yet, for all that the Palestinians' position in Lebanon was indeed desperate as a result of Syrian aid to the Christians, the Soviet decision to oppose Damascus cannot have been an easy one. There may even have been those in the Kremlin who opposed this shift, for *Izvestiia*, at least, tended to refrain from directly criticizing Syria, alone of the Soviet papers granting what in better days would have been considered normal coverage to Khaddam's July visit.<sup>25</sup> Certainly a strong case could be made for preferring the Syrians over the PLO in the polarization that occurred, particularly after June 1976. Soviet policy in the Middle East had long demonstrated a conservative preference for dealing with states or stable governments as distinct from more amorphous movements; Soviet political and particularly strategic interests could be better served by states, specifically Syria—since

---

<sup>22</sup> *Free Palestine* (London), 9 (August 1976):6; *Le Monde*, July 20, 1976; Beirut radio, July 12, 1976.

<sup>23</sup> *Al-Akhbar* (Amman), March 15, 1977; *Ruz al-Yusuf* (Cairo), July 26, 1976; O. M. Smolansky, "Soviet Policy in the Middle East," *Current History* (January 1978):9; *An Nahar Arab Report* 7 (August 30):2; INA, July 15, 1976, quoting the Beirut leftist paper *as-Safir*; Beirut radio and INA, July 12, 1976; Voice of Palestine, July 28, 1976; DPA, August 18, 1976 (the latter reporting that Soldatov had informed the Lebanese leftists of Soviet actions against Syria).

<sup>24</sup> Beirut radio, July 31, 1976.

<sup>25</sup> *Izvestiia*, July 6, 1976, for example, published a picture of Khaddam, while on Thursday, July 15, 1976, the paper failed to appear. On the day of this absence an anti-Syrian interview of the PLO representative in Moscow had appeared in most other Soviet papers. When *Izvestiia* returned on July 16, 1976, it carried no mention of this statement, speaking, rather, of Syrian-Palestinian efforts for a settlement. For details see Kass, "The Lebanon Civil War," p. 48.

Egypt had been recently lost<sup>26</sup>—than by the PLO, whether in the Arab-Israeli context or in the broader Soviet-U.S. context. Indeed, Syria's attempt to establish a north-eastern Arab bloc consisting of Syria, Jordan, the PLO and, apparently, Lebanon, had been positively received by Moscow, offering, as it did, an alternative to the pro-U.S. Egyptian-Saudi Arabian camp. Even the implied control over the PLO was not totally unwelcome if it promised a moderation of the organization on the issues of statehood, Geneva, and the like.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, Syria would clearly be the winner in any direct contest with the militarily weak, internally divided PLO, while Syrian power, not PLO obstinacy, could bring an end to the Lebanese conflict. From almost any point of view it would have been logical for the Soviets to rely on and maintain their Syrian ally rather than risk alienating Damascus at a time when Egypt and Saudi Arabia were trying to woo it away from Moscow. Moreover, there was nothing in the Soviet-PLO relationship to suggest that the Soviet Union saw this group as a more important, effective, or dependable ally than Syria.

It might be argued that the Soviets opted for the PLO because of ideological considerations, unwilling to let down, or appear to be letting down, a national liberation movement, especially one aligned with clearly leftist forces. Yet, such considerations, at least in the past, had not usually been sufficient to outweigh the benefits to be reaped from favoring a state such as Syria, especially in view of all the problems Moscow had with the PLO's internal situation and conflicting ideologies. Perhaps more probably it could be argued that Moscow had its eye on the more radical Arab states such as Libya and Iraq, both of which had long opposed the Syrian move into Lebanon. But this option posed problems for Soviet aspirations in the Arab-Israeli context inasmuch as these "Rejection Front" states opposed Moscow's position favoring a negotiated Arab-Israeli settlement, the Geneva conference, and so forth. This is not to say that the Soviet Union did not hope to gain some points with these states by its anti-Syrian position, but it is unlikely that Moscow saw such a trade-off as a wholly fruitful one on a long-term basis. The explanation for the Soviet choice may well be that this was not so much a

---

<sup>26</sup> Egypt abrogated its friendship treaty with the USSR in March 1976 and closed facilities for the Soviet navy.

<sup>27</sup> See the respective chapters regarding these issues. Moscow had supported Syria's 1975 plan for a joint command with the PLO and Syria's alignment with Jordan.

decision designed to favor the Palestinians as, rather, one to oppose the Syrians. At stake, from Moscow's point of view, was Syria's increasingly blatant independence of decision making.<sup>28</sup> While Assad had long guarded his independence from Moscow, Syria's total disregard for Soviet reservations about events in Lebanon, and especially the plight of the Lebanese left, even to the point of launching the invasion just as Kosygin was due to arrive in Damascus, may have stretched Soviet tolerance too far. What made this particular sample of Syrian independence dangerous to Moscow was the implied, possibly even explicit, factor of Syrian-U.S. collusion.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, any hopes that Syrian involvement in Lebanon would bring a swift halt to the crisis and its negative tendencies were dashed by the failure of the Syrian invasion. Thus, Moscow's patience during the first days of the invasion finally gave way to open Soviet criticism and a serious strain in Soviet-Syrian relations.

The Soviets did, however, avoid an actual split with Damascus, restraining their criticism at least by limiting it to the media, TASS, and nongovernment spokesmen. More important, and quite logical, in view of the difficulties created by the PLO-Syrian polarization that had occurred, was Moscow's continued support for efforts for a Lebanese solution—even a compromise solution. Thus, at the end of July 1976, the Soviet attitude toward PLO-Syrian talks was positive, and Moscow continued to encourage the PLO to accept a settlement with Syria even when such a settlement came under Saudi Arabian sponsorship in the fall of 1976. To some degree it was this position that caused certain difficulties between Moscow and the PLO, as we shall see below, but in fact, the Palestinians had a number of complaints to put to the Soviets in the Lebanese context, complaints that probably resulted from the fact that the Soviet position

---

<sup>28</sup> The Syrians themselves interpreted it this way—see Assad interview in *Events* (London) (October 1976), cited in Galia Golan and Iramar Rabinowitz, "The Soviet Union and Syria" in Yaacov Ro'i, ed., *The Limits to Power: The Soviet Union and the Middle East* (London: Croom-Helm, 1979), p. 226. For history of Syrian independence vis-à-vis Moscow, see Golan, "The Soviet Union and Syria since 1973."

<sup>29</sup> The Soviets may have been concerned that such collusion had already taken place, for example, by means of U.S. mediation to prevent an Israeli response to Syria's moves in Lebanon. Kissinger had even called Syria's position on Lebanon "constructive," while the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury visited Damascus in March 1976, and in June 1976 the U.S. Senate approved the sale of American transport planes to Syria.

had been prompted more by concern over Syria's independence and future orientation than by the Palestinians' actual plight.

## PROBLEMS WITH THE PALESTINIANS

As already pointed out, the Palestinians were concerned about continued Soviet support for the first Syrian intervention inasmuch as the Syrians were already operating against PLO units during the spring of 1976. However, it was not just the attitude toward the Syrians that was of concern to the PLO—or at least part of the PLO. One of Fatah's leaders, Abu Iyyad, was also worried about Moscow's desire for a swift settlement and a return to the status quo. The PLO itself was divided over the issue of joining the leftists for a continued battle in Lebanon. A later Soviet commentary was to commend Fatah for "correctly" deciding to "stand aside from this conflict" and conserve its efforts for the Arab-Israeli front,<sup>30</sup> but it was just this position that led Abu Iyyad to complain that in "the first phase [of the Lebanese crisis] the Soviets did not understand what was going on in Lebanon, or they did not know what they wanted."<sup>31</sup> The complexity of Moscow's own dilemma was demonstrated by the fact that Hawatmeh agreed with Abu Iyyad—and Habash—about the necessity of fighting, even complaining to Moscow that only the Communists and his PDFLP were fighting, the Fatah having opted out.<sup>32</sup>

The launching of the second Syrian intervention just as Kosygin was visiting Damascus did not help matters. In fact, this "coincidence" gave the PLO the impression that Moscow had at the very least condoned the Syrian decision. A moderate Palestinian account explained as follows:

The departure of Soviet Prime Minister Kosygin from Damascus in early June 1976 coincided with the Syrian military intervention in favour of the isolationists in Lebanon. The timing of this Syrian

---

<sup>30</sup> Moscow T.V., July 24, 1976.

<sup>31</sup> Farouq M., "Palestine and the Soviet Union," p. 41, quoting Abu Iyyad interview.

<sup>32</sup> *An-Nahar Arab Report* 7 (February 2, 1976):3. For differences within the PLO during this period, see Hudson, "The Palestinian Factor," pp. 268-69.

initiative led to a great deal of confusion in Palestinian-Soviet relations.<sup>33</sup>

According to this account, the PLO asked Moscow for a "clear stand" regarding the invasion, and the Soviets implicitly admitted having supported the launching of the invasion because they had been "misled by the Syrian statements concerning the situation in Lebanon." The Soviets claimed to have changed their mind once they realized that the Syrians were actually trying to destroy the Palestinian movement.<sup>34</sup> The Palestinians apparently were skeptical of this argument, for they pointed out that Moscow's position had been taken even as the Syrians were participating in battles against the Palestinians.<sup>35</sup> Abu Iyyad was quoted in Cairo as having accused the Soviets of actually giving the order for the Syrian invasion, although a perhaps less biased Beirut account quoted Abu Iyyad as having said: "The Syrians have intervened at the orders of a foreign party and they will not withdraw unless they receive an order from abroad."<sup>36</sup> Inasmuch as this comment was in the context of criticism of the Soviet Union, the Egyptian interpretation may have been justified. In any case, it was clearly stated by the Palestinians that a strain in their relations with Moscow had occurred, and the PLO did ask the Soviets for clarification of their position regarding the invasion.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, this request reportedly was made through the intervention of the Libyans,<sup>38</sup> which in itself would indicate something of a breakdown in Soviet-PLO relations.<sup>39</sup> Moscow's response was the Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee's statement reported in *Pravda* on July 10, 1976, and, presumably, the Brezhnev letter sent to Assad on July 11 and shown to Arafat on July 12.

---

<sup>33</sup> Farouq M., "Palestine and the Soviet Union," p. 40.

<sup>34</sup> A Syrian source reportedly said much later that Kosygin was persuaded to support the move, and, therefore, Syria was surprised when Moscow subsequently became critical—*al-Akhbar* (Amman), March 15, 1977. According to Egyptian sources the Soviets became angry because of the timing of the invasion, just as Kosygin was to arrive, and because Kosygin was given a false account of the size and purpose of the invasion force—*Ruz al-Yusuf*, July 26, 1976.

<sup>35</sup> Farouq M., "Palestine and the Soviet Union," p. 40.

<sup>36</sup> Beirut radio, September 26, 1976; MENA, September 27, 1976, quoting *al-Akhbar* (Cairo).

<sup>37</sup> Qaddumi spoke of this strain on Beirut radio, August 11, 1976; INA and Cairo radio, July 8, 1976 (on request for clarification).

<sup>38</sup> INA and Cairo radio, July 8, 1976.

<sup>39</sup> *Free Palestine* 9 (August 1976):6.

The Soviet response was not sufficient from the Palestinians' point of view, as they themselves later stated,<sup>40</sup> and their recriminations continued with regard to a number of issues. A critical issue was Moscow's failure to come to the Palestinians' assistance militarily. A request for such direct intervention was carried in a Palestinian statement issued on June 12, 1976.<sup>41</sup> While they were willing to send food and medicine, the Soviets do not appear to have been willing to send arms, and they most definitely were not willing to intervene directly, themselves.<sup>42</sup> There were reports, denied by Moscow, that the Soviets were trying to land arms for the Palestinians.<sup>43</sup> And the Soviet Mediterranean squadron was augmented in early June 1976 by an addition of twenty ships, including intelligence gathering equipment, which the Palestinians claimed the Soviets would operate for their benefit.<sup>44</sup> But, in fact, the Palestinians complained that the Soviets were not willing to break the Israeli blockade of Lebanese ports and sail in weapons—their own or others'—under the Soviet flag.<sup>45</sup> Nor did at least certain people in the PLO feel that Moscow had "given us all the assistance it could have done."<sup>46</sup> Presumably Moscow considered it sufficient that it was willing to jeopardize its relations with Damascus, ostensibly on behalf of the Palestinians. More to the point, the Soviets were most unlikely to take the risks involved in direct intervention, particularly with the Israeli and U.S. fleets hovering near Lebanon.

Even in the sphere of Soviet-Syrian relations, however, Moscow was criticized for its moderation. Abu Iyyad, on various occasions,

---

<sup>40</sup> Farouq M., "Palestine and the Soviet Union," pp. 40-41.

<sup>41</sup> *Arab Report and Record* (June 1-15, 1976):367.

<sup>42</sup> The Soviet answer, offering to send food and medicine, was reported by the Voice of Palestine and Beirut radio, June 19, 1976.

<sup>43</sup> TASS, July 16, 1976, denial.

<sup>44</sup> According to *Al-Sharak al-Jedid* (London), April 15, 1978, the Soviets promised Arafat the materials gathered (on Israeli communications) by its intelligence ship located off the Lebanese shores. Such a ship was normally located off the Israeli coast. See Robert Weinland, "Superpower Naval Diplomacy in the October 1973 Arab-Israeli War" (Center for Naval Analyses, 1978), p. 49.

<sup>45</sup> Farouq M., "Palestine and the Soviet Union," p. 42, quoting Abu Iyyad and later Abu Iyyad complaint carried in *New York Times*, August 17, 1976. Beirut radio, August 19, 1976, referred to a PLO request to Soldatov for Soviet flag protection for arms coming into Lebanese ports. The PLO journal *Palestine!* II (February 1977) carried similar criticism, voiced by a member of a Lebanese splinter Communist group; see Fawaz Trabulski, "Lebanese Leftist Assesses War Results," p. 11.

<sup>46</sup> Beirut radio, September 26, 1976 (Abu Iyyad).



argued that the Soviets could have brought more pressure to bear on Syria, or on the United States.<sup>47</sup> There were signs that not only Abu Iyyad, important as he was in the Fatah-PLO lineup, shared this critical opinion regarding the Soviet position. Another PLO official, on the occasion of a visit to Moscow at the end of July 1976, was reported to have "stressed the need to exert pressure on Syria to withdraw its troops from Lebanon."<sup>48</sup> Indeed, it was probably in response to these critical views that Hawatmeh and Qaddumi both stated that the Soviets had in fact adopted a clear position regarding Syria.<sup>49</sup> Qaddumi's statement, however, was revealing, for he said: "The Soviet Union has made great efforts at all levels to check the deterioration in Soviet-Palestinian relations. Moscow has taken up a firm position towards the withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon and in regard to the consolidation of the cease-fire. *This is the maximum the Soviet Union can do regarding a problem such as ours.*"<sup>50</sup>

Moscow had in fact called for the withdrawal of the Syrian troops, but it did this only semiofficially, through the Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee or through newspaper commentaries and reports, rather than public, official policy statements or leadership pronouncements. The Lebanese Communist Party was authorized to make such demands and was even quoted by the Soviets as having made them.<sup>51</sup> Further, Brezhnev's July 11, 1976, message to Assad reportedly called for Syrian withdrawal.<sup>52</sup> Nonetheless, Abu Iyyad and others did not fail to notice that, for all its support, Moscow was still hesitant to risk a total break with Syria. Soviet manipulation of arms deliveries to Syria, as serious a move as it was, still did not satisfy the Palestinians as "sufficient" pressure. Part of the reason for this

---

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. and Farouq M., "Palestine and the Soviet Union," p. 41, quoting Abu Iyyad.

<sup>48</sup> INA, July 29, 1976 (Majid Abu-Sharer, Palestinian Unified Information Chief). See also *Palestine!* II (February 1977), for another. Similar criticism was also expressed by Lebanese leftist leader Kamal Jumblatt, who reportedly asked the Soviets to begin a campaign for volunteers in Cuba and the Soviet bloc countries and said that Moscow *did* promise arms—see Beirut radio, August 11, 1976.

<sup>49</sup> Beirut radio, September 27, 1976 (Hawatmeh).

<sup>50</sup> Beirut radio, August 8, 1976 [emphasis the author's]. Qaddumi's praise was repeated, later, in *Pravda*, September 12, 1976.

<sup>51</sup> TASS international service in Russian, August 13, 1976; Moscow radio in Arabic, August 19, 1976, though *not* contained in the *Pravda* account, August 15, 1976.

<sup>52</sup> Voice of Palestine (Algiers), July 28, 1976.

attitude on the part of some Palestinians was the Soviet position regarding negotiations for a cease-fire, specifically with regard to the agreement reached at the end of July 1976, but also later. The PLO, as well as the Lebanese left, were sorely split over the July talks, Fatah's own Abu Iyyad being one of those opposed to the agreement that emerged.<sup>53</sup> The Soviet response to this accord was positive, if cautious.<sup>54</sup> Indeed, Soviet propaganda regarding the need for an agreement and in response to the agreement itself suggested that Moscow may well have pressed the PLO to reach the accord with Syria. Soviet mediation was even suggested by the dispatch of Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister S. P. Kozyrev to Damascus, where he met with the PLO negotiator, Qaddumi, at the beginning of the talks.<sup>55</sup> For all its own criticism of Syria, Moscow's original aim of bringing the Lebanese crisis to an end could only have been intensified by the uncomfortable PLO-Syrian polarization that had occurred. That the Soviets had been pressing the PLO to negotiate with Damascus was indicated by Abu Iyyad's criticism, once again. Calling for Soviet flag protection to break the sea blockade, he reportedly said:

What have you given us? We do not want you to tell us to reach an understanding with the Syrians. You have lost many of your positions in the Arab world because you did not understand the conspiracy.<sup>56</sup>

This difference of opinion could be seen from the Soviet side as well. As early as June 8, 1976, just a week after the Syrian invasion and even as Moscow was shifting to open criticism of Damascus, Moscow radio spoke of "extremist groups" among the Palestinians. The epithet "extremist," in this context, could only mean those opposed to a settlement of the crisis. *Prauda's* commentator Pavel

---

<sup>53</sup> There was even a dispute between Qaddumi, who negotiated the agreement on behalf of the PLO, and Arafat, because the agreement contained a clause condemning the Israeli-Egyptian Interim Sinai Accord, a clause opposed by Arafat because of his anti-Syrian-spawned rapprochement with Egypt. See Alain Cass, "What Lessons From Lebanon," *Middle East International* (September 1976):9. See also Hudson, "The Palestinian Factor," pp. 273-78.

<sup>54</sup> See, for example, TASS international service in Russian, August 8, 1976; *Prauda*, August 4, 1976—though the latter did cite Arab reservations over the absence of a call for Syrian withdrawal.

<sup>55</sup> *Voice of Palestine*, July 24, 1976. The Soviet media made no mention of Kozyrev's visit at all—Kass, "The Lebanon Civil War," p. 50.

<sup>56</sup> *New York Times*, August 17, 1976.

Demchenko was to express similar criticism somewhat more indirectly when he accused the "imperialists" and "Zionists," that is, those who wanted prolongation of the crisis, of exploiting the "lack of unity and multiformity of Lebanese political forces" and "differences within the Palestinian movement."<sup>57</sup> This was the thrust of a commentary that appeared in the Soviet journal *Sotsialisticheskaya industriia* as well.<sup>58</sup>

That the differences between Moscow and the PLO on the issue of negotiations continued after the breakdown of the July cease-fire was indicated by criticism that appeared in an authoritative *Pravda* "Observer" commentary September 8, 1976. This time the criticism was quite direct and explicit, even if coupled with condemnation of the Syrians as well. Calling for a political solution based on a "reasonable compromise," *Pravda* criticized "attempts to reject out of hand any peaceful proposals, in the way that some leftist elements do within the Palestine resistance and the patriotic forces' front." Perceived by many Arabs as a sudden but definite shift in the Soviet position regarding the various contingents in Lebanon, this criticism aroused much attention in the Arab press. A Beirut radio review of the press referred to the "Soviet surprise" switch to a pro-Syrian attitude based on accusations that it was the Palestinians who were obstructing a settlement.<sup>59</sup> According to this round-up, the Soviet comment was seen as a "*coup de grace*" from Moscow that would force the Palestinians to surrender politically and peacefully, quitting the Lebanese crisis. Soviet motivation was attributed to Moscow's concern lest it lose its only remaining friend in the region, Syria.<sup>60</sup> The Arab media response claimed that there was a link between the recall to Moscow of Soviet ambassador Soldatov and the new Soviet position. Soldatov purportedly was to be replaced because of his extremism and lack of flexibility—presumably meaning his pro-Palestinian position. The media, as reported by Beirut radio, saw as proof of this claim the fact that Moscow published the formal note that had been sent by the Lebanese government protesting Soviet support for "one of the parties to the dispute," read, the Palestinians. It might be argued, however, that any Soviet publication

---

<sup>57</sup> Moscow radio, June 23, 1976.

<sup>58</sup> *Sotsialisticheskaya industriia*, June 29, 1976, p. 3, carried by FBIS/Soviet Union, July 2, 1976, F.1.

<sup>59</sup> Beirut radio, September 10, 1976.

<sup>60</sup> This was the line taken also by Egyptian comments on the *Pravda* article; see, for example, Cairo radio, September 12, 1976.

of such a protest was probably intended as proof that Moscow was doing a great deal for the Palestinians rather than an admission of "guilt" designed to pave the way for a shift in policy, as claimed by Beirut radio. The Egyptian media did not go so far as to claim that Soldatov was recalled because he had been pro-Palestinian but rather simply as a move to place some distance between the Soviet Union and the crisis in Lebanon altogether.<sup>61</sup> Whatever the purported reasons, Soldatov's recall was perceived as part of an anti-Palestinian policy, even though, as it turned out, his absence from Lebanon was only temporary.

The Palestinians, according to their own accounts, were "confused and astonished" by *Pravda's* criticism.<sup>62</sup> Abu Iyyad, one of those obviously intended by the Soviet criticism, responded on numerous occasions, saying "If defending the Palestine Revolution and opposing Syrian intervention in Lebanon is considered to be extremism, then we are extremists. Frankly, I did not understand the *Pravda* article. In fact, by talking about extremists the article served the isolationists' interests."<sup>63</sup> It may well have been in response to this article—as the climax to the various complaints that the PLO had regarding the Soviets' Lebanese policy—that Qaddumi journeyed to Moscow on September 16, 1976. The Soviets, too, had reasons to discuss these differences with the PLO at a higher level, for they may well have intended the visit as a further effort to pressure the Palestinians to try again for a cease-fire and a compromise, particularly in view of the serious deterioration in the PLO's strength since the breakdown of the July 29 agreement. Why Qaddumi rather than Arafat went for these talks with Gromyko is almost a moot question. Any number of reasons may have accounted for Arafat's failure to visit Moscow during this period of crisis in Lebanon, but the choice of Qaddumi at a time when Syria and various Palestinian contingents were demanding Arafat's replacement could conceivably have been

---

<sup>61</sup> Cairo radio, September 12, 1976.

<sup>62</sup> Farouq M., "Palestine and the Soviet Union," p. 41. The Lebanese leftists reportedly sent a delegation to the Soviet Embassy in Beirut asking whether a change had occurred in Moscow's policy. See *New York Times*, September 10, 1976.

<sup>63</sup> Beirut radio, September 26, 1976, quoting Abu Iyyad interview to *Monday Morning* (Beirut), September 26, 1976. See also Abu Iyyad criticism, *Monday Morning*, October 27, 1976, and *Palestine* 2 (November 15, 1976) and 3 (January 1977).

construed as a gesture in the direction of Syria. It has been claimed, however, that Arafat himself had refused to go to Moscow throughout the period of hostilities in protest at the lack of sufficient Soviet assistance.<sup>64</sup> In any case, Moscow's preference for negotiations was the dominant line in the communiqué issued at the close of Qaddumi's brief visit. Reporting on Qaddumi's meeting with Gromyko, the announcement "stressed the need for a very rapid cease-fire" in Lebanon, adding that it is "important that the Arab progressive forces, and particularly those involved in the Lebanese events, find ways towards mutual cooperation and by joint efforts achieve a normalization of the situation in Lebanon."<sup>65</sup> In deference to the PLO, the statement also warned against the use of negotiations as a cover for moves against the Palestinians, but the weight of Moscow's advice continued to be on the side of compromise. That this was the case was suggested by the fact that much of the above criticism expressed by Abu Iyyad was issued after the Qaddumi visit. Moreover, the Soviets were even to publish, without comment, Syrian criticism of "certain Palestinian leaders," contained in a speech by Assad at the end of September 1976.<sup>66</sup> This occurred during a brief Soviet-Syrian interlude, but Soviet-PLO relations were strained further when the Syrians renewed their military offensive on September 28. Inasmuch as the Soviets had been pressing the PLO to proclaim a cease-fire, which they had on September 24, 1976, there were those such as Abu Iyyad who could once again blame the Soviets for deception.<sup>67</sup> Moscow itself never openly answered the Palestinian accusations, but it indirectly acknowledged them by denying what it reported as Egyptian claims that the Soviet Union was supporting Syrian intervention in Lebanon.<sup>68</sup> With the imminent possibility of the PLO's collapse but also in the face of PLO declarations of resolve to continue the military battle, Moscow was reported to be trying to mediate a solution.<sup>69</sup> The Soviet chargé d'affaires in Beirut was reported to be holding numerous talks not only with Arafat but with

---

<sup>64</sup> Smolansky, "Soviet Policy," p. 38.

<sup>65</sup> *Pravda and Izvestiia*, September 18, 1976.

<sup>66</sup> *Pravda*, September 27, 1976.

<sup>67</sup> Kass, "The Lebanon Civil War," pp. 54-55.

<sup>68</sup> Moscow radio in Arabic, October 5, 1976.

<sup>69</sup> MENA, September 28, 1976. PLO statements to continue the battle; Beirut radio, September 30 and October 1, 1976; Voice of Palestine, September 28, 29, 1976.

newly elected Lebanese President Sarkiss.<sup>70</sup> One report claimed that the Soviets had actually presented a peace plan to Sarkiss, but Moscow denied proposing anything quite so specific.<sup>71</sup>

Although Moscow continued to criticize the Syrians for their actions in Lebanon,<sup>72</sup> Soviet pressure on the Palestinians to agree to a settlement was maintained even as Saudi Arabia moved into the center of renewed cease-fire efforts in October 1976. For all that a Saudi-sponsored agreement, which also precipitated a Syrian-Egyptian rapprochement, might have been perceived as anathema to Moscow, the Soviets did not in fact attack the Riyadh agreement of October 1976. In fact, despite the opposition of their radical allies, Iraq and Libya, as well as certain rejectionist Palestinians, Moscow expressed moderate support for the new accord.<sup>73</sup> The Palestinians were to explain this as part of the Soviets' preference for their own interests over and above the specific cause of the Palestinians. This was the interpretation offered by Fatah's paper in London, which editorialized as follows:<sup>74</sup> The Riyadh agreement might well bring peace in Lebanon and Arab unity, although Syria's goal remained control over Lebanon. Both Moscow and Washington were concerned that a further delay in the reconvening of the Geneva conference might increase the possibility of a new Arab-Israeli war. Therefore, according to the editorial, somewhere around October 2, 1976, that is, approximately at the time of a new Soviet appeal for the reconvening of Geneva, the solution of the Lebanese crisis became linked with the search for a Middle East settlement and the reconvening of Geneva. While it is true that the October 1, 1976, Soviet proposal for a Middle East settlement and the Geneva conference did link these with Lebanon by stating, as Moscow had on numerous occasions, that the latter crisis was due to the continuation of the Arab-Israeli conflict—read, the continued plight of the Palestinians—the Fatah paper, interpreted this, via the Riyadh agreement supported by the

---

<sup>70</sup> *Arab Report and Record* (September 16-30, 1976):484, and (October 1-15, 1976):601.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> See, for example, Soviet AASC statement, September 30, 1976; *Pravda*, October 18, 1976; Brezhnev speech, TASS, October 25, 1976. According to the *New York Times*, October 2, 1976, Brezhnev sent Assad another letter calling for Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon.

<sup>73</sup> See even Brezhnev's speech of October 25, 1976, which expressed some skepticism but general support—TASS, October 25, 1976.

<sup>74</sup> *Free Palestine* 9 (November 1976):2.

superpowers, to mean that the Palestinians could remain in southern Lebanon but only under conditions of Syrian pressure to attend Geneva—something the PLO was not at all decided upon. The Fatah paper appeared to blame the Soviets, saying: “The Palestinians were faced with an unpleasant choice. With the Soviet Union and others linking the Lebanese conflict to the Middle East crisis, it became obvious that the PLO, under heavy pressure, was being put before a choice: to accept a Middle East settlement with Israel which would involve conditions hitherto unacceptable to the Palestinian leadership, or to face the consequences in Lebanon.” It was Abu Iyyad who rejected this reasoning on the grounds that the Geneva conference was not imminent, that *Israel* would not agree to PLO participation in any case, and that nothing had in fact been agreed at Riyadh regarding Geneva, although the Fatah editorial had said only that Riyadh was based on such an implied agreement. Expressed in other terms, Fatah reasoning perceived the Soviet Union as the initiator of pressures upon the PLO to accept the fact that it was doomed to destruction in Lebanon, especially since no Soviet aid could be expected, and that, therefore, it would be better to compromise even if this compromise meant a dependence upon Syria for logistic and other support in southern Lebanon, a dependence that would open the Palestinians to pressures to attend the Geneva conference, which in any case was what the Soviets wanted. While all of this may appear to be somewhat convoluted reasoning, it was symptomatic of the suspicions with which even Fatah regarded the Soviet Union, in the Lebanese context as well as in other contexts.

A certain linkage did exist, however, between Soviet policy toward the PLO in the Lebanese conflict and the PLO in the Arab-Israeli context. Aside from the Soviet considerations regarding Syria discussed above, the Soviets did see prolongation of the Lebanese crisis as beneficial to Israel and an obstacle to the reconvening of Geneva, now proposed by the Soviets to occur in November 1976. This was particularly the case insofar as the Palestinians were in fact being badly hit. Unwilling to risk—politically or militarily—the types of assistance demanded by the Palestinians, Moscow seemed to compensate for its “inactivity” in the Lebanese context by means of stronger support for the PLO in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Thus, it was during this period that Moscow stepped up its support for the Palestinians on issues such as statehood and participation in Geneva. This was especially apparent in Soviet propaganda, but it was also reflected, for example, in the above-mentioned October 1, 1976, Soviet statement, Fatah interpretations notwithstanding. Yet this linkage

remained tactical; it did not reach the level of basic policies or precipitate any essential changes in the Soviet position regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict. It has also been suggested that another form of "compensation" for Soviet inactivity in Lebanon was the June 1976 opening—after a few years' delay—of a PLO office in Moscow.<sup>75</sup> The timing of this move, however, was more probably a gesture in the direction of the Palestinians that was meant to coincide with the visit of King Hussein to the Soviet Union.<sup>76</sup>

Still another problem posed for the Soviets in the kaleidoscope of relations occurring in the Lebanese conflict was the apparent disintegration of the PLO as a roof organization. Inasmuch as membership in the PLO was by organization, the serious rifts that occurred between the various Palestinian groups threatened to cripple the parent body altogether. This was by no means a welcomed development in Soviet eyes, as we have seen in the preceding chapter. Not only were the Soviets dismayed about the collapse of one of their few remaining allies, however uncertain and problematic, in the Middle East, but they were also concerned over the difficulties of their own relationship with and possible control over this more amorphous body. Such concern was particularly warranted by the fact the the ever-changing alliances and splits within the PLO over Lebanon-connected issues appeared to be strengthening the Rejectionists within that group. As we have already seen, the Soviets did occasionally refer to these internal PLO problems, even criticizing this lack of unity regarding the Lebanese conflict. Moreover, Soviet reporting of Lebanese events in 1976 tended increasingly (but not totally) to refrain from using the term PLO, reverting on most occasions to the once generally used term "Palestine Resistance Movement." While this may have been an indication of Moscow's recognition of the functional weakening of the PLO, it was also indicative of a Soviet effort to avoid whatever negative effects might accrue to the PLO's image as a result of the Palestinian issue in Lebanon. Thus, the "PLO" was not to be ignored or forgotten in the Arab-Israeli context; here the PLO was to be seen as a reasonable, stable political unit with which one must negotiate. In the Lebanese context Palestinian refugees were merely struggling to maintain their exis-

---

<sup>75</sup> See Kass, "The Lebanon Civil War," p. 45, and Freedman, "The Soviet Union," p. 28.

<sup>76</sup> See Chapter Two.



tence—their success or failure, weakness or strength was not to reflect in any way upon the legitimacy of their demands vis-à-vis Israel. Moreover, any analogy—such as that expressed by many Israelis—of the Palestinians' "coexistence" with Christians in Lebanon and the possibility of Palestinian-Israeli or Palestinian-Jewish coexistence was to be avoided or condemned.<sup>77</sup>

The actual state of affairs within the PLO could not be entirely ignored, however. Thus, it was in the Lebanese context that references became more frequent in Soviet literature to the links between various PLO member organizations and specific Arab states.<sup>78</sup> Nonetheless, the Sa'iqa attempt to take over the PLO was not reported, just as the actual fighting that occurred between PLO factions, resulting in the almost total destruction of Sa'iqa, for example, was only rarely mentioned. Nor was there any mention of the internal PLO arguments and splitting of some of the organizations over the issue of Syria or the problem of continuing to fight. Instead, the Soviets sought to portray the new problems within the PLO as those of small splinter groups opposed to the large, more powerful and stable groups such as Fatah, Sa'iqa, and the PDFLP. This effort was motivated not only by the desire to present a positive picture of a more-or-less unified movement but also the wish to refrain from revealing the opposition of some of these groups to the policies proposed by Moscow, such as, for example, the PDFLP's opposition to Fatah's cease-fire attempts at various stages of the war. Still more difficult for Moscow to handle, and, therefore, generally ignored by the Soviet media, were the changing alliances between Arafat's Fatah, Hawatmeh's PDFLP, and Habash's PFLP vis-à-vis Syria and the issue of continuing the battle. How was Moscow to cope, for example, with the PDFLP-PFLP alliance against Fatah when the last avoided battle in early 1976, or the PDFLP shift to Syria and Sa'iqa in the spring, or the Fatah-PFLP alliance against Syria just prior to and particularly after the second Syrian intervention, or the PFLP opposition to the PDFLP-Fatah agreement to the July 1976 cease-fire agreement with Syria, to say nothing of the Iraqi-favored Arab Liberation Front's opposition to any cease-fire and the splitting of the PFLP-General Command into pro-Syrian and pro-Iraqi groups with the latter

---

<sup>77</sup> *Krasnaya zvezda*, June 16, 1976.

<sup>78</sup> See, for example, Victor Bukharkov, "The Palestine Movement Shapes Its Course," *New Times* (December 1976):26-27. See Chapter Four.

committed to fighting at a time when rapprochement with Syria was advocated by Moscow and accepted by Fatah.<sup>79</sup> Indeed, one of the Soviets' reasons for seeking an end to the Lebanese war was this impossible fragmentation of the PLO. It was probably with a sigh of relief that *Pravda* reported in December 1976 that the PLO was finally able to hold a Central Council meeting that was attended by "almost all the Palestinian organizations (38 of the Council's 42 members)," even though this event by no means marked the end of the PLO infighting.<sup>80</sup>

While the media avoided specifics, Soviet policy itself remained loyal to Fatah, for, whatever its fortunes, this organization was the strongest member of the PLO. Nor did the Soviets have any interest in a Sa'iqa or PFLP takeover of the organization, given Sa'iqa ties to Syria and the PFLP's Rejectionist position. At most, the Soviets may have repaired their relations with Habash following the March 1976 Arafat-Habash rapprochement, although many problems remained between them.<sup>81</sup> A dilemma may have arisen for the Soviets regarding Fatah itself because of (1) the differences of opinion erupting within that organization, such as Abu Iyyad's "radical" position; (2) Syrian pressures for the replacement of Arafat as Fatah—and, therefore, PLO—leader; and (3) the Fatah-Egyptian bond that developed against Syria. As noted in the previous chapter, there were indeed periods during the Lebanese war during which Soviet media singled out Qaddumi to the exclusion of Arafat, and it was Qaddumi rather than Arafat who visited the Soviet Union in 1976.<sup>82</sup> There were also Soviet warnings against the rise of "reactionary" influence within the PLO prompted perhaps by Arafat's relationship with Egypt and the growing dependence upon Saudi Arabia as the Lebanese fighting weakened the Palestinians.<sup>83</sup> Yet there were no other signs that the Soviet Union preferred anyone, within Fatah, to Arafat or even sought to dabble in Fatah's internal struggles.

---

<sup>79</sup> The ins and outs of these alliances are discussed in *An Nahar Arab Report* 7 (February 2, 1976), (March 29, 1976), (April 12, 1976), and *Free Palestine and The Middle East* (November 1976).

<sup>80</sup> *Pravda*, December 22, 1976. See also Bukharkov, "The Palestine Movement."

<sup>81</sup> See Chapter Four. Soviet references to PFLP, *Pravda*, and *Krasnaya zvezda*, April 7, 1976.

<sup>82</sup> Though it was Qaddumi, rather than Arafat, who led the delegation to China in 1976.

<sup>83</sup> See, for example, *Les Communistes et la Question Palestinienne*, Central Committee of the Jordanian Communist Party and the Directing Committee of the Palestinian Communist Organization in Transjordan, March 1, 1977, p. 15.

## POST-CIVIL WAR

The Soviet-PLO relationship within the Lebanese context was to be greatly relieved once the October 1976 cease-fire took effect. While sporadic fighting did break out and the Soviets continued their criticism of the Syrians for a few months,<sup>84</sup> the emerging PLO-Syrian *modus vivendi* paved the way for Soviet fence-mending efforts with Damascus. With the increasing cooperation between Syria and the PLO, in which Fatah aided Sa'iqa forces against pro-Iraqi Palestinian groups that continued to fight in Lebanon, Moscow could more easily revert to its former championing of the Palestinians against Israeli incursions and Israeli plots. In 1977 there were minor crises between the Syrians and the PLO, first over the disarming of the latter and then over the degree to which the Syrians might assist the Palestinians against Israel, by stationing Syrian troops in southern Lebanon, for example. The Soviets did not appear to become particularly involved in these issues, however. Rather, despite the expression of some disagreement with Syria over Lebanon during Assad's April 1977 Moscow visit, they seemed gradually to accept the fact of Syrian control over Lebanon and heightened influence over the PLO.<sup>85</sup> This was probably because the PLO had, in fact, been defeated, though not destroyed, by Syria, further Syrian-Soviet animosity therefore being futile as well as counterproductive to Soviet efforts to combat U.S. inroads into the area in 1977.<sup>86</sup>

---

<sup>84</sup> See, for example, the above mentioned Brezhnev letter to Assad in the autumn of 1976, and his October 25, 1976, speech, or the Soviet AASC statement October 1, 1976. The Iraqi Communist Party condemned the Syrians in February 1977—INA, February 22, 1977. Syria responded with threats to deny the Soviets access to Tartus port facilities—*Arab Report and Record*, March 1-15, 1977, and *Voice of Arab Syria* (clandestine), March 5, 1977, which also said Syria had sent a large number of Soviet advisers home. See also AP, March 3, 1977, and MIS 4 (January 1-15, 1977), p. 147.

<sup>85</sup> See *BULLETIN: The Soviet Union and the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Jerusalem) II:8, 10 (1977). Post-civil war commentaries continued, nonetheless, to depict the 1976 Syrian intervention against the PLO as negative: Y. Primakov, "The Middle East Crisis in 1976," in *Mezhdunarodnyi ezhegodnik: politika i ekonomika, Vypusk 1976* [International Yearbook: Economy and Politics, 1976 edition] (Moscow: Political Literature Publishers, 1976), p. 229; E. D. Prylin, "The Palestinian National Liberation Movement and a Middle East Settlement," *Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo* (October 1977):101.

<sup>86</sup> For post-1976 Soviet-Syrian relations see Smolansky, "Soviet Policy," Rothenberg, "Recent Soviet Relations," and Robert Rand, "Assad in Moscow," RFE-RL, RL 217/78, October 5, 1978.

On a propaganda level Moscow hailed the PLO-Syrian rapprochement, ignoring the lingering resistance within the PLO toward Syria and exaggerating the renewed solidarity.<sup>87</sup> It is difficult to determine whether this outward enthusiasm was prompted by the Soviet desire to paint a rosy picture of Arab unity on the part of those Arab forces friendly to Moscow, or, indeed, indicated a degree of Soviet sanguinity toward the PLO's weakened position vis-à-vis Syria. There were signs, in late 1977 and in 1978, that the Soviets sought to strengthen the PLO, be it as an effort to help the organization assert its independence from Syria or an effort to gain *Soviet* influence over the weakened Palestinian movement. Thus, there were reports in early 1978 that Moscow had promised both the PLO and Syria effective Soviet protection in the case of an Israeli military attack on either of them in Lebanon.<sup>88</sup> With the March 1978 Israeli move into southern Lebanon it became clear that the Soviets intended no such aid, but, in fact, it would appear that these reports were based on rumors that circulated around the time of Assad's visit to Moscow of such a promise to Syria, alone.<sup>89</sup> On a more practical level, the Soviets were reported to be sending military supplies to the PLO, including heavy weapons and ground-to-air missiles, even prior to the Israeli move but, in even larger quantities, following the action.<sup>90</sup> Moscow was also said to be providing the PLO in Lebanon with intelligence material regarding Israel, gathered by Soviet ships in the Mediterranean.<sup>91</sup> In addition, some 20 to 30 Soviet instructors were said to be working with the PLO in Lebanon, together with East German personnel who were helping in the construction of PLO positions.

---

<sup>87</sup> The Soviet media ignored entirely, for example, the conflict prior to and during the PLO's National Council meeting of March 1977 over the organization's attitude toward Syria and the election of a presumably pro-Syrian PNC Chairman Khalid al-Fahum.

<sup>88</sup> This promise was reportedly given to Boumedienne. See MENA, January 17, 1978; *al-Nahar*, February 26, 1978; MIS 5 (January 16-31, 1978):155, quoting Kuwaiti paper *as-Siyassah*.

<sup>89</sup> *Al-Nahar al-Arabi ve al-Doli*, March 12, 1978; *al-Manar* (London), March 14, 1978. According to QNA (Qatar), March 12, 1978, such a promise had been given Arafat in Moscow that month, but this may have been an Arab propaganda effort meant to deter Israel from retaliating for the terrorist attack on the Tel Aviv road the previous day.

<sup>90</sup> *Arab Report and Record* (March 1-15, 1978):180; MIS 5 (January 1-15, 1978):148; *idem*, 5 (March 1-15, 1978):182.

<sup>91</sup> *Al-Sharak al-Jedid*, April 15, 1978.

And, during the first six months of 1978, there were recurring reports of Cuban advisers assigned to PLO units in Lebanon. This last was explicitly denied by *Pravda*, May 7, 1978, but the rumors persisted nonetheless.<sup>92</sup>

The reported direct and indirect Soviet assistance to the PLO could certainly have been interpreted as evidence of Soviet encouragement of PLO activity in southern Lebanon, even after the placement of UN forces in the area and the restrictions placed on PLO activities by Syria. Yet, this help could just as easily have been compensation for Moscow's reluctance to challenge the Syrians for their failure to come to the aid of the PLO during the Israeli invasion or Syria's restraining policies. Moscow's position was not necessarily a sign of Soviet support for Syrian control of the PLO but, rather, agreement with Syrian policies at this time. The Syrians sought to avoid a war with Israel over southern Lebanon. Thus, they backed down in the 1977 confrontation with Israel over the placement of Syrian troops as far south as Nabatiyeh, and they refrained from military action in response to the Israeli invasion of March 1978. Considering themselves over-extended and weak vis-à-vis Israel, the Syrians opposed actions by the Palestinians that might provoke Israeli retaliation, such as in fact occurred following the PLO terrorist attack on the Tel Aviv highway, precipitating the invasion.<sup>93</sup> Basically, this was the position of the Soviet Union as well, which was concerned that Lebanese events might cause an Israeli-Syrian clash, in which Syria would be defeated, Lebanon divided, and Moscow discredited.<sup>94</sup> Moscow gave expression to this fear indirectly when, in response to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in March 1978, *Pravda* warned that continued Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon could lead to the involvement of other states and set back the cause of Middle East peace.<sup>95</sup> Moreover, Moscow, which was said to have forewarned the Syrians of Israel's intention to move into Lebanon in March 1978,

---

<sup>92</sup> *Events* (May 19, 1978):31; *Al-Nahar*, July 24, 1978; MIS 6 (April 16-30, 1978):15, which said reports untrue.

<sup>93</sup> See Sam Younger, "What Can Syria Do?," *Middle East International* (May 1978):8-10.

<sup>94</sup> See similar argument in "Moscow's View after Lebanon," *Events* (April 21, 1978):17.

<sup>95</sup> *Pravda*, March 19, 1978.

reportedly also urged restraint on Damascus.<sup>96</sup> The Soviets themselves moved their fleet out of the region and were rumored to have temporarily suspended arms shipments to the PLO, avoiding any clash with the Israeli blockade. Indeed, for all its propaganda condemnation of the Israeli move, Moscow's only official response was a relatively restrained TASS statement, rather than a government statement, for example, as had been issued on much less serious occasions such as Israeli incursions into Lebanon in September 1972 or into Jordan in March 1968.<sup>97</sup> Furthermore, Moscow did not oppose the stationing of UN forces (UNIFIL) in southern Lebanon despite the obvious limitations this would place on the Palestinians. The Soviets defended their abstention in the UN vote with the somewhat limp explanation that the Lebanese government had requested the Soviet Union not to veto the decision.<sup>98</sup> But, in fact, it joined in Syria's efforts to persuade the PLO to abide by the UN-imposed rules and to cooperate with UNIFIL. The Lebanese Communist Party was reportedly informed of this Soviet position,<sup>99</sup> which was also reflected in *Pravda's* positive response to a PLO-Lebanese government agreement to take "resolute measures against any attempts to disrupt [UNIFIL] activity."<sup>100</sup> Thus, the Soviet media repeatedly quoted—or claimed to be quoting—Palestinian declarations of cooperation with UNIFIL, ignoring or branding as Israeli provocations the clashes

---

<sup>96</sup> QNA, March 23, 1978, citing Jordanian sources, which claimed that this Soviet warning had been passed on to Amman from the Syrians. Following the March 11, 1978, terror attack the Soviets, expecting Israeli retaliation, reportedly moved their advisers from southern Lebanon to Beirut. TASS items datelined Beirut on March 13 and 14, 1978, spoke of Israeli troop concentrations on the Lebanese border and said that Israel would probably use the March 11 incident as a pretext for incursions into southern Lebanon. The TASS correspondent reportedly was recalled from Beirut for having released Soviet intelligence information prior to the Israeli attack—*Alziad* (Beirut), April 10, 1978. Yet reports of Soviet warnings of Israeli attack plans had circulated well prior to the March terrorist action. See INA, February 15, 1978; QNA, February 22, 1978. According to QNA, March 12, 1978, the matter had been discussed during Arafat's March 1978 visit to Moscow, which ended one day before the operation.

<sup>97</sup> TASS, March 16, 1978; see *Trends in Communist Media*, Washington, D.C. (March 22, 1978).

<sup>98</sup> *Pravda*, March 21, 1978, which said, on the other hand, that the USSR did not vote for the resolution because the latter did not directly condemn Israel.

<sup>99</sup> *Al-Nahar al-Arabi ve al-Doli*, April 20, 1978.

<sup>100</sup> *Pravda*, May 27 and June 4, 1978.

that did occur between PLO operatives and UN soldiers.<sup>101</sup> In the latter vein, Moscow chided Israel for obstructing UNIFIL and refusing to withdraw, while it occasionally cited PLO statements of determination to continue fighting if Israel did not withdraw.<sup>102</sup> It was probably in deference to the Palestinians' reservations concerning the U.N. presence that Moscow did not support the Security Council decision to increase UNIFIL from 4,000 to 6,000 men, but the Soviets' abstention rather than veto attested to their interest, nonetheless, in a peace-keeping force and quiet even in all of Lebanon. The fighting that did continue, both in the south and elsewhere in Lebanon, was attributed to rightist and/or Israeli provocations that were supposed to be designed to rekindle the civil war and create a pretext for foreign intervention, and in which the Palestinians were said to be taking no part.<sup>103</sup>

The above Soviet position was not clearly acceptable to the PLO, however, within which there reportedly was resentment at the fact that the Soviets did nothing to help during the Israeli invasion itself even in response to the PLO's urgent call for arms. Indeed, the massive shipments of arms sent to the Palestinians after the invasion was said to be compensation specifically for this. Moreover, prior to the invasion, the internal split over the need to continue fighting had persisted, as the issue of continuing actions against Israel from Lebanon was debated. Fatah military leader Abu Jihad advocated an aggressive policy, as did Abu Iyyad, who took credit for persuading Arafat to agree to the Tel Aviv highway action that precipitated the Israeli move into Lebanon.<sup>104</sup> And Abu Iyyad reportedly maintained his more aggressive attitude, along with Abu Jihad, even when UNIFIL was installed, declaring that "if necessary, we will fight against the U.N. troops, whose role should be nothing more than border guards.

---

<sup>101</sup> *Pravda*, March 28, 1978, April 14, 1978, June 13, 1978—which reported the Palestinians' "resolve to deny Tel Aviv and the rightist forces any chance of provoking an incident"; TASS, April 11, 1978; Moscow radio in Arabic, April 13, 1978; Moscow domestic radio, March 26, 1978; Evgeny Korshunov, "Thorny Road to Normalization," *New Times* (May 1978):10.

<sup>102</sup> TASS, April 17 and 21, 1978, May 28, 1978, June 2, 1978.

<sup>103</sup> See especially Victor Golovin, "Mounting Tensions," *New Times* (July 1978):11.

<sup>104</sup> Helena Cobban, "The PLO Faces New Pressures," *Middle East International* (May 1978):11.

If they deviate from this we shall strike back."<sup>105</sup> Even as Arafat was promising PLO cooperation with UNIFIL, Abu Iyyad attacked the U.N. decision to send troops, directly challenging Arafat by stating: "To those who say that facilitating the task of the U.N. interim force will guarantee an Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon, we say that the Israelis will not withdraw except when they feel the territories in the south shaking under their feet."<sup>106</sup> Fatah's Abu Daoud took matters further by actually leading an armed group against UNIFIL in April 1978, reportedly with Abu Iyyad's blessing.<sup>107</sup> Arafat had Abu Daoud arrested for this, however, and the Fatah line became more unified when Arafat, on behalf of the PLO, had signed an agreement in May 1978 with the Lebanese authorities limiting Palestinian activity in southern Lebanon. Not all the groups in the PLO accepted this position, however, as the Rejectionists, such as Habash and the ALF, continued their outspoken opposition to UNIFIL and Arafat's line.<sup>108</sup> Indeed, even within the Fatah the split continued, while this issue, combined with others, threatened to tear the PLO apart and precipitated what was probably the strongest challenge to Arafat's leadership of the organization to date.<sup>109</sup>

The only clues available in the Soviet media regarding these internal PLO difficulties and the opposition of some to Moscow's preferred policy on southern Lebanon were reports of "erosion" within the Palestinian movement and the calls for internal unity advocated in the statements issued on Arafat's March 1978 and

---

<sup>105</sup> March 28, 1978 interview to *Le Matin* quoted in *Jerusalem Post*, August 27, 1978. See also *as-Siyassah*, March 21, 1978.

<sup>106</sup> Voice of Palestine, April 15 and 17, 1978.

<sup>107</sup> Voice of Palestine (Baghdad), April 20, 1978; MENA, April 21, 1978, QNA, April 22, 1978; *Ar Ra'y al-Amm* (Kuwait), April 24, 1978.

<sup>108</sup> Habash opposition: Cobban, "The PLO Faces New Pressures," p. 12; PFLP: INA, April 4, 1978; ALF: INA, May 23, 1978; Rejection Front: INA, June 4 and 6, 1978; Sa'iqa: JANA (Libya), May 27, 1978. The pro-Syrian Jibril said that he would fight if Israel did not withdraw by the end of June—INA, June 6, 1978—and Syria's Sa'iqa support the agreement, albeit with reservations—Gulf News Agency, May 27, 1978; JANA (Libya), May 27, 1978, carried an interview with Mohsen.

<sup>109</sup> Cobban, "The PLO Faces New Pressures," pp. 10–12; MIS 6 (August 1–15, 1978):70–71. Other issues were the decision to unite all Palestinian forces, the Rejectionists' bid to change the decision-making procedures in the PLO, the necessary response to Sadat's initiative, the renewal of PLO-Jordanian talks—see Chapter Four.



Hawatmeh's June 1978 visits to Moscow.<sup>110</sup> Hawatmeh's visit, followed by a Fatah delegation led by Abu Iyyad, may well have been intended—by the Soviets at least—to discuss these internal differences.<sup>111</sup> That Lebanon was one of the topics discussed with Hawatmeh was indicated not only by the statement issued at the close of the visit but also by the fact that a delegation of Lebanese leftists was also invited to Moscow.<sup>112</sup> During his stay, Hawatmeh was quoted by *Prauda* as being in favor of cooperation with UNIFIL, asserting only that Israeli “ruling circles” were trying to provoke clashes between the UN troops and the Palestinians.<sup>113</sup> Presumably, the publication of this comment by *Prauda* was indicative of Moscow's own position, although, as already noted, the Soviet press did occasionally carry somewhat more ambiguous statements by various Palestinian leaders on the need to continue fighting.<sup>114</sup> Moreover, Moscow criticized what it called Sadat's effort to halt the anti-Israeli Palestinian military activity in southern Lebanon. On safer grounds, the Soviet media were consistent in their condemnation of any attempt by the Lebanese Christians, rather than UNIFIL, to move into the areas evacuated by the Israeli army. These apparent contradictions to Moscow's overall line advocating restraint and tranquility in Lebanon may have been Moscow's response to the complexities of the situation. Thus, the Soviets may have sought to wind their way—much the way Arafat himself did—between the PLO alliance with the new Steadfastness Front, which Moscow was supporting in response to Sadat's peace initiative, and the policy of moderation deemed most advisable by the Soviet leadership for the Lebanese situation. And it was Soviet persistence in this policy of moderation that contributed to a new crisis in Soviet-PLO relations in the year following the Israeli invasion. Steady and serious Israeli air and artillery attacks on Palestinian strongholds in southern Lebanon prompted the PLO, including Arafat, to request Soviet military assistance, in the form of supplies of heavy artillery and more sophisticated antiaircraft weapons. The Soviet Ambassador to Lebanon reportedly rejected any but indirect supplies provided

---

<sup>110</sup> TASS, June 7, 1978. Hawatmeh visit: May 29–June 5, 1978.

<sup>111</sup> Fatah visit: July 26–August 4, 1978.

<sup>112</sup> Leftists' visit, led by Farid Jubran: June 16–17, 1978.

<sup>113</sup> *Prauda*, June 3, 1978—interview to TASS, June 2, 1978.

<sup>114</sup> See, for example, Abu Salah of Fatah in TASS, May 28, 1978.

by the Arab states.<sup>115</sup> A Soviet interview with Arafat published just after the PLO leader's November 1979 Moscow visit suggested that this issue was still a source of Soviet-PLO tension, with Arafat speaking of Israel's military superiority and use of ultramodern weapons that are banned by international conventions.<sup>116</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

As on other issues that arose between Moscow and the PLO, so, too, in the Lebanese conflict, the Soviet Union's policy was dictated more by its own globally and regionally oriented policies than by an interest in the Palestinians themselves. Moscow's overriding concern was the swift ending of the war in Lebanon, in order to bring to a halt developments that threatened to weaken the Soviet-Syrian relationship and benefit the United States. Insofar as this interest benefited the Palestinians, Moscow could claim some credit both with the PLO itself and with the more radical Arab states. Yet, inasmuch as this policy was not primarily dictated by the Palestinians' plight as such, it also resulted in certain tensions and problems in the Soviet-PLO relationship. For Moscow's actions were limited by the constraints of its own interests: avoiding the risk of direct involvement, ensuring against a total break with Syria, and pressing the Palestinians themselves to make the compromises necessary for an end to the war. Therefore, despite the serious strain that developed in Soviet-Syrian relations during the Lebanese Civil War as Moscow championed the Palestinians' cause, the net result was a PLO wary of Soviet promises and intentions. Even leading members of Fatah became critical of the Soviet Union, realizing, as they did, the essential limitations of the Soviet-PLO relationship, namely, Moscow's subordination of its clients' interests to its own broader strategic objectives.

Moscow was not wholly indifferent to this problem. It sought to compensate by various means including stepped-up support in the Arab-Israeli context, but the response of leading Palestinians would suggest that this was not sufficient. Indeed, the differences between the two regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict created still further Palestinian suspicions with regard to Moscow's linkage of this issue

---

<sup>115</sup> *Al-Hawadess*, June 8, 1979, as cited by *MEED Arab Report* (July 4, 1979):11.

<sup>116</sup> *Prauda*, November 16, 1979.

with that of Lebanon. This situation was only partly alleviated by the cessation of hostilities in October 1976. The subsequent Soviet-Syrian rapprochement, as well as Moscow's continued interest in calm even in southern Lebanon, once again limited Soviet moves on behalf of the Palestinians in Lebanon. This in turn led Moscow once again into a dichotomy of views with some of the PLO's leading figures, specifically over the issue of the U.N. presence in southern Lebanon, continuation of PLO actions, and Soviet assistance against Israeli attacks. Here the dichotomy resembled the familiar problem of Moscow's difficulties with the Rejection Front, both inside and outside the PLO, as distinct from Arafat's usually more acceptable line. The Lebanese crisis, however, had led not only to a series of strange Arafat alliances but to a split in Fatah itself, as well as to a significant weakening of Arafat's position. While the Soviets sought to remain aloof from the kaleidoscope of internal PLO developments, the radicalization of Fatah in the wake of the Lebanese events posed additional problems for the Soviets, particularly when combined with the creation of the PLO-supported Arab Steadfastness Front in response to Sadat's peace initiative. A weakened, less united, but more radical PLO emerged from the Lebanese conflict, but it was also a PLO that contained still more elements critical or at least wary of the Soviet Union.

## CHAPTER SIX

# Terrorism

The Soviets were generally, though by no means always, careful to distinguish between guerilla warfare and terror.<sup>1</sup> While they refrained from defining the two concepts, possibly even intentionally leaving the distinction vague, they did relate differently to the two phenomena when referring to them by name. The Soviet attitude toward guerilla warfare was somewhat mixed, as we have seen in Chapter One, but even when supported it was advocated as only one type of action, to be complemented if not entirely superseded by political action. Thus, indirectly, the Soviet attitude toward terror could be understood from the general references to armed struggle. Yet, the Soviets also specifically spoke of terror, upon occasion; these references were relatively consistent and generally negative. Terrorism as such had little or no support from official Soviet ideology, the early Bolsheviks having been at most ambivalent to the idea. Indeed, one of the distinguishing factors between the Russian Social Democrats, Bolsheviks and Mensheviks alike, and the Social Revolutionaries was the latter's support for the use of terror. Lenin was to characterize

---

<sup>1</sup> For definitions, see Paul Wilkinson, *Political Terrorism* (London: Macmillan, 1974), 79-80.

this Bolshevik opposition to terror as a position of expediency, but he himself warned against indiscriminate terror.<sup>2</sup> Inasmuch as political change was to be the result of socioeconomic change, with revolution coming as an act of the people moving at the proper historical moment, any acts of violence were to be systematic, directed toward precisely specified targets, operating possibly as a trigger for revolution.<sup>3</sup> Political assassination—and one might add kidnappings—indiscriminate strikes against innocent civilians, be they hijackings or even actions within the “enemy’s” territory, such as against a school or apartment block, would not be deemed effective with regard to the goal of over-all sociopolitical change.

While there is no lack of instances upon which Soviet ideological tenets have been stretched, distorted, or altogether ignored to accommodate the dictates of political tactics, the criterion of expediency has remained in the case of terrorism. Palestinian terrorism was generally—though not always—perceived by the Soviets as counter-productive and in this specific case even as harmful to the Arabs’ cause. At one level it was argued that terror alienated potential supporters of the PLO and provided Israel not only with useful propaganda material but also with an excuse for armed retaliation. At another level, the Soviets themselves had reason to be concerned about international terrorism inasmuch as they themselves were vulnerable to hijackings, attacks on diplomatic installations abroad, and the like. According to one analysis, the Soviet attitude toward the Palestinians’ use of hijackings changed from one of approval to disapproval following the hijacking of a Soviet aircraft by Lithuanian nationalists in 1970.<sup>4</sup> While in fact one may point to Soviet condem-

---

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 113; V. I. Lenin, “Left-Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder,” *Collected Works*, Vol. 31 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1966), pp. 17–117. See also Robert Freedman, “Soviet Policy towards International Terrorism,” in Yonah Alexander, ed., *International Terrorism: National, Regional and Global Perspectives* (N.Y.: Praeger, 1976), pp. 115–16; Ze’ev Avyansky, *Personal Terror (Hateror Haishi)* (Tel Aviv: Kibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, 1977); William Pomeroy, ed., *Guerrilla Warfare and Marxism* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1969), pp. 75–121.

<sup>3</sup> Pomeroy, *Guerrilla Warfare*, Feliks Gross, *Violence in Politics* (The Hague: Mouton, 1972), p. 32; Nathan Leites, *A Study of Bolshevism* (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1953), p. 341; Stefan Possony, *A Century of Conflict* (Chicago: Regnery Co., 1953), pp. 224–25; Edward Taborsky, *Communist Penetration of the Third World* (N.Y.: Robert Speller and Sons, 1973), p. 413.

<sup>4</sup> Freedman, “Soviet Policy,” p. 122.

nation of hijackings, including those carried out by the Palestinians, prior to 1970,<sup>5</sup> it is true that the Soviet attitude became more critical subsequent to their own direct experience. Indeed this may even have been the immediate reason for the strong Soviet support given the November 1970 U.N. General Assembly resolution against hijacking despite the opposition of various Arab states.<sup>6</sup> In any case, the Palestinians' use of terror was a continuous and even major problem in Soviet-PLO relations, Soviet complaints being only slightly less persistent when Fatah itself used these methods.

There was, nonetheless, some ambiguity between open pronouncements and clandestine activities in the 1970s as international terrorism became a serious world problem. Soviet arms turned up in the arsenals of a number of terrorist and armed political groupings, from Ireland to Italy, and a good deal of speculation arose as to whether the socialist bloc was a direct supplier or merely an innocent bystander whose products had fallen into unforeseen hands. Similarly, there was much speculation as to links between Western European terror organizations such as the Baader-Meinhof group in West Germany or the Red Brigades in Italy, on the one hand, and the Soviet Union and its European satellites, on the other.<sup>7</sup> Links between "Carlos" and Prague were rumored, and there were claims that terrorists of all types were receiving training in Czechoslovakia and East Germany. PLO cooperation with other terrorist groups, for example, the open use of Japanese and German personnel in Palestinian actions such as the Lod Airport attack of June 1972 and the hijacking of an Air France plane to Uganda in July 1976, strengthened the impression of linkage inasmuch as the PLO, as such, enjoyed open Soviet support. Soviet sensitivity to this type of linkage, with its implied connection to Moscow, was openly apparent in response to former Italian Premier Aldo Moro's kidnapping and murder in 1978. *Pravda* reported the PLO's "categorical" denial of any ties with the Italian "terrorist groups" and argued that the PLO had "cleansed its ranks of all terrorist elements . . . and is relentlessly struggling against terrorism."<sup>8</sup> By and large, however, Palestinian links

---

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, *Pravda*, September 17, 1970, cited by Freedman himself.

<sup>6</sup> See Freedman, "Soviet Policy," p. 122, who cites the *Pravda*, November 28, 1970, article praising the UNGA resolution.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, *New York Times*, April 28, 1978.

<sup>8</sup> *Pravda*, May 3, 1978. See also *Izvestiia*, June 6, 1978.

with non-Arab radical groups tended to be through Habash and various splinter groups rather than through the Soviet-preferred Fatah.<sup>9</sup>

More directly, it was reported that Cuban advisers were training PLO units in Lebanon, in accordance with an agreement negotiated by Arafat in Moscow in 1978, reports to which effect had been explicitly denied by Moscow.<sup>10</sup> It may also have been a sign of a link that Haddad, leader of an extremist Palestinian splinter group responsible for a number of actions, including the Ugandan hijacking, which had been strongly criticized by the Soviets, was reported to have died in an *East German* hospital in 1978. Similarly, thousands of terrorists reportedly have been trained in Soviet-backed courses in North Korea, as well as in the Soviet Union itself and elsewhere in East Europe.<sup>11</sup> Actual coordination between the Soviet Union and the PLO regarding at least one international terrorist act has been suggested in connection with the action against Soviet Jewish emigrants, just prior to the Yom Kippur War, aboard a train headed for Vienna, and the transit facilities prior to debarkation for Israel or elsewhere.<sup>12</sup> The terrorists boarded the train in Slovakia, which suggested some Soviet complicity. Moreover, the action itself was the first—and, for many years, only—terror operation conducted outside the Middle East by the Syrian-run Sa'iqa, which, it has been argued, may have indicated a Syrian effort, in cooperation with the Soviets, to create a diversion to preparations for the Yom Kippur surprise attack.<sup>13</sup> While it is true that Sa'iqa, unlike the other PLO components, may have been privy to at least Syrian plans for war, the most that might be argued for Soviet collusion was tolerance of the terrorist debarkation from Slovakia, for the Soviets themselves were excluded from any direct knowledge of Syrian war plans until just a few days before the war.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> Edward Weisband and Damir Roguly, "Palestinian Terrorism: Violence, Verbal Strategy, and Legitimacy," in Yonah Alexander, *International Terrorism*, pp. 283-308.

<sup>10</sup> *Al-Nahar* (Beirut), July 24, 1978. Soviet denial, *Pravda*, May 7, 1978.

<sup>11</sup> Taborsky, *Communist Penetration*, p. 434; Baruch Gurevitz, "The Soviet Union and the Palestinian Organizations," in Y. Ro'i, ed., *The Limits to Power* (London: Croom-Helm, 1979), pp. 270-71; Leonard Shapiro, "The Soviet Union and the PLO," *Survey* 23 (Summer 1977-78):206. See also Ran Merom, "The Soviet Concept of Guerilla Warfare and Retaliation, The Case of the Palestinian Guerillas and Israel," *International Problems* (Tel Aviv) 16:3-4 (1977):78-91.

<sup>12</sup> Weisband and Roguly, "Palestinian Terrorism," pp. 267-68.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> The Soviets were aware of the Arab plans for war, but they were not directly involved nor did they know the exact date planned for attack. Sadat

It could be argued that Soviet condemnation of international terrorism, be it conducted by the Palestinians or by non-Arab radical groupings, was no more than a propaganda cover-up for what were in fact KGB-supported operations. One might contend that the difficulties caused by international terror, particularly in Western Europe, outweighed basic Soviet conservatism on this subject. Yet, leaving the issue of European terrorism to one side, it would appear that the realities—what the Soviets would call “the balance of forces”—in an area as volatile as the Middle East, with its global as well as regional connections, have dictated a Soviet preference for stability or, at the least, controlled conflict, ruling out almost all types of armed conflict against Israel save what the Soviets saw as limited and controlled, static battles of attrition. While limited guerilla warfare may have been tolerated,<sup>15</sup> the Soviets seemed to define this as sabotage or resistance, which it supported, as distinct from terror, which it condemned. The exact definition, however, was left up to the Soviets, as each case arose. Thus, the Soviets encouraged as well as equipped Palestinians whose task ostensibly was to be armed action *within* the occupied territories, that is, resistance, or operations against strategic and military objectives in Israel.<sup>16</sup> The fact that they also trained Palestinians for such operations has been proven by testimony submitted in Israeli military courts and at least claimed by numerous Western press reports.<sup>17</sup> That Moscow provided the PLO with military assistance was even openly admitted when *Pravda*, in September 1977, published comments by the visiting Faruq Qaddumi who listed military aid among the types of assistance accorded the Palestinians by Moscow.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, armed struggle within the territories was one of the *raison d'être*, as presented by the Soviets, for the Palestine National Front, a group geared to resistance,

---

informed them of his plans on October 3, 1973, and Assad gave them the exact date on October 4, 1973. See Galia Golan, *Yom Kippur and after* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 66-71.

<sup>15</sup> See Chapter One.

<sup>16</sup> *Izvestiia*, April 12, 15, 1975; *Pravda*, August 29, 1972; *Pravda*, February 13, 1973. For Soviet assistance to PLO in Lebanon, see Chapter Five.

<sup>17</sup> Gurevitz, “The Soviet Union,” pp. 270-71; Schapiro, “The Soviet Union and the PLO,” p. 206; Lester Sobel, ed., *Palestinian Impasse: Arab Guerillas and International Terror* (New York: Facts on File, 1977), pp. 117, 164-65. See also Merom, “The Soviet Concept.”

<sup>18</sup> *Pravda*, September 16, 1977. See also Arafat, TASS, September 5, 1977, and Sha'ir, Moscow radio in Arabic, September 28, 1977.



of an armed as well as political nature, against the Israeli occupier on the West Bank. And for this reason the Soviets sought to depict acts of terror within Israel as the work of *local* Arabs or, at the most, actions against strategic-military objectives.<sup>19</sup> The effort to portray these as local resistance was prompted by ideological-propagandistic considerations, in part out of concern for world opinion. Such motivation was also indicated by efforts in the Soviet media not only to justify and disguise such actions but also to claim that the real users of terror were the Israelis, both in their behavior toward the local Arab population and in activities against Palestinians abroad.<sup>20</sup> This specific argument appeared in abundance in connection with the Israeli move into South Lebanon in 1978. The over-all Soviet line was also motivated, however, by a genuine concern that an escalation might result from Israeli reprisals against outside incursions. Thus, the Soviets condemned many of the PLO terrorist attacks even in Israel as well as the more clearly objectionable operations on an international level, condemning the "extremism" of some elements of the PLO, just as they condemned the "leftist adventurism" of various Arab militants anxious for renewed war against Israel.

Soviet conservatism on the issue of terrorism and even guerilla action was apparent in Moscow's early attitude to the PLO. For all that the Soviet media praised certain "partisan" acts, exaggerated their number and effectiveness, and falsely claimed them to be directed against strategic-military targets,<sup>21</sup> they reportedly told Arafat during the latter's 1970 Moscow visit to abandon the idea of terror outside Israel and concentrate on sabotage within the occupied territories.<sup>22</sup> This position was echoed officially in an editorial in *New Times* in September 1970, while the Jordanian Communist Party had already come out against the "adventurist approach of

---

<sup>19</sup> See, for example, G. Mirsky, "The Arab Peoples Continue the Struggle," *Mirovaya ekonomika a mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia* 3 (1968):120-25; G. Mirsky, "Israel: Illusions and Miscalculations," *New Times* 39 (1968):6-8; *Za rubezhom* (June 6-12, 1969).

<sup>20</sup> See, for example, Y. Primakov, "Zionism and Israel against the Arab People of Palestine," Part I, *Aziia i Afrika Sevodnia* (March 1977):8-9.

<sup>21</sup> See Chapter One.

<sup>22</sup> Aryeh Yodfat, "The USSR and the Palestinians," *New Outlook* 19 (June 1976):31. For a differentiation of the Soviet attitude toward terrorism outside Israel, within Israel itself, or in the occupied territories, see Ran Marom, "The Soviet Concept," pp. 82-88.

terrorists" in 1969.<sup>23</sup> Similarly, in their talks with the Syrian Communists in 1971, Moscow condemned the methods, such as hijackings "and so on," employed by "extremist" elements in the PLO.<sup>24</sup> In 1972 *Pravda* argued that "ill-considered and adventurist actions [such as] the blowing up of non-military targets, as a result of which civilians suffered . . . did serious damage to the prestige of the entire Palestinian resistance movement and made its support by progressive and democratic forces more difficult."<sup>25</sup> Even guerilla warfare in the occupied territories was condemned at this time. One article claimed that the guerillas were nothing but "anarchist groups . . . embarked upon adventurism and terror [which] prevented them from building a strong mass base in the occupied Arab territory" causing, rather, their deportation by the Israeli authorities.<sup>26</sup> The Soviets themselves later referred to their earlier reservations regarding the PLO because of the terrorism issue, arguing that a major sign of this movement's maturing process was the abandonment of such "extremist," "adventurist" policies.<sup>27</sup> The continuation, nonetheless, of terrorist action was explained as the "anarchistic" acts of small "extremist" groups, rejected by the PLO as a whole and especially by Fatah, though often supported by some Arab states.<sup>28</sup> Habash himself was singled out, by name, for criticism for his support of

---

<sup>23</sup> "Danger Course," *New Times* (September 1970):1; *The Arab World Weekly*, May 24, 1969.

<sup>24</sup> "Special Document," *Journal of Palestine Studies* II:1 (1972):97.

<sup>25</sup> *Pravda*, August 29, 1972.

<sup>26</sup> Y. Kornilov, "Meeting with the Fedayeen," *New Times* (October 1972): 23.

<sup>27</sup> E. Dimitryev, "The Middle East: An Important Factor of Settlement," *Kommunist* 2 (1976):99-105 reported that the actions of terrorists were exploited for the justification of "Tel Aviv's aggressive policy." R. Landa, "The Palestinian Question: The Socio-Political Aspect," *Aziia i Afrika Sevodnia* (March 1976):8; I. Riabinov, "Zionist Policy at an Impasse," *Mirovaya ekonomika a mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia* (May 1976):50; R. Landa, "From the History of the Palestinian Movement of Resistance (1967-1971)," *Narody Azii i Afriki* (April 1976):20; R. Landa, "The Contemporary Stage in the Struggle of the Palestinian Movement of Resistance," *Narody Azii i Afriki* 5 (May 1976):16; E. Dimitryev and V. Ladeikin, *Put' k miry na blizhnem vostokoye* [The Road to Peace in the Middle East] (Moscow: International Relations Publishers, 1974), pp. 62-65; E. Dimitryev, *Palestinskii uzhel* [The Palestinian Knot] (Moscow: International Relations Publishers, 1978), p. 67.

<sup>28</sup> Landa, "The Contemporary Stage," p. 19; Landa, "The Palestinian Question," p. 8; Riabinov, "Zionist Policy," p. 50; E. D. Prylin, "The Palestinian National Liberation Movement and a Middle East Settlement," *Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo* (October 1977):101.

such measures, and, indeed, in inner PLO debates Habash was critical of the Soviets' policy on this issue.<sup>29</sup>

The Soviet position outlined above was apparently more clearly defined in 1973 at the time of the founding of the PNF and Arafat's November visit to Moscow. At this time, apparently, the Soviets made a strong bid to the PLO leader to abandon the use of terror and to shift action, via the PNF, to armed struggle in the occupied territories.<sup>30</sup> Less a result of Soviet pressures than the result of other internal PLO developments,<sup>31</sup> Fatah—but not other groups in the PLO—did abandon terror outside Israel, closing down the operations of Black September by the end of 1973.<sup>32</sup> At the same time, the Communists on the West Bank, organized through the PNF, began to organize "military resistance."<sup>33</sup> The use of armed struggle by the PNF was not only supported by Moscow but even strongly advocated in the spring of 1977, when the PNF appeared to be on the decline. At least critical comments regarding the absence of armed struggle in the occupied territories could be heard, together, nonetheless, with the usual criticism of terrorism.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, the fact that the PLO, even Fatah, had reverted to the use of terror was even critically noted as the result of the failure of guerilla warfare in the occupied territories.<sup>35</sup>

The Soviets' problem would appear to have been the shifting Fatah attitude toward the use of terror, armed struggle, and negotiations, apparent not only in Arafat's vacillations between alliance and disagreement with the Rejection Front in 1976 and 1977 as a result of the Lebanese war and later in connection with Sadat's initiative, but also his arguments on this issue with other Fatah

<sup>29</sup> Yodfat, "The USSR and the Palestinians," p. 32; Landa, "The Contemporary Stage," p. 19; Dimitryev, *Palestinian Knot*, p. 67; Dimitryev and Ladeikin, *The Road to Peace*, pp. 62-65.

<sup>30</sup> Yodfat, "The USSR and the Palestinians," p. 32.

<sup>31</sup> Weisband and Roguly, "Palestinian Terrorism," pp. 295-98.

<sup>32</sup> According to MIS 4 (July 1-15, 1976):54 as a result, terrorist actions were down, from 50 in 1973 to 15 in 1974. Figures vary from source to source on the number of operations, however.

<sup>33</sup> "Interview with the Palestine National Front," *Palestine Digest* 6 (October 1976):21. See also Amnon Cohen, "The Changing Patterns of West Bank Politics," *The Jerusalem Quarterly* (Fall 1973):109.

<sup>34</sup> Y. Primakov, "Zionism and Israel against the Arab People of Palestine," Part II, *Azii i Afrika Sevodnia* (April 1977):8-13. Jordanian Communist Party, *Les Communistes et la Question Palestinienne*, March 1977, p. 16. See also Moscow radio in Arabic, August 14, 1977.

<sup>35</sup> Landa, "The Contemporary Stage," pp. 19-20.

personalities such as Abu Iyyad. In addition, the Soviets had encountered difficulties—in part because of the above problem—in gaining control over this side of Palestinian activities, despite the creation of the PNF. If the Soviets' greater emphasis on armed struggle in the occupied territories could be attributed to the second problem, the first problem—of greater PLO militancy in 1976-77—may have precipitated an albeit slight change in the Soviets' tone. In the fall of 1977 Moscow, apparently for the first time, publicly admitted that it was supplying the Palestinians with military assistance,<sup>36</sup> and, in March 1978, it virtually supported the terrorist attack that took place outside Tel Aviv.<sup>37</sup> Neither of these concessions necessarily meant a basic change in the Soviet attitude. The admission of military support was probably connected with the effort to combat the U.S.'s and Saudi Arabia's advances with the PLO, while the support of the March action, which was falsely described according to the official PLO account as an operation against Israeli soldiers, was probably due to the PLO's open identification with the action and the alliance then in effect between Arafat and the Rejectionists in response to Sadat's peace initiatives. And even this support was placed somewhat in doubt when an authoritative Moscow radio commentary, two weeks after the event, referred to it with the admonition that "the murder of civilians cannot be justified, especially when it is deliberate."<sup>38</sup> Moreover, shortly thereafter Moscow was reported to have requested Habash to help prevent extremist acts such as assassinations, kidnappings, hijackings, and so forth, on the grounds that these acts were neither useful nor worthwhile. As in the past, the Soviet request reportedly included a statement of Soviet opposition to the use of violent means with regard to political and national problems in the Arab area.<sup>39</sup> There was also the possibility, though probably slight, that differences of opinion within the Kremlin were at play. One,

---

<sup>36</sup> *Pravda*, September 16, 1977. Report denied, however, by PLO-Moscow representative, *New York Times*, September 18, 1977. Even during the Lebanese crisis, when the amount of Soviet aid came under criticism (see Chapter Five), there had been no such admission.

<sup>37</sup> See below. Another possible sign of a change in the Soviet attitude was Moscow's positive response to the French government's release of Abu Daoud. *Izvestiia*, January 13, 1977, reported Daoud's arrest in France for "alleged participation in acts of terror perpetrated during the 1972 Olympic Games," but praised the French decision shortly thereafter to release him.

<sup>38</sup> Moscow radio (roundtable), March 26, 1978.

<sup>39</sup> *Al-Manar*, April 29, 1978.

albeit minor and dubious, sign of such was the difference in reporting on the PNC session of March 1977 in which the Soviet military daily *Krasnaya zvezda* quoted the more militant PNC resolution (number 3) on armed struggle, *Pravda* choosing to quote the somewhat milder one (number 2), so that *Krasnaya zvezda* spoke of a decision to intensify the armed struggle and other aspects of the struggle on Arab territories in order to put an end to Zionist occupation, while *Pravda*—and subsequent reports—spoke of the resolve to conduct armed struggle together with political and mass struggle for the realization of national rights.<sup>40</sup> A similar difference was evident in response to the January 1979 PNC session, when only *Sovetskaya Rosiya* referred to the decision to increase “military resistance” on the West Bank and Gaza.<sup>41</sup> This decision was presented in such a way as to imply that stepped-up armed activities could now be expected as a PLO reaction to Camp David. This was indeed Fatah’s proclaimed response, although Hawatmeh himself called for the more typically Soviet-supported type of action: general strike and protest demonstrations. Hawatmeh himself, however, later returned to the idea of terror operations against civilian targets in Israel.<sup>42</sup>

A sample of Soviet responses to Palestinian actions will demonstrate the Soviet position and some of the complications involved. The September 1972 murder of Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics, as well as the murder of Western diplomats in the Sudan, were both clearly and directly condemned by the Soviets—however “understandable” such “acts of desperation” might be, they said.<sup>43</sup> In response to Munich, Soviet President Podgorny even said, in a speech honoring the visiting Iraqi President, that “naturally, we cannot look with favor upon the actions of certain elements, through which they harm the Palestinian movement.”<sup>44</sup> And Foreign Minister Gromyko told the U.N.:

---

<sup>40</sup> *Pravda* and *Krasnaya zvezda*, March 23, 1977; Victor Bukharkov, “The Palestinians’ Stand,” *New Times* (April 1977):11; Moscow radio in Arabic, March 23, 1977. For the full resolution, see *Journal of Palestine Studies* VI (Spring 1977):188–89.

<sup>41</sup> *Sovetskaya Rosiya*, February 2, 1979.

<sup>42</sup> MIS 5 (September 1–15, 1978):84; idem, 6 (February 1–15, 1979):164.

<sup>43</sup> See, for example, *Pravda*, September 16, 1972; *Pravda*, March 4, 5, 1973; Moscow radio in English to North America, February 25, 1973; Moscow radio, March 11, 1973; TASS, March 7, 1973; Moscow television, March 24, 1973.

<sup>44</sup> Moscow radio in Arabic, September 14, 1972.

It is certainly impossible to condone the acts of terrorism committed by certain elements from among the participants in the Palestinian movement that have led, notably, to the recent tragic events in Munich. Their *criminal actions* deal a blow also at the national interests and aspirations of the Palestinians; these acts are used by the Israeli criminals to cover up their policy of banditry against the Arab peoples.<sup>45</sup>

In these cases Moscow sought to dissociate the PLO from Black September, even, on occasion, claiming that the latter belonged to Israel—how else might one explain a group so detrimental to the Palestinian cause and, therefore, of benefit to Israel. Yet, the Soviet media nonetheless chastized the PLO for failing to achieve internal unity leading to control over its armed groups.<sup>46</sup> Such criticism was often expressed in *Sovetskaya Rosiya*, generally known for its nationalistic stands and possibly representing the views of some in the Kremlin who may have opposed Soviet support for the Palestinians in favor of reliance upon relations with Arab governments.<sup>47</sup>

Particularly irritating to the Soviets, apparently, was the terrorist operation at the Rome and Athens airports, December 17–18, 1973, coming as it did just prior to the opening of the Geneva Peace Conference. Although the operation was disowned by the PLO, the Soviets found the incident embarrassing, for, at the very least, it demonstrated the lack of Soviet control over its would-be clients at a time of increased Soviet support for the Palestinians, forcing Moscow to condemn acts of air piracy while weakly hinting that the terrorists may not in fact have been Palestinians and even that they worked for Israel.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, the incident did not help Moscow's preconference efforts to portray Israel as the only unreasonable party in the Middle East dispute. Further, it raised the tensions in the area to a point that went beyond that desirable for pressures at the conference, threatening, as it did, the very convening of the conference for which Moscow had been striving. Indeed, the Soviets' argument

---

<sup>45</sup> *New York Times*, September 27, 1972 [emphasis the author's].

<sup>46</sup> Moscow radio in Arabic, November 28, 1972; TASS, November 27, 1972; *Pravda*, January 7, 1973; *Sovetskaya Rosiya*, October 18, 25, 1972; August 7, 1973 (some of these in response to the Munich murders).

<sup>47</sup> *Sovetskaya Rosiya*, August 7, 1973, and Galia Golan, "Internal Pressures and Soviet Foreign Policy Decisions," unpublished paper, Jerusalem, 1973.

<sup>48</sup> *Pravda*, *Trud*, *Krasnaya zvezda*, *Sovetskaya Rosiya*, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, and others, December 19, 1973.

against the Palestinians' use of terror had focused on this counter-productive effect of such acts. Such criticism continued in the spring of 1974 and may even have been raised in Gromyko's talks with Arafat in March 1974. The March 15, 1974, issue of *New Times* saw fit to criticize the leadership of the Palestine resistance movement on the issue of terrorism and to condemn the use of terror, specifically the activities of the by then virtually defunct Black September, on the grounds that it was harmful to the cause of national liberation.<sup>49</sup> A few days later Moscow radio in Arabic reported Arafat's condemnation of "armed operations outside Israel," claiming that "the patriotic forces of the Palestinian resistance had deplored terrorism."<sup>50</sup> Similarly, an article in the *World Marxist Review* in April 1974 by a leading Jordanian Communist official claimed that the influence of "Maoist and Trotskyite ideas and slogans" such as "everything comes from the barrel of a gun" was waning and that there was a "disaffection with adventurous actions which so strongly harmed its [the PLO's] reputation, confused world opinion, and diverted attention from the crimes of the Israeli occupying authorities."<sup>51</sup> Yet, the attack by Jibril's organization, clearly a member of the PLO, on a block of flats in the Israeli town of Kiryat Shmona, on April 11, 1974, belied such Soviet confidence, though Moscow tried to depict this as the act of local Arabs, and therefore legitimate local resistance rather than an outside terrorist raid.<sup>52</sup> But Arafat was apparently obliged to reassure his Soviet bloc allies that he did not condone terrorism, suggesting that Moscow had expressed its dissatisfaction to him, and one Soviet Arabic-language broadcast after the attack spoke of "barbaric actions committed by irresponsible persons."<sup>53</sup> Moscow was hard put to speak of "irresponsible persons," however, when the man they had acclaimed as a moderate, Nayif Hawatmeh, perpetrated the attack on an Israeli school in the town of Ma'alot the following

---

<sup>49</sup> Vladimir Terkhov, "International Terrorism and the Fight against It," *New Times* (March 1974):20-21.

<sup>50</sup> Moscow radio in Arabic, March 23, 1974.

<sup>51</sup> Naim Ashhab, "The Palestinian Aspect of the Middle East Crisis," *World Marxist Review* 17 (April 1974):29.

<sup>52</sup> TASS, April 15, 1974, said Israeli Arabs were responsible; Moscow radio in Arabic and domestic radio, April 15, 1974, spoke of Palestinian partisans operating from the occupied territories. Radio Peace and Progress, April 12, 1974, said fedayeen from the occupied territories were responsible.

<sup>53</sup> Moscow radio in Arabic, April 27, 1974; *Smena* (Czechoslovakia); May 4, 1974, talk with Arafat; Hungarian television interview with Arafat, MENA, May 14, 1974.

month. Moscow was at least indirectly to condemn this attack when *Pravda*, as well as the *New Times*, reported "international condemnation," printing more press accounts than usual of the incident.<sup>54</sup> Soviet sensitivity was shown by its meticulous effort to shift the blame for the killings to Israel, even calling Dayan a "Palestinian Eichman." For example, TASS of May 20 carried a story of "Palestine-born Dayan who perpetrated the Ma'alot tragedy so as to have an excuse to attack the Palestinians, just as the Germans had killed Germans to have a pretext for invading Poland in 1939." In response to the Ma'alot action, the Soviets clearly stated that they condemned terrorism, claiming, however, that the PLO had denounced the Ma'alot operation as well.<sup>55</sup> One Soviet bloc paper, at least, found it necessary to qualify its support for the Palestinians' demands, at the time of the signing of the Syrian-Israeli disengagement agreement at the end of May 1974, with the statement that it was not always possible to agree with the methods resorted to by "some members" of the Palestinian resistance movement.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, when the Syrian-Israeli talks had run into a serious delay over the very issue of Palestinian incursions, the Soviets reported the delay without specification of the issue involved—a further sign of Soviet sensitivity, especially on the question of the geographic origin of such activities.<sup>57</sup>

For all these efforts to dissociate the PLO from the label of terrorism and to ignore its actual role in such actions (see for example, the continued singling out of Hawatmeh as a moderate just two months after Ma'alot), criticism of such extremist tactics and admonitions to the PLO to get its house in order on this issue continued to appear in the Soviet media.<sup>58</sup> Just as Arafat was visiting Moscow in July 1974, *Izvestiia's* editor Tolnukov condemned in no uncertain terms such tactics as hijackings, sending of explosive parcels by

---

<sup>54</sup> *Pravda*, May 19, 1974; unsigned, "The Aggressor's Crimes," *New Times* (May 1974):17; *Pravda*, May 17, 19, 22, 1974; TASS, May 16, 1974.

<sup>55</sup> Unsigned, "The Aggressor's Crimes," p. 17. Moscow radio in English to North America, May 20, 1974, said: "The USSR condemns terrorism, believing it can solve no political problem including the problem of the Middle East."

<sup>56</sup> *Praca* (Czechoslovakia), May 31, 1974.

<sup>57</sup> See Galia Golan, *Yom Kippur and after*, p. 228.

<sup>58</sup> See, for example, Victor Bukharkov, "Palestine National Council Session," *New Times* (June 1974):12; *Izvestiia*, July 30, 1974; Lev Tolkunov, "The Middle East Crisis and the Ways of Solving It," *Kommunist* 13 (1974); *Izvestiia*, April 12, 15, 1975.



mail, or "such action as the seizing and murdering of Israeli sportsmen at the Olympic Games."<sup>59</sup> Rejecting terror, he recommended "proper forms" of struggle such as sabotage against military targets. A possible difference of opinion may have been reflected by a *New Times* article just a week after Tolkunov's criticism, which, while condemning the use of terror of the Habash and Jibril organizations, presented their case for terror in most sympathetic terms.<sup>60</sup>

The over-all line remained firmly against terror. On the occasion of Arafat's next visit to Moscow, in November 1974, a Soviet broadcast in Arabic calling for a sense of responsibility on the part of the Palestinians urged greater "political activity" in the occupied territories. This was the line expressed by the Palestine National Front and probably reflected Moscow's preference for the type of civil disorder now encouraged on the West Bank in conjunction with the Palestinian debates in the U.N. and the Rabat Conference.<sup>61</sup> A Palestinian journalist who had apparently accompanied Arafat on this visit was to refer to differences with the Soviets, claiming that the Soviets wanted to avoid armed confrontation by all means, wanted the "logic of peace in times of crises," while "we Palestinians" see the necessity of intensifying the armed struggle.<sup>62</sup> A series of articles the following spring by *Izvestiia's* Palestinian supporter Viktor Kudryavtsev denied the charge that the PLO even used terror, thereby ignoring, as indeed the Soviet press in general had done, the Fatah-sponsored attack on a Tel Aviv hotel just a month earlier.<sup>63</sup> Instead, he emphasized the activation "of the struggle within the occupied territories" carried out by the Palestine National Front. While this presaged Moscow's subsequent increase in publicity for the PNF, it clearly reflected Moscow's preferences. The fact that the

---

<sup>59</sup> *Izvestiia*, July 30, 1974.

<sup>60</sup> Alexandr Ignatov, "The Palestinian Tragedy," *New Times* (August 1974):26-31.

<sup>61</sup> *Al-Nahar*, November 4, 1974 (interview with Igor Belyaev). The Soviets were later to report the PLO's decision to try the terrorists who had hijacked a British plane from Dubai, praising this decision for "demonstrating the maturity of the Palestine resistance movement and its leadership's comprehension of the treacherous role that the extremist elements can play against the just struggle of the Palestinian Arab people"—Moscow radio in Arabic, December 17, 1974.

<sup>62</sup> *Al-Nahar*, December 7, 1974. See also Soviet condemnation of the use of terror by "some organizations" of the Palestinian resistance movement in Landa, "The Palestinian Question," p. 8.

<sup>63</sup> The Fatah attack on the Savoy Hotel, March 6, 1975.

Soviets and the PLO continued to disagree on this question of tactics was further evidenced by such comments as a lengthy Soviet Arab-language broadcast on September 24, 1975, on the Palestinians, which went into some detail on the lessons of Lenin's book *Leftwing Communism, an Infantile Disorder*, which in its day had been an admonition against extreme or precipitate actions. Similarly, this line was maintained with regard to the hijacking of the Air France plane to Uganda in July 1976. The Soviets condemned this action as an act of "piracy," reporting, for example, the fact that the Jewish hostages were not released, although the non-Jews were. Even after the rescue operation by the Israeli army—which was also condemned by Moscow as violation of Ugandan sovereignty—the Soviet media continued to characterize the hijacking as inadmissible and abhorrent.<sup>64</sup> As earlier, it also sought to dissociate the act from PLO policy, quoting Arafat condemnation of the use of terror.<sup>65</sup> This last, however, appeared in Soviet broadcasts to the Arab world itself, suggesting that the Soviets sought in fact to discourage such measures as hijacking and international terrorism, for reasons of Soviet state interests as well as propaganda.

To sum up, the Soviets distinguished between those acts of terror conducted outside and those within Israel, seeking to dissociate the PLO from the former. In the case of international terror, Soviet condemnation was explicit even when the Fatah-run Black September organization was involved. With regard to actions within Israel, which were invariably directed against civilian targets, the Soviet reaction was consistently negative. The only exceptions were those operations conducted by Fatah itself; in these cases Moscow merely refrained from any comment, presumably preferring to reserve any criticism of its major ally, and the leading group within the PLO, for more private communications.

Palestinian terror operations against non-Israelis, such as the hijackings, were difficult enough for the Soviets to handle, but Moscow was faced with an even greater dilemma when such actions were directed against other Arabs, even Palestinians, of political leanings not abhorrent to Moscow. This was the case apparently with regard to the attack in Cyprus, on February 18, 1978, on the meeting of the Afro-Asian Solidarity Organization, a Soviet-sponsored group,

---

<sup>64</sup> *Pravda*, July 5, 10, 1975; *Izvestiia*, July 13, 1976; *Krasnaya zvezda*, July 10, 1976; TASS, July 2, 1976.

<sup>65</sup> Radio Peace and Progress, July 9, 1976.

and the murder of Egyptian representative Youssef el-Sebai. Although Sebai was a close friend of Sadat, he was also closely linked with Moscow in connection with the activities of the Afro-Asian Solidarity Organization. Without waiting for any group to claim responsibility for the action, the Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee issued a statement condemning it as a "criminal action of terrorists regardless of the side they belong to."<sup>66</sup> Moscow subsequently published Arafat's denial of Palestinian involvement, although *Krasnaya zvezda* did carry an Egyptian reference to the Palestinians' responsibility for the incident.<sup>67</sup> This and other Soviet papers, however, criticized Egypt's use of the incident as a pretext to begin an "anti-Palestinian campaign." They also condemned Cairo's abortive effort to free the plane and the hostages taken by the terrorists in the same raid.<sup>68</sup> Soviet exploitation of the incident for propaganda against Egypt did not alter the actual condemnation. Moreover, Arafat may well have been taken to task by Moscow for this lack of control over the Palestinian movement, in connection also with such actions as the murder of the PLO representative in London, Sa'id Hamami. Hamami had been involved in the Moscow-supported contacts with leftist Israelis and tended to accept Moscow's more moderate line regarding a settlement.<sup>69</sup> It may have been such Soviet criticism which prompted Arafat's apparently defensive comment, in an interview he gave TASS during his March 1978 Moscow visit, that "Zionist" and "imperialist circles" were trying to damage the Palestinian revolution by dragging it into "peripheral clashes" by the physical elimination of Palestinian leaders and to discredit the movement by such actions as the Cyprus incident.<sup>70</sup>

It was just one day after this Arafat visit to Moscow that still another action took place of the type that usually embarrassed Moscow: the terrorist attack near Tel Aviv on a civilian bus carrying families returning from a Saturday excursion. Not only was this, like the Kiryat Shmona and Ma'alot actions, an attack on a civilian target—involving large numbers of children as well—but it was openly espoused as a PLO, even Fatah, operation. This last factor, though

---

<sup>66</sup> *Pravda and Izvestiia*, February 20, 1978.

<sup>67</sup> *Pravda, Izvestiia, Trud*, February 21, 1978; *Krasnaya zvezda*, February 22, 1978.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*; *Izvestiia*, February 24, 25, 1978; *Pravda*, February 25, 1978.

<sup>69</sup> See Chapter Four.

<sup>70</sup> TASS, March 9, 1978. Arafat was even more explicit and defensive in his interview in *New Times* (March 1978):8-9.

never officially admitted by Moscow, apparently prompted the Soviets to seek a way of condoning the action; they employed the official PLO version of the incident, which described it as a commando clash with Israeli troops, resulting in the death of thirty Israeli soldiers. Although the Soviet press did say that there were U.S. press claims that the guerillas had captured two buses with passengers, this version was minimized; one account argued that the death of passengers came only after encountering an Israeli police blockade and was not to be blamed on the Palestinians.<sup>71</sup> Egyptian criticism of the Palestinian action was also reported, but it was characterized as a sign of Egyptian-Israeli collusion.<sup>72</sup>

Soviet support for this terrorist action suggested a change in the Soviet attitude, prompted, perhaps, not only by the PLO's direct involvement in the action but also by the temporary alignment that had taken place both between the PLO and the Rejection Front, and between the Soviet Union and this radical grouping, in the wake of Sadat's 1977-78 peace initiative. It has even been argued that the Soviets gave prior approval to the operation during Arafat's visit to the Soviet Union.<sup>73</sup> Yet, it has also been argued that a controversy had arisen over the advisability of such an action because of the likelihood of Israeli reprisals in Lebanon, which might provoke Syrian involvement.<sup>74</sup> Concern of this type might well have been attributed to the Soviets. As already noted, there was a slight Soviet retreat from the Soviets' initial public support of the action. Further, there were no indications that this brief support represented a basic change in the Soviet preference for civil disorder or limited actions confined to the occupied territories rather than the more extreme—and controversial—terror tactics. Given the over-all Soviet position regarding guerilla warfare and wars of liberation, the PLO would have to gain far greater mass support, and the volatility of the Arab-Israeli conflict with its U.S. factor might have to undergo radical changes, before Moscow could be expected to alter its basic position on the Palestinians' use of terror. Nonetheless, the tactical support

---

<sup>71</sup> *Pravda*, March 13, 1978; *Krasnaya zvezda*, March 14, 1978.

<sup>72</sup> *Pravda*, *Izvestiia*, *Krasnaya zvezda*, March 15, 1978.

<sup>73</sup> Schapiro, "The Soviet Union and the PLO," p. 205.

<sup>74</sup> Sam Younger, "What Can Syria Do?," *Middle East International* (May 1978):10. According to Helena Cobban, "The PLO Faces New Pressures," *Middle East International* (May 1978):10-12, Abu Iyyad in fact had persuaded Arafat to launch the operation, though Schapiro, "The Soviet Union and the PLO," p. 205, argued that the Soviets had favored the action as a means of torpedoing the Sadat initiatives.

given the radical Arab elements, including the PLO, in response to various anti-Soviet trends or events in the region may well occasion at least temporary support for such actions, just as the Soviet position on other aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian issue underwent temporary or tactical adjustments in accordance with events. Not only political exigencies affected and could be expected to affect in the future Moscow's attitude on this issue, however. As in the broader case of Soviet-Arab state-to-state relations, so, too, with Soviet-PLO relations, a basic difficulty remained in the near paradox of Soviet military aid, which created the capability for actions that Moscow itself nonetheless disdained. Inner PLO disunity further compounded the already difficult task of Soviet control over the activities of the organization so that Soviet preferences and even admonitions regarding the types of action permissible or condonable promised to have little effect.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

# Recognition of the PLO

While the shift to Soviet support for the PLO beginning in 1968 saw the appearance of Soviet acknowledgement of the Palestinian Resistance Movement as part of the Arab national liberation movement, official recognition was still long in coming. Even as such recognition emerged, the Soviets hesitated, at least officially, to acknowledge the organization as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The communiqué at the close of Arafat's July 1972 visit to Moscow did stipulate that the Palestine resistance movement "expresses the interests of the Palestinian Arab people," and prior to the Yom Kippur War the Palestinian resistance movement was elevated even to the role of "vanguard" or "leading force" of the Arab struggle.<sup>1</sup> The organization itself was given a significant boost by the announcement that East Germany had agreed to the opening of a PLO office in East Berlin, which was generally taken as a sign that such Soviet recognition would not be long to come.<sup>2</sup> This view was further strengthened by the resolution of a meeting of Arab Communist Parties in September 1973, which spoke of the Palestinian resistance movement as "representing the people of Palestine."<sup>3</sup> Yet this

---

<sup>1</sup> TASS, September 19, 1972; *Pravda*, October 17, 1972.

<sup>2</sup> TASS, July 28, 1973.

<sup>3</sup> Published in *Pravda* only on October 19, 1973.

reference, as well as most Soviet comments, refrained from speaking of the PLO as such, using the more general "resistance movement" label, while the Soviet versions of the decisions of the September 1973 nonaligned conference in Algiers actually *omitted* the decision recognizing the PLO as the "legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and its struggle."<sup>4</sup> These early inconsistencies, at the time of Moscow's clear intensification of its support for and contacts with the PLO prior to the Yom Kippur War, may have been the result of continued indecision—or even differences of opinion—within the Kremlin as to just how far or how fast to go with the PLO. At the very least, the Soviets may simply have been trying to keep all their options open even while developing this new Palestinian one.

Although Arafat was to claim that the Soviet memo sent him immediately after the Yom Kippur War contained Soviet recognition of the "Palestinian resistance movement" as the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, the delivery of this memo individually to Arafat, Habash, and Hawatmeh—as well as the continued absence of the term PLO—strongly suggests that the Soviets were not yet ready to recognize the organization fully.<sup>5</sup> As in the past, Arafat's visit to Moscow at the head of a PLO delegation in November 1973 was upon the invitation of the Soviet Afro-Asian Committee rather than a Party or government body, and, as in the past, Arafat was not received by any high Party or government official except Boris Ponomarev, who was responsible for relations with nonruling Communist Parties and generally took care of contacts with national liberation movements.

Much more indicative of Soviet reticence even in the wake of the Yom Kippur War, however, was Soviet reporting of the resolutions of the Algiers Conference of Arab heads of state just two days after Arafat's November visit. Reporting all the resolutions, the Soviets actually deleted the resolution granting the PLO the status of "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians."<sup>6</sup> Only the Soviet trade

---

<sup>4</sup> *Pravda*, September 11, 13, 1973.

<sup>5</sup> *Le Monde*, October 6, 1973.

<sup>6</sup> TASS, November 28, 29, 1973; *Pravda*, November 30, 1973; Moscow radio in Arabic, November 29, 1973. A TASS report from Algiers, November 27, 1973, had reported the full draft of the resolutions, but a November 15, 1973, broadcast in English (to Africa) had even referred to the PLO as "one of various" Palestinian organizations. The only other resolution ignored by Soviet media was the one referring to Jerusalem, as we have seen (Chapter Two).

union paper *Trud* referred to this resolution, in a November 30, 1973, article by Vladimir Shelepin, member of the editorial board of *Novoye vremya* (*New Times*—which is published by *Trud*). Shelepin published the same point in a *New Times* article the following week.<sup>7</sup> The *Trud* article was nonetheless careful to attribute this point to “international press reports” while reporting the other resolutions directly. This indicated a realization of the sensitivity of the point but did not stop Shelepin from saying what he wanted to say. Indeed, in the *New Times* he repeated the PLO recognition directly. Such a discrepancy suggests some difference of opinion regarding recognition of the PLO, the trade union organ, conceivably, tending to a more radical line.<sup>8</sup> At the very least this exception to the general reporting served to highlight the reluctance of the more official organs to commit themselves. That the Soviet Union was nonetheless toying with the idea of recognition was suggested by the fact that Middle East specialist Igor Belyaev spoke of the necessity of PLO participation in forthcoming Middle East negotiations—though he made no mention of their exclusive representation of the Palestinians—in a December 12, 1973, article in *Literaturnaya gazeta*.<sup>9</sup> While this paper is not a popular mass organ, it may have been used in this case to pave the way for a new view of the PLO as Middle East negotiations were getting underway. Yet, the official Soviet position remained unchanged. *Pravda*’s coverage of a Syrian Communist Party resolution again ignored the reference to the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.<sup>10</sup> *Trud*, on this last occasion, avoided any difference from *Pravda*’s reporting—it simply ignored the Syrian Communist Party Central Committee meeting altogether. Similarly, all Soviet media ignored the resolutions of the November 1973 meeting of representatives of The Arab Communist Parties, one of which accorded the PLO recognition as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians, according to an account by a Jordanian Communist Party official

---

<sup>7</sup> V. Shelepin, “The Arab Summit,” *New Times* (November 1973):8.

<sup>8</sup> For background to such a position, see Ilana Dimant, “*Pravda* and *Trud*: Divergent Attitudes towards the Middle East,” Soviet and East European Research Centre, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1972.

<sup>9</sup> Belyaev said; “When the interested parties begin to discuss possible variants of a solution to the problem of the Palestinians during the forthcoming political settlement, they will have to deal with the Palestine Liberation Organization.”

<sup>10</sup> *Pravda*, December 29, 1973. It was on Moscow radio in Arabic, December 27, 1973.



several months later.<sup>11</sup> That this was no accident was demonstrated later when the official Soviet version of the resolutions of the February 1974 Lahore Moslem Conference deleted the decision recognizing the PLO.<sup>12</sup> And as with the Algiers Conference, this official reticence did not prevent less official references, in this case in Soviet Arabic-language broadcasts, to Arab recognition of the PLO.<sup>13</sup>

The PLO received a strong boost in the direction of official recognition when the Soviet Foreign Minister met with Arafat twice, during the former's March 1974 visit to Egypt and Syria. Although the Soviets stopped short of full recognition either by referring directly to the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians or by issuing a separate official communiqué with Arafat, Gromyko did receive Arafat in the Soviet Embassy in Cairo for official talks that were subsequently summarized in the Soviet-Egyptian communiqué. Moreover, Gromyko reportedly extended to Arafat the latter's first *official* invitation to the Soviet Union from the Soviet government, although the Soviets themselves did not make the invitation public.<sup>14</sup> These steps toward the PLO were primarily symbolic, designed perhaps with tactical purposes in mind vis-à-vis both the United States and Egypt, but also, possibly, with the intention of strengthening Arafat in the debate then underway within the PLO over a mini-state and Geneva participation. Moscow itself played up the meeting with Gromyko in its Arabic broadcasts, saying, for example, that the "Palestine resistance movement" had gained important moral and political support from the visit.<sup>15</sup> As to the substance of the Gromyko-Arafat talks, Arafat claimed that Gromyko had now accorded the PLO the same recognition granted by the Algiers and Lahore Conferences, but Moscow was willing to admit only that the topic of the international recognition received by the PLO had been discussed.<sup>16</sup> This admission, although it came only in an Arabic-language Soviet broadcast quoting Arafat, nonetheless implied Soviet approval. This impression was substantiated by a

---

<sup>11</sup> Naim Ashhab, "The Palestinian Aspect of the Middle East Crisis," *World Marxist Review* 17 (April 1974):74.

<sup>12</sup> As well as one on Jerusalem, TASS, February 24, 1974.

<sup>13</sup> Moscow radio in Arabic, February 25, 27, 1974.

<sup>14</sup> *Al-Ahram* (Cairo), March 6, 1974; *al-Nahar* (Beirut), March 8, 1974.

<sup>15</sup> Moscow radio in Arabic, March 6, 1974.

<sup>16</sup> *Al-Nahar*, March 19, 1974 (Arafat interview); Moscow radio in Arabic, March 9, 1974. Arafat was to make this claim again after a May 6, 1974, meeting with Gromyko in the Middle East, just as he had after his November 1973 visit to Moscow and this March meeting—Voice of Palestine, May 8, 1974.

number of semiofficial Soviet references to the PLO's authoritative status, such as various mentions of the Arafat claim that 103 countries recognized the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians.<sup>17</sup> Particularly important was a *Pravda* publication of such recognition granted by the coordinating committee of the nonaligned states, as well as an *Izvestiia* interview with Palestinian members of the PNF, who were quoted as asserting that the inhabitants of the West Bank saw the PLO as their sole representative.<sup>18</sup> The timing of this apparent shift in Soviet reporting suggested an effort to counter Kissinger's latest Middle East moves, not so much perhaps to raise the stakes by demanding recognition of the PLO, but, rather, to appear at least to the Arab world as the only superpower championing their position. As stated earlier, Soviet tactics in the post-Yom Kippur War period tended to nurture the radical or more extremist Arab position so as to strengthen Moscow's appearance as an indispensable party to Middle East negotiations. This somewhat increased attention to the PLO during Kissinger's negotiation of an Israeli-Syrian disengagement agreement could be seen as part of these tactics, while, possibly, operating also in anticipation of U.S. efforts for an Israeli-Jordanian agreement regarding even part of the West Bank.

It is quite possible that the Soviets did agree—in March 1974, or late October 1973, or even earlier, as Arafat claimed—to recognize the PLO exclusively, but such agreement, coupled with the above “unofficial” recognition, made Moscow's continued reluctance to state this officially and directly all the more striking. The Soviets would appear to have decided to keep their options open, possibly as a lever in their own relations with the PLO as well as in the broader negotiations over an Arab-Israeli settlement.

In the course of 1974 the Soviets referred with increasing frequency to the recognition granted the PLO by others, culminating, finally, in a Ponomarev-Arafat communiqué at the close of Arafat's July-August 1974 visit. On this occasion the Soviets allowed that “the sides noted with satisfaction the importance of the decisions taken at the conference of the heads of Arab states in Algiers and the conference of Moslem states in Lahore on the recognition of the

---

<sup>17</sup> Moscow radio in Arabic, March 23, 1974; *Novosti*, March 28, 1974; Moscow domestic radio, March 29, 1974.

<sup>18</sup> *Pravda*, March 23, 1974; *Izvestiia*, March 21, 1974. There was an interesting break in such reporting from March 24 to 27, the three days Kissinger was in Moscow.

PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Arab people of Palestine.”<sup>19</sup> Combined with the fact that the visit was also climaxed by the announcement of Soviet agreement to the opening of a PLO office in Moscow, as well as the official character accorded this visit (Arafat was housed in an official VIP guest house and was received by Party and government officials, albeit no one higher than deputy Foreign Minister Kuznetsov), this was clearly a turning point in Soviet relations with the organization, even if short of granting full official Soviet recognition. Arafat was soon to declare that the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Rumania, the GDR, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Poland, and Hungary had all recognized the PLO, meaning, presumably, that they had all agreed to the opening of PLO offices, though quite some time was to pass before such offices were actually opened.<sup>20</sup>

This latest shift coincided with other efforts to increase Soviet support for the Palestinians following the Soviets’ mistaken appraisal of the Sadat-Hussein statement,<sup>21</sup> at a time when Moscow apparently sought to thwart U.S. efforts for a Jordanian-Israeli agreement. As we have seen, this shift was followed, on the eve of the Rabat Conference and the Palestinian debate in the U.N., by Soviet support for a Palestinian state and a slightly more direct recognition of the PLO, which came in the form of Brezhnev’s October 11, 1974, reference, for the first time in a published speech, to the PLO by name. Brezhnev spoke of the organization as one of the partners—along with and by implication on a par with the Arab states—for negotiations in the Middle East.<sup>22</sup> Having taken this and the preceding steps, Moscow could enthusiastically report the Rabat resolution recognizing the PLO as sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians. Yet, still anxious to keep options open with the Jordanians, particularly with regard to the question of the Geneva Conference, the Soviets characterized the Rabat resolution as a sign of Jordanian-PLO rapprochement. This was by no means the interpretation applied by the PLO—or, for that matter, by Jordan, which began systematically to dissociate itself from the Palestinian issue.<sup>23</sup> Thus, Arafat’s November 1974 trip, in which he was received by a still

---

<sup>19</sup> TASS, August 3, 1974.

<sup>20</sup> Voice of Palestine, August 24, 1974.

<sup>21</sup> See Chapter Two.

<sup>22</sup> Moscow domestic radio, October 11, 1974.

<sup>23</sup> *Pravda*, October 31, 1974; Moscow radio in Arabic, October 29, 1974; Radio Peace & Progress in Arabic, October 31, 1974. As we have seen, one

higher level of Soviet officials—Gromyko and, finally, Kosygin—was concluded by a communiqué welcoming others' recognition, in this case the recognition given by Rabat,<sup>24</sup> though still not asserting this as *direct, Soviet* recognition as such. This was, of course, a purely formal reservation given all the other forms of recognition the Soviets had accorded the PLO, yet it was sufficient to leave some small opening for future manipulation or maneuver. On the other hand, if pressed, the Soviets could point to the implicit recognition contained in these communiqués, speeches, and commentaries, as well as to Soviet support for U.N. General Assembly resolution 3236, which had accorded the PLO the status it sought.

The above basic approach, of limiting recognition to that of praise for such by other states or bodies, remained throughout the ensuing year. In late 1975 and 1976 there occurred, however, still further refinements of the Soviet position. In their November 9, 1975, initiative for a reconvening of the Geneva Conference, the Soviets for the first time *officially* called for participation of "the Arab people of Palestine *as represented by the PLO*" and *on an equal footing* with Egypt, Syria, Israel and, however, Jordan (with whom Moscow was in frequent high-level contact by this time).<sup>25</sup> In time, many press references to the PLO as "the representative" or "the legitimate representative" appeared—although Russian has no definite article, so that the formula was weaker in the Russian than in TASS translations to English. In particular, Malik used these formulations in the U.N., where Soviet pronouncements tended to be somewhat more militant than elsewhere. Such references at the U.N. were also part of the Soviets' contribution to the Syrian initiative during which the PLO, as such, was invited to the Security Council debate of January 1976. Indeed, in this context the Soviet press was even willing to add the word "sole" when speaking of the PLO's representative status. Parallel to the media change, the Soviet government statement issued just prior to the January Security Council debate spoke, directly, of the PLO as "legitimate representative" of the Arab people of Palestine.<sup>26</sup> Thus, the November 1975 and January 1976 statements would appear to have made an official Soviet commitment to the recognition of the PLO. And,

---

Soviet report on this resolution even said that the Palestinians would now be accommodated in the Jordanian delegation to Geneva (see Chapter Three).

<sup>24</sup> TASS, November 30, 1974.

<sup>25</sup> TASS, November 9, 1975 [emphasis the author's].

<sup>26</sup> *Pravda*, January 10, 1976.

for the first time in a Soviet state communiqué, the Soviet-Kuwaiti joint communiqué at the close of a visit by the Kuwaiti Foreign Minister called for PLO participation in the Geneva Conference as "the sole legitimate representative" of the Palestinian people.<sup>27</sup> Yet, both these statements, and the communiqué, were made in the context of the Syrian initiative; once this campaign ended, Moscow reverted to its former, only indirect, characterization of the organization. Thus, the April 28, 1976, government statement merely said that the PLO was "widely recognized as the lawful representative" and, in the Geneva context, spoke of the organization only as "a" representative of the Palestinian people.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, Brezhnev's speech to the Twenty-Fifth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party made no effort to use the opportunity for official recognition of the organization. Brezhnev said only that "friendly ties" with the organization had grown stronger.<sup>29</sup>

Despite its apparent reluctance to make the official final commitment to exclusive PLO status as the Palestinians' representative, Moscow was clearly on its way to such a position in 1976. Overtures to Jordan may have held the Soviets back somewhat, but King Hussein was willing to include a line in his joint communiqué at the close of his visit to the USSR referring to the PLO as "the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people."<sup>30</sup> For the Russians the dilemmas raised by the Lebanese war may have worked in the direction of greater recognition of the PLO. In any case, Soviet media not only increasingly referred to the PLO in its exclusive status, but also explained, as did even the April 1976 Soviet government statement, that the PLO held the support of the "popular masses in the Israeli-occupied territories."<sup>31</sup> Moreover, this support was juxtaposed to the unwillingness of the United States to deal with the PLO or recognize its legitimacy.<sup>32</sup> It was probably in this context, that is, as a counter to the United States, that the Soviet Union permitted various Communist parties, including the Bulgarian and

---

<sup>27</sup> TASS, December 5, 1975.

<sup>28</sup> TASS, April 28, 1976.

<sup>29</sup> *Pravda*, February 25, 1976.

<sup>30</sup> TASS, June 28, 1976. For Hussein this was, of course, not the first such reference, inasmuch as he had accepted the Rabat decision.

<sup>31</sup> TASS, April 28, 1976.

<sup>32</sup> See, for example, V. Vladimirovsky, "Middle East: Need for an Immediate Settlement," *International Affairs* (July 1976):100; Oleg Alov, "Blueprint for Settlement," *New Times* (October 1976):9; Moscow radio in Arabic, August 2, 1976.

East German, as well as the Middle Eastern parties, to speak—even officially—of the PLO as the *sole* legitimate representative of the Palestinians.<sup>33</sup> Yet, the furthest Moscow itself was willing to go was a reference, in a joint communiqué with Yugoslavia, to the “Palestine Resistance Movement” as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.<sup>34</sup> Even when the Soviets finally permitted the PLO to open its office in Moscow—after two years of Soviet-inspired delays—no such recognition was formally stated.<sup>35</sup> The opening of the office did, nonetheless, mark a symbolic strengthening of Soviet support for the organization, even if the timing was designed to balance the King Hussein visit and, possibly, to compensate the Palestinians for Soviet inaction on the Lebanese front. At least Arafat argued that the office was to be seen as a form of diplomatic relations, when he claimed that Ponomarev had told him that the Soviet Union usually opened such offices “so that they may be turned into embassies.”<sup>36</sup>

The question of official Soviet recognition of the PLO became connected, in 1977, with a number of related issues such as PLO participation in Geneva—in view of Egyptian and Syrian suggestions, which avoided an independent PLO delegation—and a federated Jordanian-Palestinian state in response to Sadat proposals to this effect. The Carter administration’s apparent overtures to the PLO in the spring of 1977 also prompted a Soviet response in the area of recognition, while the whole question of the PLO’s legitimacy became something of an issue, first when King Hussein appeared to be backtracking on the Rabat decisions, then when the Egyptians—as well as the U.S.-Israeli working paper—spoke of non-PLO Palestinian representation, and, finally, when Sadat’s peace initiatives circumvented the organization. One outcome of these developments was that the idea of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians moved into the forefront of Soviet media discussions of

---

<sup>33</sup> *Pravda*, December 29, 1976 (Arab Communist Parties’ statement); *Pravda*, August 1, 1976 (Israeli-Jordanian Communist Parties’ statement); *Pravda*, March 30, 1976 (Bulgarian Communist Party leader Zhivkov’s speech to Bulgarian Party Congress); *Izvestiia*, January 21, 1976 (GDR representative at U.N. Security Council); *Pravda*, December 9, 1976 (Polish representative at U.N. General Assembly). The Soviets told the U.N. General Assembly that the PLO was the “*bona fide*” representative of the Palestinians (*Pravda*, November 19, 1976).

<sup>34</sup> *Pravda*, November 18, 1976.

<sup>35</sup> *Pravda*, June 12, 1976, on the opening.

<sup>36</sup> *Al-Ahram*, November 8, 1974.

the conflict. The various arguments concerning the PLO's legitimacy, raised only occasionally in the past, were now expressed prominently and frequently. Responding directly to what was condemned as U.S. and Israeli refusal to recognize the PLO's legitimacy, Soviet media spoke of the massive support enjoyed by the organization among the Palestinians.<sup>37</sup> The declarations of West Bank mayors in favor of the PLO were cited in this context, while international recognition of the organization, particularly that of the U.N., was repeatedly invoked.<sup>38</sup> Now that the issue of the PLO's legitimacy was under frequent discussion, details such as the demand of the United States that PLO recognition of Israel precede Israeli recognition of the PLO were mentioned.<sup>39</sup> While the media refrained from revealing the fact that the Soviet Union itself had urged the same policy, they did argue that PLO participation in Geneva would in effect give the Israelis the recognition they required.<sup>40</sup> One article, which, nonetheless, cited international recognition of the PLO, went so far as to say that "it is permissible not to recognize one political movement or another," but it was impossible not to recognize the Palestinians' rights.<sup>41</sup> This was an unusual formulation, albeit employed only on one occasion, but it may well have been a veiled reference to the fact that the Soviet Union had not, itself, given the PLO official recognition as the Palestinians' exclusive representative.

If the spurt of support for the PLO as the Palestinians' legitimate representative came mainly to counter U.S. overtures to the organization in the spring of 1977, the September and October 1977 U.S.-Israeli working papers, which called for the participation of non-PLO Palestinians in negotiations, prompted greater Soviet emphasis

---

<sup>37</sup> *Izvestiia*, February 26, 1977; Y. Primakov, "Zionism and Israel against the Arab People of Palestine—Part I," *Aziia i Afrika Sevodnia* (March 1977):12; L. Teplov, "Current Problems in World Politics," *Mirovaya ekonomika a mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia* (April 1977):94; A. K. Kislov, "Vital Problems of a Middle East Settlement," *S.Sh.A.* (July 1977):29.

<sup>38</sup> TASS, February 11, 12, 1977, August 11, 1977, September 11, 15, 1977; *Pravda*, August 14, 1977; Kislov, "Vital Problems of a Middle East Settlement," p. 29; M. Kobrin, "Current Problems in World Politics," *Mirovaya ekonomika a mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia* (July 1977):97.

<sup>39</sup> *Izvestiia*, February 26, 1977, April 14, 1977; Kislov, "Vital Problems," p. 29; O. Alov, "For a Settlement in the Middle East," *International Affairs* (September 1977):69.

<sup>40</sup> Igor Blishchenko, "The Rights of the Palestinians," *New Times* (January 1978):21.

<sup>41</sup> *Izvestiia*, January 12, 1978.

on the PLO's exclusivity. The media accused the United States and Israel of "trying to find a group of agent elements in the occupied land and to portray them as responsible leaders who speak for the Palestinians living on the West Bank and in the Gaza area."<sup>42</sup> A TASS release even quoted a Palestinian claim that the U.S. Consul in Jerusalem was bribing Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza to get them to replace the PLO as spokesman for the people.<sup>43</sup> This attack on attempts to find a substitute for the PLO was intensified after the Sadat visit to Jerusalem and his meeting with local Palestinians, for the major card Moscow could use against the Egyptian leader was his apparent willingness to bypass or ignore the PLO. The Soviets themselves, however, were somewhat vulnerable inasmuch as they had agreed to a joint statement with the United States in which no reference whatsoever had been made to the organization. While the reason for this was fairly obvious—U.S. reluctance to mention the PLO as such<sup>44</sup>—Soviet references to the PLO, to its exclusivity, and to the necessity of its participation in Geneva may have been prompted also by the PLO dissatisfaction over the Soviet-U.S. statement of October 1, 1977.<sup>45</sup>

The developments of 1977 prompted not only greater Soviet emphasis upon the PLO's role, but, also, an explicit discussion of the organization's legal position as interpreted by a Soviet legal specialist.<sup>46</sup> According to this commentary, the PLO was the legitimate representative of the Palestinians because it had achieved "a definite standing in international law." This standing itself had been gained by the fact that many—including the socialist—countries had "officially recognized" it and permitted it to open missions. Indeed, the presence of such missions even in countries that had not explicitly recognized

---

<sup>42</sup> Radio Peace & Progress in Arabic, September 14, 1977. See also Moscow radio in Arabic, September 30, 1977; Moscow domestic radio, September 30, 1977; *Pravda*, October 1, 1977. O. Alov, "For a Middle East Settlement," *International Affairs* (January 1978):92-96 devoted a great deal of attention to U.S.-Israeli tactics, arguing that both had even been forced by reality to acknowledge that the PLO did represent the majority of Palestinians, but they, nonetheless, refused to recognize the PLO and let it participate in Geneva (pp. 94-95).

<sup>43</sup> TASS, September 13, 1977.

<sup>44</sup> The Soviets themselves offered this explanation, for example, in Alov, "For a Middle East Settlement," p. 93.

<sup>45</sup> MENA, October 2, 1977.

<sup>46</sup> Professor Igor Blishchenko, Secretary of the International Association of Democratic Lawyers, "The Rights of the Palestinians," pp. 20-21.



the organization was cited as "de facto" recognition. In addition to its "right" to maintain missions abroad, the fact that the PLO was a signatory to international agreements, such as the 1949 Geneva Convention, was also raised as an "important" factor determining its legitimacy. Other such factors were the Rabat decision of Arab states, the inclusion of the PLO in the Arab League—which granted it "state" status—and the U.N. resolutions that gave the organization observer status while recognizing it as speaking for the Palestinians. This last factor was also employed by the author as the basis for PLO participation in negotiations such as the Geneva Conference, arguing that mutual Israeli-PLO recognition would "naturally follow from negotiations" and that such recognition, in any case, was not a prerequisite in international law to participation in international conferences. While this article raised almost no new points, the gathering together of the various arguments and the concentration on the official legal aspect of the recognition granted the PLO even by the socialist states—without, however, specific mention of the USSR—went further toward open official recognition of the PLO than had any previous statement. It was also the first time that a Soviet organ publicly defined the opening of a PLO office as an act of official recognition. Thus, it gave credence to Belyaev's earlier comment that the Soviet agreement of 1974 to permit the opening of a PLO office in Moscow, even if implemented only two years later, had constituted official "diplomatic" recognition.

While not a required component of official recognition, the fact that Brezhnev officially received Arafat in the Kremlin in April 1977 could also be seen as something of a step upwards in the granting of official Soviet recognition. The decision to make this gesture to the PLO leader was almost certainly connected with the overtures on the part of the United States to the PLO in the spring of 1977, though it may also have been prompted, secondarily, by Arafat's difficulties within the PLO and resentment among some Palestinians to Moscow's behavior in the Lebanese context. While the Soviet media reported the meeting and an official statement was issued after the session, it was the Palestinians, not the Soviets, who were to refer to it as an "historic event" demonstrating Moscow's recognition of the PLO as representatives of a "sovereign state."<sup>47</sup> In fact, there

---

<sup>47</sup> Qaddumi, reported in TASS, May 3, 1977; Arafat, TASS, April 8, 1977. There were some, though rare, subsequent Soviet references to the meeting as "historic," for example, in E. D. Prylin, "The Palestinian National Liberation

were a number of elements connected with this meeting that suggested Soviet ambivalence as to its significance as official Soviet recognition. Not only was no joint communiqué issued on what was only a twenty-minute audience, but the statement that was released curiously avoided reference on Brezhnev's part to the PLO as such except in connection with Geneva, employing instead the general term of Palestinian resistance movement.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, while Arafat's delegation was met at the airport by Party and government representatives, these were of a surprisingly low level for what the PLO claimed as a "head of state" visit. Perhaps more significant was the fact that none of the statements issued on Arafat's talks in Moscow spoke of the PLO as the "sole legitimate representative" of the Palestinian people.

This last omission highlighted the strange inconsistencies that continued in Moscow's position. As we have seen, the Soviet media had long—and in 1977 increasingly—spoken of the PLO's exclusive status, as had non-Soviet Communist Parties. In response to the events of 1977 there were even two more official Soviet communiqués in which, as in the communiqué with Kuwait in December 1975, the PLO was specified as the "sole legitimate representative." The appearance of these communiqués—one with the Tunisian Prime Minister on April, 11, 1977, and one with Tito on August 19, 1977—would seem to have marked the end of Soviet fence-sitting and willingness, finally, to accord the PLO full exclusive recognition.<sup>49</sup> Yet, there was no mention of exclusive representation in any other communiqué or in any leadership speech, an omission that was particularly noteworthy in such cases as in Soviet communiqués with Rejection Front delegations, in meetings with Arafat himself, and in speeches by Brezhnev and Kosygin throughout 1977 and 1978. Indeed, the joint communiqué issued after Libyan Premier Jallud's February 1978 visit to Moscow contained a discrepancy on just this point: the version carried by Libyan radio said both sides expressed support of the PLO as the "sole legitimate representative," but the Soviet version did *not* contain the word "sole."<sup>50</sup>

---

Movement and a Near East Settlement," *Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo* (October 1977):95-101.

<sup>48</sup> TASS, April 7, 1977.

<sup>49</sup> *Pravda*, August 13, 20, 1977. Soviet U.N. representative Oleg Troyansky also said "sole legitimate representative" in his U.N. Security Council speech at the end of October—TASS, October 28, 1977—as did the Bulgarian and Czechoslovak representatives to the U.N.

<sup>50</sup> Tripoli radio, February 20, 1978; *Pravda* and *Izvestiia*, February 21, 1978.

Similar ambiguity continued even in the Soviet press as in the case of an *Izvestiia* article that claimed that the socialist states did recognize the PLO as the "sole legitimate representative" only to have the headline omit the word "sole," and a *Pravda* article of the same day using only the indirect approach of citing others' recognition.<sup>51</sup> It would seem, then, that even at this late date the Soviets wanted to keep their options open, either because of their own estimates as to the stability and strength of the PLO, internally as well as in relation to local Palestinians or even Jordan, or simply as a precautionary measure leaving the door open to future—possibly unforeseen—developments in the Arab world or even in the Soviet-U.S. relationship. Specifically, the Soviets may have simply been trying to avoid the type of commitment that could prevent Moscow from participating in Middle East negotiations in the event that the PLO issue became the only obstacle to the holding of such talks. Thus, for example, the way might remain open to the type of talks in which the PLO figured only as one of several representatives of the Palestinians, assuming that this was the most one could hope for from Israel.

As might have been expected, Soviet attention to the PLO continued its steady increase in response to the Egyptian-Israeli talks of 1978 and Begin's autonomy plan for the West Bank. The Soviets used the Palestinian issue as a means of isolating and attacking Egypt in what was part of the broader tactic of supporting the radical Arab camp against exclusive U.S. mediation and U.S. inroads into the Arab world. Soviet criticism of the peace talks raised many points, but the discussion of the Palestinian issue focused on the question of who represented the Palestinian people, both for the purposes of negotiation and in the context of administering the West Bank and Gaza. On the first point the Soviet press claimed, for the first time, that the PLO had been "democratically elected by the Palestinians themselves" to serve as their only legitimate representative.<sup>52</sup> While they never explained just how, where, or when such elections had taken place,<sup>53</sup> they again publicized declarations of support for the PLO expressed by West Bank officials and even

---

<sup>51</sup> *Izvestiia* and *Pravda*, December 31, 1977. See Robert Rand, "The USSR and the Palestinian Problem," RFE-RL, RL 40/78, February 15, 1978, p. 2.

<sup>52</sup> *Pravda*, December 18, 1977; *Pravda*, January 29, 1978, spoke of the Palestinians' "right to create an independent state headed by the PLO."

<sup>53</sup> King Hussein had been saying that such elections, in the form of a plebiscite, would have to take place, and that PLO leadership was not a foregone

spoke of the increased support evidenced for the PLO among the Arabs living in Israel.<sup>54</sup> Some of these Soviet commentaries came in explicit response to what they called Sadat's claim to speak on behalf of the Palestinians or, at the very least, his alleged acceptance of Israel's argument that the PLO need not be the spokesman of the Palestinians.<sup>55</sup> In this context Moscow published comments by Arafat which accorded the PLO a status that had only been implicitly accorded by the Soviets in the past. Speaking of the international recognition granted the PLO, Arafat said that the Palestinians themselves and the struggle waged by the organization had given the PLO the right to represent them in the same way as the "Algerian patriots" and the "patriots of South Vietnam" had represented their people during the struggle for independence.<sup>56</sup> Although Arafat had frequently spoken this way, it was extremely rare for the Soviets to publish such references—which would place the PLO in the mainstream of national liberation movements as conceived by Moscow. That this was in fact the intention was demonstrated by a concluding comment in a later article on the PLO which said, "One of the Palestinian posters shows a Vietnamese patriot handing the banner of victory to a Palestinian fighter. This is symbolic. The Palestinian people's struggle is part of the general antiimperialist liberation process which is winning ever new victories."<sup>57</sup>

With regard to representation of the Palestinians within the framework of the autonomy plan proposed by Israel, Moscow was quick to criticize both the fact that the PLO was totally ignored and that, instead, local "quislings" were to administer the proposed self-rule.<sup>58</sup> The plan was also attacked as an effort to split the Pales-

---

conclusion. See *Newsweek*, August 1, 1977, interview with Hussein as reprinted in *Journal of Palestine Studies* VII (Autumn 1977):204.

<sup>54</sup> See, for example, *Pravda*, April 16, 1978.

<sup>55</sup> *Pravda*, April 16, 1978, argued against Sadat's claim that the West Bank Arabs were aloof from the PLO and Sadat's claim to speak on behalf of the Palestinians. See also *Izvestiia*, July 7, 1978; *Pravda*, May 16, 1978, July 26, 1978; V. Shelepin, "The Would-Be Blitzkrieg," *New Times* (March 1978):6; R. Ovchinnikov, "Middle East: Quick Sands of Separate Agreements," *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn* 11 (1978):38.

<sup>56</sup> Yuri Tyunkov, "Yasser Arafat: The Palestinians Are Closing Ranks," *New Times* (March 1978):8.

<sup>57</sup> Vladimir Belyakov, "Grief and Hopes of the Palestinians," *New Times* (January 1979):26.

<sup>58</sup> *Pravda*, July 26, 1978 (Primakov spoke of a "puppet 'alternative'" to the PLO); *Pravda*, *Krasnaya zvezda*, December 28, 1977, and September 8, 1978. Earlier attempts by Israel to encourage local Palestinian leadership in the

tinian movement into two parts: the minority of Palestinians living in the West Bank with the rest outside the occupied areas, which, presumably, were to be the only constituency of the PLO.<sup>59</sup> Sadat's own proposals for future negotiations concerning the West Bank and Gaza prompted Soviet proclamations of support for the PLO. By suggesting that Gaza revert to the Egyptians and that Jordan negotiate for the West Bank, Sadat was said not only to be ignoring the PLO and the Rabat decisions, but even stripping the PLO of its territorial base.<sup>60</sup> As we have seen, there were in fact other, probably more basic, reasons for Soviet opposition to the autonomy plan, but given the undesirability of its origins and the declared opposition of the PLO, the issue of the PLO's role was a convenient card to play even if this meant further recognition of the group's exclusive legitimacy. Thus, it was probably in response to the 1978 negotiations, and perhaps specifically to the autonomy plan proposal, that Brezhnev himself made a further gesture in the PLO's direction. During Arafat's March 1978 visit to the Soviet Union, Brezhnev once again personally received the PLO leader and, unlike the only previous occasion, referred to the PLO by name, speaking of it as the "head" of the Palestinian people's struggle.<sup>61</sup>

Nonetheless, the Soviets *still* refrained from granting the organization official exclusive status. As already pointed out, joint communiqués—even with Arafat—and Soviet leadership speeches continued to avoid the term "sole" legitimate representative. It took the Camp David accords, that is, the evident success of the Egyptian-U.S. peace effort, to push the Soviets over this barrier. Soviet responses to Camp David contained the by now customary criticism of the bypassing of the PLO, though this was by no means the focal point of Soviet criticism. Again reviewing not only the Palestinians' rights but also the role of the PLO, the Soviets repeated a point made earlier by Arafat that more states recognized the PLO than held

---

occupied territories had evoked the same Soviet response. See Y. Primakov, "Middle Eastern Crisis in 1976," in *Mezhdunarodnyi ezhaodnik politika i ekonomika* [International Yearbook: Politics and Economy] (Moscow: Political Literature Publishers, 1976), p. 217, or Y. Primakov, "Zionism and Israel against the Arab People of Palestine," Part I, *Aziia i Afrika Sevodnia* (March 1977):12.

<sup>59</sup> *Izvestiia*, July 22, 1978; *Pravda*, December 28, 1977.

<sup>60</sup> *Pravda*, July 22 and 26, 1978; *Izvestiia*, July 7, 1978. See also Fyodor Yugov, "Reanimation of Separate Diplomacy," *New Times* (July 1978):8-9; Ovchinnikov, "Middle East: Quick Sands," p. 42.

<sup>61</sup> TASS, March 9, 1978.

official relations with the State of Israel.<sup>62</sup> Although Brezhnev's speeches and official communiqués issued in October, following Camp David, avoided granting the PLO exclusivity,<sup>63</sup> at the close of Arafat's October 29–November 1, 1978, visit to Moscow an official joint communiqué was issued that finally referred to the PLO as the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people."<sup>64</sup> At one level this move may have been meant symbolically to strengthen the PLO's opposition to the possibility of any group of Palestinians, specifically those on the West Bank, answering and cooperating with the Camp David accord regarding West Bank autonomy. It might, similarly, have been a signal to Jordan as well, although by the time of the Arafat visit King Hussein had aligned himself with the Rejectionists. Judging from this point of view, it was probably the PLO that requested the Soviet commitment. Indeed, Arafat added in the communiqué that the PLO would not permit anyone else to speak on behalf of the Palestinian people. The Soviet decision finally to respond positively, however, was probably prompted by more general considerations. As an answer to the United States it reflected the continued Soviet tactic of increasing Moscow's support for the more radical Arab elements in response to U.S. inroads. Given both the U.S.-Egyptian opposition to Soviet participation in a settlement on the one hand, and Syrian-PLO refusal to join in talks with Israel on the other, there were few options open to the Soviets but the radical camp. Whether this remained merely a tactic or was in fact to become the foundation of an obstructionist Soviet policy regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict

---

<sup>62</sup> A. Stepanov, "Hour of Trial for the Palestinians," *New Times* (October 1978):7; Belyakov, "Grief and Hopes," p. 25. Arafat had said the PLO was recognized by twice the number of states recognizing Israel; see Tyunkov, "Arafat," p. 8. The Soviets corrected this from "recognition" to maintaining diplomatic relations inasmuch as many states, such as the USSR, recognized Israel despite having severed diplomatic relations.

<sup>63</sup> RFL-RL had cited this as a point of disagreement between Moscow and Damascus during Assad's October 1978 visit—see Robert Rand, "Assad's Visit to Moscow Ends," RFL-RL, RL 219/78, October 7, 1978, p. 2. A Kuwaiti paper, as we have seen, drew the same conclusion—MENA, October 2, 1977.

<sup>64</sup> *Pravda*, November 2, 1978. Brezhnev repeated this recognition in his November 29, 1978, letter to the PLO on the occasion of its anniversary—*Pravda*, November 30, 1978 has quote from letter. It has been claimed—*Trends in Communist Media*, for example—that this was the first time an *official communiqué* was issued at the close of an Arafat visit, all former visits having been capped by a "report" or something not quite defined as a communiqué.

was yet to be seen. At best the Soviets could be said to be playing both cards at once, namely, strengthening relations with the radical camp as a means of maintaining a foothold in the region, including and especially with an eye on the Persian Gulf, while, at the least, improving their position with these elements so as to increase Moscow's own influence over them in the event of a return to the Geneva forum or to similarly inclusive negotiations.

In any case, for all that the Soviets did make this gesture in the direction of the PLO, it did not necessarily connote an irreversible commitment. Not only did many subsequent Soviet statements revert to former—nonexclusive—usage, but the renewed activity of the PNF and the Communists on the West Bank after Camp David and later the highly publicized visit of a delegation of West Bank mayors to Moscow, together with Soviet overtures to Jordan—for example, the visit to Moscow by Crown Prince Hassan in October 1978 and of an envoy of King Hussein, Hassan Ibrahim, in May 1979—suggested that the Soviets still intended to keep their options open. They were apparently by no means willing to leave the field exclusively to the PLO, nor were they apparently willing to count exclusively upon this organization, whatever the official declarations made for the benefit of Arafat and the Rejectionists or as a counter-thrust to the United States, Egypt, and Israel. Moreover, as Soviet concern grew regarding a westward shift on the part of the PLO, together with Jordan, the Soviets went so far as to oppose certain PLO moves, contributing not only to a split between the Communists and PLO supporters on the West Bank but also to an over-all cooling of Soviet-PLO relations as the 1970s drew to a close.





# CONCLUSIONS

Soviet-PLO relations have come a long way since 1968, particularly since the 1973 war. Moscow shifted from a limited approach to the Palestinian issue as merely a refugee problem, gradually introducing and increasing its support for the Palestinians' right to statehood. Shifting from indirect to direct and even military as well as political support, the Soviet Union elevated its recognition of the PLO from the status of one of the Palestinian organizations, its chairman being invited only as part of Arab state delegations, to the status of a national liberation organization, by 1974 to be received officially by Party and state leaders and accorded an office in Moscow. By 1978 this recognition included the PLO's exclusive claim to represent the Palestinian people, and the Palestinian problem was said to be central to any settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, with the Palestinians' struggle deemed a major part of the Third World movement for national liberation.

Despite this steady augmentation of Soviet support for and involvement with the PLO, Moscow did not, however, change certain of its basic positions regarding the PLO itself, the solution of the Palestinian problem, or even the methods to be used. Thus, the Soviets maintained a critical attitude toward the PLO's position on the existence of the State of Israel and the idea of a Palestinian state instead of, rather than alongside, Israel within the pre-June 1967 borders. Risking the ire of more radical or extremist Palestinian groups, Moscow not only sought to precipitate a change in this attitude but also pressed for a reversal of PLO decisions regarding Security Council resolution 242, the Geneva Peace Conference, and the very idea of negotiations. In this last context the Soviet position regarding methods, that is, political versus military means, negotiations versus terror, underwent only slight change, the weight of Soviet arguments clearly advocating political means at times even to the point of contacts with "progressive" Israelis and improved relations with King Hussein of Jordan. Moscow's own improved relations with Jordan and stepped-up Soviet-sponsored Communist

activity within the occupied territories even suggested a continued Soviet interest in developing a variety of options for the future. This interest was linked with, if not caused by, Soviet concern over the lack of unity within the PLO, and of the role of groups of varied political colorings, particularly that of extremist elements, but also of pro-Hashemite, traditional Muslim forces. Such an interest was only heightened when PLO-Jordanian collaboration aroused Soviet fears that the PLO would shift to the United States.

The juxtaposition of increased Soviet support for the PLO on the one hand, with Moscow's persistence in its opposition to certain key PLO policies and methods on the other, was the result both of the options open to Soviet policy and Soviet objectives, be they in the particular sphere of the Palestinian question or the broader realm of the Arab-Israeli conflict with its regional and global implications. There were in fact few options open to the Soviets with regard to supporting the PLO or not, given the increased importance of the organization in the eyes of the Arab states and the success of its operations at least in thrusting the Palestinians' cause into the center of world attention. Even if various Arab states saw the Palestinian issue only as a tactical card to be used against Israel, such a view alone would be sufficient to press Moscow to follow suit. Indeed, as this card became increasingly popular or central to the Western perception of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the United States itself became interested; at this point the Soviet attitude toward the Palestinians became a function of the superpower relationship and of considerations of the global balance of influence at least in the Middle East. While the incremental development of Soviet support was indeed determined primarily by these last considerations, the relationship was not always direct or entirely positive. U.S. interest in the PLO, as well as U.S. inroads into the Arab world did indeed provoke increased Soviet support for the Palestinians—both as part of Moscow's broader tactic of building its position on the radical element in the Arab world and as part of the Soviets' effort to isolate Egypt and block Egyptian-type shifts to the West by other Arab clients. Yet, Soviet calculations of U.S. willingness to accept Moscow into the negotiating process, the occasional perception of an immediate possibility of such a multilateral process and even of concrete results, as well as the less than wholly consistent Arab attitude toward the Palestinians, prompted restraint in Soviet support for the PLO, occasional backtracking, and, often, accelerated Soviet efforts to gain control over and/or, at least, precipitate a change in PLO positions. Thus, both in the realm of Soviet-U.S. relations and Soviet-Arab state relations, that is, the regional conflict

dominated by superpower competition, the Soviet position vis-à-vis the PLO remained a tactical one. Although the Soviets may have had certain fundamental positions on such matters as the borders of a Palestinian state or the use of international terror or the political leadership of the Palestinian cause, based on considerations of practicality and what Moscow justifiably termed "realism," they were willing to adjust their stand, assume a new one, or even avoid any stand on various issues such as a government-in-exile, Palestinian link with Jordan, PLO participation in the Geneva Conference, and others, depending upon the circumstances of the negotiating process, inter-Arab and Arab-U.S. relations.

Thus, at this tactical level, circumstances at any one point within these often interrelated areas of considerations tended to dictate the benefits—and the liabilities—that might accrue to the Soviet Union from its support for the PLO. For example, Soviet aid to the PLO might serve not only to please, and therefore strengthen Moscow's position with, the radical Arab states, it might also provide an additional option in the Arab world—even an option in the negotiating process, especially given the loss of Egypt, or regarding a topic such as the territories formerly belonging to Jordan. Indeed, a strengthened Soviet-PLO relationship might serve to pressure the United States to include Moscow in the negotiating process as that element that could bring the PLO to the negotiating table and steer that organization's policies toward a less warlike, more cooperative posture. By the same token, support at this stage might provide Moscow with an additional foothold in the region at some future time, after the creation of a Palestinian state, or after a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict with or *without* the creation of a Palestinian state. A Palestinian state might give the Soviet Union another client in the area, and one whose continued grievances against Israel might provide a factor for keeping a conflict alive should the Soviets be so interested. The same "troublemaker" function could also be obtained in the event of a settlement that left the Palestinian problem unsolved. Conversely, if the Soviet objective is in fact a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict with a role for Moscow as coguarantor, the Soviets may well believe that a lasting settlement cannot in fact be achieved, or is not likely to emerge, without solution of the Palestinian problem and, in any case, their own position with a new Palestinian state would be stronger if they could claim even partial credit for having brought about the creation of this state. It is even conceivable that the Soviets might believe that the Palestinian leadership would be more stable, rational, possibly even more controllable, if faced with the responsibilities of state-

hood, particularly since they would be dependent upon outside, presumably Soviet, assistance of all types.

The question arises over the price of Soviet support for the PLO, the liabilities of such an alliance, or simply the negative side of the apparent benefits Moscow can derive from the relationship. In the present situation, prior to a comprehensive settlement and Palestinian statehood, the list of problems raised by the PLO is a long one. Not only does the lack of unity within the organization make it difficult for the Soviets to control its movements or even influence its policies, the internal struggles tend to sway the organization toward rejectionist positions. Such positions not only contradict substantive and even tactical positions of the Soviet Union but, in fact, threaten to impede the negotiations for which Moscow has been striving. The fact that the rejectionist groups inside the organization are linked with various Arab regimes only complicates the matter for Moscow, as do the fluctuating alliances of moderate as well as rejectionist PLO groups with various states and the PLO's financial dependence on Saudi Arabia. And, if ultimately the PLO is dependent upon the Arab states, so, too, is Soviet policy, for it is still the Arab states that can provide—or deny—the Soviets their basic strategic interests in the area. Thus, the PLO would clearly be a liability should the Arab states decide to abandon the Palestinian issue in an effort to gain a settlement with Israel. Assuming that they should do this as continued clients of the Soviet Union, Moscow might well be expected to recognize the purely secondary nature of its relationship with the PLO, subordinate to its interests in the Arab states and in being part of a settlement. It is unlikely that the Soviets would *prefer* to remain outside a settlement, with only the Palestinians as their clients. And, indeed, under such circumstances there would hardly be any guarantee that the PLO itself would not find a *modus vivendi* with the United States. In any case, such a threat generally exists regarding the PLO's orientation, just as it has with the Arab states themselves. Nor would all of these problems vanish in a post-settlement situation with or without Palestinian statehood. In the case of a settlement without solution of the Palestinian problem, it is not certain that the Arab states would be willing to jeopardize their agreements with Israel or risk renewed conflict and war by supporting PLO actions. Presumably the Soviets would opt for the Arab states, assuming that Moscow had not been totally excluded from the settlement and thus left *only* with the PLO option. Yet, given PLO dependence—not only financial—upon the Arab states, there would, in fact, be little the Soviets might do on its behalf short of sponsoring local civil wars, with all their negative implications

both with regard to preventing PLO defeat and avoiding U.S. intervention. In the case of the somewhat more likely case of an Arab-Israeli settlement *with* the creation of a Palestinian state, the Soviets would still be faced with numerous problems. There is no guarantee that such a state would be any more certain or stable a Soviet ally than the PLO as a national liberation movement is today. Neither the domestic nor the foreign policy orientation of such a state is entirely clear given the presence of various even conflicting ideologies or tendencies within the Palestinian movement: bourgeois, Muslim conservative, radical, Marxist, pro-Chinese, pro-Egyptian, pro-Jordanian and even pro-United States. Even assuming that the new state would opt for what the Soviets call a noncapitalist path of development orientated toward the Soviet-led socialist camp, the problem of control would still remain. The Soviets would have the burden of making the state viable economically, and they would have to provide for its defense. These missions are both costly and risky—and, as proven by past Soviet relations with Third World states, do not guarantee control. As in other cases of Soviet patron-client relationships, the U.S. option for economic assistance would be a persistent threat. Nor could the Soviets count on benefiting financially from the supply of arms if the Arab states were unwilling to pay the Palestinians' bills. Moreover, the risk of war with Israel would create a problem for the Soviet Union much the way it had in the past with regard to Egypt and Syria. The classical dilemma would return: supplying arms in order to gain influence but thereby augmenting the possibility of war with its risk of Arab (Palestinian) defeat, the blow to Soviet prestige, the need for Soviet intervention, escalation, superpower confrontation—or failure. Even if the new state pursued a moderate policy, whether or not because the Soviets gained greater control over this client than they did over Egypt, in the past, for example, a problem would occur over the continued operations of dissident Palestinian groups. From this point of view the history of the Palestinian issue and the apparent devotion of most PLO members to a state in all of Palestine provide an almost built-in contradiction to the achievement of the Soviet-backed solution of the problem, rendering it a somewhat different character than that of other movements supported by the Soviets in the past.

For the most part, however, these are not entirely new dilemmas for the Soviet Union. Moscow has faced similar problems in the past, and even elsewhere today, in determining its policies toward Third World countries and movements, including even apparently Communist movements. Moreover, for all the theoretical discussion the Soviets themselves have engaged in regarding many of

these issues, it is not entirely certain that Soviet decision makers have actually undertaken the above cost-benefit analysis in deciding upon a policy regarding the Palestinians. Many of their decisions, including those of incremental support, were probably taken on an ad hoc basis in response to developments within the Arab world and U.S. steps in the Middle East. This would, in fact, fit the pragmatic model of Gibert discussed in our first chapter. Yet, the Soviets have also exhibited signs of comprehending the liabilities and risks involved in their PLO alliance; these signs have been apparent both in Soviet commentaries and articles and in conversations with the Palestinians themselves. Moscow would appear, therefore, to have decided that it is nonetheless worth while to strengthen this relationship so as to reap maximum benefits while striving to overcome or minimize the liabilities. It has attempted to accomplish the latter by seeking some control or influence over the PLO so as ultimately to dictate the direction of the policies and actions of the movement or future state. In content this has meant an effort to achieve a cohesive, stable organization based on a socialist orientation guided by the less radical Soviet-advocated model—all of which might minimize the risks of a pro-Chinese or pro-U.S. or Arab conservative direction, while urging a moderation of objectives, agreement to negotiations, the continued existence of Israel, a mini-state, possibly even a relationship with Jordan, so as to avoid the dangers of extremism and isolation.

None of this is wholly uncomplicated or easy. The very policies urged upon the PLO by the Soviets might make the PLO a more desirable, and suitable, client for exclusive U.S. support, just as Soviet support for radical PLO demands could encourage the undesirable—in Soviet eyes—totally Rejectionist elements. Moreover, the Palestinians themselves have made significant efforts to guard their independence, at least from Moscow. One might even suggest that the PLO is helped in this by the anti-Soviet or independent position of those Arab nations upon which it is dependent, such as Saudi Arabia and Syria. But, primarily, the relative success of the PLO in remaining free of Soviet policy dictates emanates from the organization's internal cleavages, which tend to highlight the broad differences between them and Moscow. It is doubtful that the PLO's continued contacts with China are in fact a serious factor in maintaining independence from Moscow, for the Soviets—and the Palestinians—presumably realize that China can in fact offer little in the Arab-Israeli context. Of greater concern to the Soviets would be the United States, that is, the already mentioned possibility that the United States would find a means of reaching a modus vivendi

with the PLO. This concern has indeed prompted Soviet accommodation with the PLO on specific issues, which, whether intended or not, certainly demonstrated the inverse power relationship that has appeared in superpower-client relationships in recent years. It has also precipitated something of a crisis in Soviet-PLO relations.

If, as we have concluded, the Soviets have nonetheless opted for a strengthened relationship with the PLO, maximizing the benefits while striving to limit the liabilities, have the Soviets in fact closed their other options? Is this an irreversible decision, which in effect elevates the Palestinian factor from a tactical to a strategic level in Soviet Middle East policy? It would appear that the elevation of Soviet demands on such matters as PLO participation in Middle East negotiations or recognition of the organization as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians have led Moscow into an irreversible commitment. Yet, even on these specific issues, the Soviets have demonstrated a marked ability to backtrack or at least maneuver, ignoring apparent contradictions in their position while striving to cultivate alternative or additional options. For all that this superpower-client relationship has been characterized by a lack of superpower control and even a certain superpower dependence, the Soviet Union still maintains a large degree of versatility and flexibility in the pursuit of its own regional and globally-linked regional objectives. One might argue that having despaired of becoming a partner to an Arab-Israeli settlement—or for whatever other reason one might care to presume—Soviet Middle East policy has undergone a radicalization, shifting to classical expansionist aims based on the pursuit of a radical, antiimperialist, anti-U.S. block. This would explain what would appear to be a strengthened Soviet commitment to the PLO and the elevation of this issue beyond the tactical level. Yet, the adoption of such a policy—or exclusive reliance on such a policy—has not yet been proven. Despite the leftist success in such places as South Yemen, the activization of Communists in Egypt, and the short-lived Syrian-Iraqi rapprochement, Soviet orders to local Communists have not urged a radicalization of policies or even tactics. The Soviets were in fact most restrained in their attitude toward the Syrian-Iraqi merger, even creating problems in the realm of military relations. More directly, the Soviets have maintained their basic position on the Arab-Israeli conflict, urging a return to multilateral negotiations and demanding Soviet participation in the peace-seeking process. From this point of view there has been no essential change in the Soviet attitude or behavior toward the PLO. But even if a radicalization were in effect, the PLO itself is far too unstable, uncertain, and divided, far less

Marxist and yet far too extremist to be Moscow's preferred partner. Even in this case the PLO would be seen as a tactical-instrumental factor, aimed, ultimately, at reaching the radical Arab states and influencing events, rather than perceived as a pillar of Soviet expansionist plans. The net conclusion in any case may well be that the PLO in fact has little to offer the Soviets beyond the tactical level, and thus, perhaps even more than many other national movements, Third World states, and even Communist parties, is subject to Moscow's broader superpower, global considerations. As such it is not indispensable to Soviet policy—indeed, few things are—although its function in Soviet Middle East policy is fraught with complications, ambiguities, limitations, and, at times, contradictions.



# ***APPENDIX***



# BIBLIOGRAPHY

## SOVIET NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS

*Aziia i Afrika Sevodnia*

*Izvestiia*

*Kommunist*

*Komsomolskaya pravda*

*Krasnaya zvezda*

*Literaturnaya gazeta*

*Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'* (International Affairs)

*Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnoshenie*

*Narodi Azii i Afriki*

*New Times*

*Pravda*

*S.Sh.A., Ekonomika, Politika, Ideologia*

*Sovetskaya Rosiya*

*Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo*

TASS

*Trud*

*World Marxist Review*

*Za rubezhom*

*Zarie Vostoka*

## **NON-SOVIET NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS**

*An-Nahar Arab Report* (Beirut)

*An-Nahar Arab Report and Memo* (Beirut)

*Arab Report and Record* (Beirut)

*The Arab World Weekly* (London)

*BBC Summary of World Broadcasts* (London): USSR, Middle East, and Africa

*Bulletin of the Soviet Union and The Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Jerusalem)

*The Economist* (London)

*Events* (London)

*Foreign Broadcasting Information Service (FBIS)* (Washington, D.C.): USSR, Middle East, and Africa

*France-Presse Arabes* (Paris)

*Free Palestine* (London)

*The Guardian* (London)

*Ha'aretz* (Tel Aviv)

*Israel and Palestine* (Paris)

*Israel Mizrach Bulletin (IMB)* (Tel Aviv)

*Jerusalem Post* (Jerusalem)

*Journal of Palestine Studies* (Beirut)

*MERIP Reports—Middle East Research and Information Project* (Washington, D.C.)

*The Middle East* (London)

- Middle East Economic Digest* (London)  
*Middle East Journal* (Washington, D.C.)  
*Middle East Review* (New York)  
*MIS—Middle East Intelligence Survey* (Tel Aviv)  
*Monday Morning* (Beirut)  
*Le Monde* (Paris)  
*The New Middle East* (Jerusalem)  
*New Outlook* (Tel Aviv)  
*New York Times* (New York)  
*L'Orient le Jour* (Beirut)  
*Palestine* (New York)  
*Palestine Digest* (Washington, D.C.)  
*Radio Free Europe Research* (Munich)  
*Radio Liberty Research* (Munich)  
*Sunday Times* (London)  
*Times* (London)  
*Trends in Communist Media* (Washington, D.C.)  
*The USSR and the Third World* (London)  
*Yediot Ahranot* (Tel Aviv)

Arabic language sources were consulted in the translations of the BBC, FBIS, IMB. Discrepancies in the spelling of Arabic names are the result of varied systems of transliteration employed among the sources.

## BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS

- Alexander, Yonah, ed. *International Terrorism: National, Regional and Global Perspectives*. New York: Praeger, 1976.
- Ayvansky, Ze'ev. *Hateror Haishi [Personal Terror]*. Tel Aviv: Kibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, 1977.
- Bell, J. Bowyer. *On Revolt: Strategies of National Liberation*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978.
- Ben-Dor, Gabriel, ed. *The Palestinians and the Middle East Conflict*. Ramat Gan: Turtledove Press, 1978.
- Blishchenko, I. P., and V. D. Kudryavtsev. *Agresia Izraela i mezhdunarodnoe pravo [Israeli Aggression and International Law]*. Moscow: International Relations Publishers, 1979.
- Bolton, Alexander. *Soviet Middle East Studies, Part VI*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959.
- Cantori, Louis, and Stephen Spiegel. *The International Politics of Regions*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970.
- Central Committee of the Jordanian Communist Party and the Directing Committee of the Palestinian Communist Organization in Transjordan. *Les Communistes et la Question Palestinienne*. March 1977.
- Confino, Michael, and Shimon Shamir, eds. *The USSR and the Middle East*. New York: John Wiley, 1973.
- Cooley, John. *Green March, Black September*. London: Frank Cass, 1973.
- Curtis, Michael, Joseph Neyer, Chaim Waxman, and Allen Pollack, The Palestinians. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1975.

- Dabagh, Salah. *The Soviet Union and the Palestinian Problem*. Beirut: PLO Research Center, 1968.
- Demchenko, P. *Arabski Vostok v chas ispytani* [The Arab East in the Hour of Trial]. Moscow: Publishing House for Political Literature, 1967.
- Denoyan, Gilbert. *El Fath Parle: Les Palestiniens Contre Israel*. Paris: Edition Albin Michel, 1970.
- Dmitryev, E. *Palestinskii uzhel* [The Palestinian Knot]. Moscow: International Relations Publishers, 1978.
- Dmitryev, E., and V. Ladeikin. *Put' k miry na blizhnem vostokye* [The Road to Peace in the Middle East]. Moscow: International Relations Publishers, 1974.
- Duncan, Raymond, ed. *Soviet Policy in Developing Countries*. Waltham, Mass.: Ginn-Blaisdell, 1970.
- Eban, Abba. *Abba Eban*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1978.
- Epp, Frank. *The Palestinians*. Toronto: McClelland and Stuart, 1976.
- Freedman, Robert. *Soviet Policy towards the Middle East*. New York: Praeger, 1975.
- Garthoff, Raymond. *Soviet Military Policy*. London: Faber and Faber, 1966.
- Gilbert, Stephen, and Wynfred, Joshua. *Arms for the Third World: Soviet Military Aid Diplomacy*. Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1969.
- Golan, Galia. *Yom Kippur and after: The Soviet Union and the Middle East Crisis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977.
- Gross, Feliks. *Violence in Politics*. The Hague: Mouton, 1972.
- Hammond, Paul Y., and Sidney S. Alexander, eds. *Political Dynamics in the Middle East*. New York: American Elsevier, 1972.
- Harcabi, Yeshofat. *Palestinians and Israel*. Jerusalem: Keter Press, 1974.
- Herod, Charles. *The Nation in the History of Marxism Thought*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976.
- el-Heyjal, Hasan. *The Road to Ramadan*. London: Collins, 1975.

- Hirst, David. *The Gun and the Olive Branch: The Roots of Violence in the Middle East*. New York: Faber and Faber, 1977.
- Hsueh, Chun-tu, ed. *Dimensions of China's Foreign Relations*. New York: Praeger, 1977.
- Jureidini, Paul A., and William E. Hazen. *The Palestinian Movement in Politics*. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1976.
- Kanet, Roger. *The Soviet Union and Developing Nations*. Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974.
- Kanet, Roger, and Donna Bahry, eds. *Soviet Economic and Political Relations with the Developing World*. New York: Praeger, 1974.
- Kass, Ilana. *Soviet Involvement in the Middle East: Policy Formulation*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1978.
- Kazziha, Walid. *Revolutionary Transformation in the Arab World: Habash and His Comrades from Nationalism to Marxism*. London: Charles Knight, 1975.
- Kim, Georgy. *The Socialist World and the National-Liberation Movement*. Moscow: Novosti, 1978.
- Kohler, Foy, Mose Harvey, Leon Goure, and Richard Soll. *Soviet Strategy for the Seventies: From the Cold War to Peaceful Coexistence*. Miami: University of Miami Press, 1973.
- Kulski, W. W. *The Soviet Union in World Affairs: A Documented Analysis, 1964-1972*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1973.
- Laqueur, Walter. *The Road to War: The Origin and Aftermath of the Arab-Israeli Conflict*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1968.
- . *The Struggle for the Middle East: The Soviet Union in the Mediterranean*. New York: Macmillan, 1969.
- . *Confrontation: The Middle East and World Politics*. London: Bubler and Tanner, 1974.
- . *Terrorism*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1978.
- . *Guerilla*. Boston, Mass.: Little Brown, 1976.
- Leites, Nathan. *A Study of Bolshevism*. Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1953.



- Lenczowski, George. *Soviet Advances in the Middle East*. Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1972.
- Lenin, V. I. *Collected Works*. Vols. 11, 22, 31. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1962, 1964, 1966.
- . *National Liberation, Socialism and Imperialism*. New York: International Publishers, 1968.
- Liska, George. *Alliance and the Third World*. Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1968.
- Maoz, Moshe. *Palestinian Arab Politics*. Jerusalem: Jerusalem Academic Press, 1975.
- Mezhdunarodnyi ezhegodnik politika i ekonomika* [International Yearbook: Politics and Economy]. Moscow: Political Literature Publishers, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977.
- Mishal, Shaul. *West Bank—East Bank: The Palestinians in Jordan 1949–1967*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1978.
- Mitin, M. B., Y. D. Modrzhinskaya, and Y. S. Yevseyev, eds. *Ideologiya i praktika mezhdunarodnogo sionizma* [The Ideology and Practice of International Zionism]. Moscow: Politizdat Publishers, 1978.
- Moore, John Nordon. *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*. Vols. I–III. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1972.
- O'Neill, Bard. *Armed Struggle in Palestine: A Political-Military Analysis*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1978.
- Pennar, Jean. *The USSR and the Arabs: The Ideological Dimension 1971–72*. London: Hurst, 1973.
- Quandt, William, Fuad Jabber, and Ann Morley Lesch, *The Politics of Palestinian Nationalism*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1973.
- Pomeroy, Wm. *Guerilla Warfare and Marxism*. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1969.
- Primakov, Y. M. *Anotomiia blizhne vostoknogo konflikt* [Anatomy of the Near Eastern Conflict]. Moscow; "Mysl" Publishers, 1978.
- El-Rayyes, Riad, and D. Nahas. *Guerillas for Palestine*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1976.

- . *The Road to Peace in the Middle East*. Moscow: Novosti, 1970.
- Ro'i, Yaacov. *From Encroachment to Involvement: A Documentary Study of Soviet Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1973*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1974.
- . ed. *The Limits to Power*. Croom-Helm, London, 1979.
- Rosenau, James. *International Aspects of Civil Strife*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1964.
- . *Linkage Politics*. New York: The Free Press, 1969.
- Rubinstein, Alvin, ed. *Soviet and Chinese Influence in the Third World*. New York: Praeger, 1975.
- Sadat, Anwar. *In Search of Identity*. New York: Harper and Row, 1977.
- Safran, Nadav. *From War to War*. New York: Pegasus, 1969.
- Schapiro, Leonard, et al. *Soviet Objectives in the Middle East*. London: Institute for the Study of Conflict, 1974.
- Schiff, Ze'ev, and Raphael Rothstein. *Fedayeen*. London: Vallentine, Mitchell, 1972.
- Sobel, Lester, ed. *Palestinian Impasse: Arab Guerillas and International Terror*. New York: Facts on File, 1977.
- Spechler, Dina. *Domestic Influences on Soviet Foreign Policy*. Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1978.
- Taborsky, Edward. *Communist Penetration of the Third World*. New York: Robert Speller and Sons, 1973.
- Thompson, Robert. *Revolutionary War in World Strategy 1945-1969*. New York: Taplinger Publishing Co. 1970.
- Thornton, Thomas. *The Third World in Soviet Perspective*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1964.
- Triska, San, and David Finley, *Soviet Foreign Policy*. London: Macmillan, 1968.
- Ward, Richard J., Don Peretz, and Evan Wilson, *The Palestinian State*. Port Washington, N.J.: Kennikat Press, 1977.

- Whetten, Lawrence. *The Canal War*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT University Press, 1974.
- Wilkinson, Paul. *Political Terrorism*. London: Macmillan, 1974.
- Wolfe, Thomas. *Soviet Strategy of the Crossroads*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964.
- Ya'ari, Ehud. *Strike Terror: The Story of Fatah*. New York: Sabra Books, 1970.
- Yaniv, A. *P.L.O., A Profile*. Jerusalem: Israel Universities Study Group, August 1974.
- Yodfat, Aryeh. *Arab Politics in the Soviet Mirror*. Jerusalem: Israel University Press, 1973.
- Zhukov, Y., L. Delynsin, A. Iskenderov, and L. Stepanov. *The Third World*. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970.
- Zhurkin, V. V., and Y. M. Primakov, eds. *Mexhdunarodnye konflikty* [International Conflicts]. Moscow: International Relations Publishers, 1972.

## ARTICLES

Agha, Hussein J. "What State for the Palestinians." *Journal of Palestine Studies* VI (Autumn 1976):3-38.

Alexander, Yonah. "The Legacy of Palestinian Terrorism." *International Problems* XV (Fall 1976):57-64.

"As the PLO Sees It." *Palestine Digest* 5:11 (1976):3.

Ashhab, Naim. "To Overcome the Crisis of the Palestinian Resistance." *World Marxist Review* 15 (May 1972):22-23.

———. "The Palestinian Aspect of the Middle East Crisis." *World Marxist Review* 17 (April 1974):27-29.

———. "The Sights on Realism." *World Marxist Review* 18 (June 1975):97-104.

———. "For an Overall Settlement in the Middle East." *World Marxist Review* 19 (December 1976):7-9.

———. "The Balance of World Forces and the Middle East Crisis." *World Marxist Review* 19 (March 1976):40-42.

Batal, Georges, Amjad Rashad, and Mohammed Hasmel. "Vital Tasks of the Arab Liberation Movement." *World Marxist Review* 11 (September 1968):26-30.

Becker, Abraham S. "Moscow and the Middle East Settlement: A Role for Soviet Guarantees?" *Middle East Review* 8 (Spring-Summer 1976):52-57.

Belfiglio, Valentine. "The UN and the Palestine Question." *International Problems* XIV (Fall 1975):45-54.

Bjelajac, Slavko. "Unconventional Warfare: American and Soviet Approaches." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 341 (May 1962):74-81.

- Borodin, N. "The Palestinian Resistance Movement: A Soviet View." *New Middle East* No. 51 (December 1972):27-28.
- Browne, Donald R. "The Voices of Palestine: A Broadcasting House Divided." *The Middle East Journal* 24 (Spring 1975):133-150.
- Burrell, R. "Opportunity Knocks for the Kremlin Middle Eastern Policy." *The New Middle East* (July 1972):9-14.
- Campbell, John C. "The Soviet Union and the Middle East." *The Middle East Journal* 32 (Winter 1978):1-12.
- . "Soviet Policy in the Middle East and Africa." *Current History* 73 (October 1977):100-4, 131-132.
- . "The Communist Powers in the Middle East: Moscow's Purposes." *Problems of Communism* XXI (September-October 1972):40-53.
- Carlson, Sevine. "China, the Soviet Union and the Middle East." *The New Middle East* (December 1970):32-45.
- Cass, Alain. "What Lessons from Lebanon." *Middle East International* (September 1976):8-9.
- Clemens, Walter. "Soviet Policy in the Third World in the 1970s." *Orbis* XIII: 2 (1969):476-501.
- Cobban, Helen. "The PLO Faces New Pressures." *Middle East International* (May 1978):10-12.
- Cohen, Ammon. "The Changing Patterns of West Bank Politics." *The Jerusalem Quarterly* (Fall 1977):105-113.
- Cooley, John K. "The Shifting Sands of Arab Communism." *Problems of Communism* XXIV (March-April 1976):22-42.
- Dawisha, Karen. "Soviet Union in the Middle East: Setback or Comeback?" *The Middle East* (July 1977):75-79.
- Denno, Bryce. "Sino-Soviet Attitudes towards Revolutionary War." *Orbis* XI (Winter 1968):1193-1207.
- Dimant (Kass), Ilana. "Pravda and Trud: Divergent Attitudes towards the Middle East." Jerusalem Soviet and East European Research Centre, Hebrew University of Jerusalem (1972).

- "The Dominoes of Extremism." *Israel and Palestine* (December 1977):8-9, 19-20.
- Eran, Oded. "The Soviet Union and the Palestine Guerilla Organization." Tel Aviv: The Shiloach Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, 1971.
- Ermath, Fritz. "The Soviet Union in the Third World: Purpose in Search of Power." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 386 (1969):31-40.
- Franjeh, Samir. "How Revolutionary is the Palestinian Resistance? A Marxist Interpretation." *Journal of Palestine Studies* 1:2 (1971-72):52-60.
- Freedman, Robert O. "The Soviet Union and the Civil War in Lebanon 1975-6." *The Jerusalem Journal of International Relations* 3 (Summer 1976):60-93.
- Gelman, Harry. "Russia, China, and the Underdeveloped Areas." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 349 (September 1963):130-42.
- Ghilan, M. "Strategy for Survival." *Israel and Palestine* (June 1975):6-7, 10.
- Ghilan, Maxim. "The Status-Quo Congress." *Israel and Palestine* (April 1977): 11-12.
- . "PLO, September 1977." *Israel and Palestine* (August-September 1977):24.
- . "The Dominoes of Extremism." *Israel and Palestine* (December 1977):9.
- Ghnaim, A. "The Peace Mafia." *Arab Palestinian Resistance* IX (March 1977): 4-6.
- Gilbert, Stephen. "Wars of Liberation and Soviet Military Aid Policy." *Orbis* X:3 (1966):839-58.
- Golan, Galia. "Internal Pressures and Soviet Policy." Unpublished paper. Jerusalem (1973), 45 pp.
- . *The Soviet Union and the PLO*. Adelphi Papers, No. 131, London, 1977.
- . "Soviet Policy in the Middle East: Growing Difficulties and Changing Interests." *The World Today* 33 (September 1977):335-42.
- . "Syria and the Soviet Union since the Yom Kippur War." *Orbis* 21 (Winter 1978):777-801.

- Gottlieb, Gidon. "Palestine: An Algerian Solution." *Foreign Policy* (Winter 1975-76):198-211.
- Harcabi, Y. "PLO will not be PPLO." *New Outlook* (April-May 1977):11-14.
- Hassner, Pierre, and Hedler Rull. *Civil Violence and the International System* Adelphi Papers, No. 51, London, 1971.
- Horelick, Arnold L. "Moscow's New Time of Troubles in the Middle East." *Middle East Review* 8 (Spring-Summer 1976):42-51.
- Hudson, Michael. "The Palestinian Factor in the Lebanese Civil War." *The Middle East Journal* 32 (Summer 1978):261-78.
- "Interview with the Palestine National Front." *Palestine Digest* 6 (October 1976):19-14.
- "Israeli-Palestinian Contacts." *Israel and Palestine* (November-December 1976): 1-10.
- Iyyad, Abu. "Syrian Tutelage Will Never Return." *Palestine* 2 (November 1976): 6-8.
- Jabber, F. "The Soviet Attitude toward Arab Revolution: Yemen, Egypt, Algeria, Iraq and Palestine." *Middle East Forum* 46:4 (1971):41-67.
- Jansen, Godfrey. "The PLO after Cairo," *Middle East International* (May 1977): 8-10.
- Jenkins, B. "International Terrorism: A Balance Sheet." *Survival* 17 (July-August 1975):158-64
- Jiryis, Sabri. "Towards an Independent Palestinian State: A Palestinian View." *New Outlook* 20 (August 1977):43-50.
- . "On Political Settlement in the Middle East: The Palestinian Dimension." *Journal of Palestine Studies* VII (Autumn 1977):3-25.
- Johnson, Michael. "Middle East: Is Time Running out?" *The World Today* 31 (June 1975):256-64.
- Kaddoumi, Farouk, and Abdel Mohsen Maizar, "The Crux of the Middle East Crisis." *World Marxist Review* 19:7 (1976):34-35.
- Kanet, Rogert E. "The Soviet Union and the Developing Countries: Policy or Policies," *The World Today* 31 (August 1975):338-46.

- Kass, Ilana. "Moscow and the Lebanese Triangle." *Middle East Journal* 33:2 (Spring 1979):164-88.
- . "The Lebanon Civil War 1975-76." *Jerusalem Papers on Peace* 26-27 (1979).
- Keep, John. "The Soviet Union and the Third World." *Survey* 72 (1969):19-38.
- Keshishian, Leon. "PLO at the UN." *The Middle East* (November 1977):31.
- Khalidi, Walid. "Thinking the Unthinkable: A Sovereign Palestinian State." *Foreign Affairs* 56 (July 1978):695-713.
- Kimche, Jon. "Soviet Military Shifts and the Destruction of Lebanon." *Midstream* XXII (March 1976):45-51.
- Kyle, K. "The Palestinian-Arab State: Collision Course or Solution?" *The World Today* 33 (September 1977): 343-52.
- Lefevre, J. "Moscou et les Palestiniens," *L'Arche* (May-June 1974):23-24.
- M. Farouq. "Palestine and the Soviet Union." *Palestine* 3 (January 1977):34-41.
- Medzini, R. "China and the Palestinians: A Developing Relationship." *The New Middle East* (May 1971):34-40.
- Meissner, Boris. "The Soviet Concept of Nation and the Right of National Self-Determination." *International Journal* XXXII (Winter 1976-77):56-81.
- Merom, Ran. "The Soviet Concept of Guerilla Warfare and Retaliation: The Case of the Palestinian Guerillas." *International Problems* 16:3-4 (1977): 78-91.
- Mohammed, Azziz. "Tasks of the Revolutionary Forces of Iraq." *World Marxist Review* 19 (September 1976):3-5.
- Mosley, Philip. "The Kremlin and the Third World." *Foreign Affairs* 46 (October 1967):64-77.
- Muslih, Mohammed Y. "Moderates and Rejectionists within the Palestine Liberation Organization." *The Middle East Journal* 30 (Spring 1976):127-40.
- O'Neill, Bard E. "A Typology of Political Terrorism: The Palestinian Resistance Movement." *Journal of International Affairs* 32:1 (1978):17-42.



- Omar, Mazin. "New PLO Hints." *The Middle East* (November 1976):72-76.
- Papp, Daniel. "National Liberation during Detente: The Soviet Outlook." *International Journal* XXXII (Winter 1976-77):82-99.
- Parker, Thomas. "Les maires de la Cisjordanie et de Gaza: Leur politique et leurs doléances." *Politique Étrangère* 43:3 (1978):331-46.
- Perera, Judith, and Terence Mirabelli, "West Bank State: The Hurdles Ahead." *The Middle East* (February 1977):8-18.
- Pittman, John, and Zahi Karkabi. "The True Face of Zionism." *World Marxist Review* 20 (March 1977):105-113.
- Plascov, Avi. "A Homeland for the Palestinians?" *Survival* XX (January-February 1978):11-20.
- Poupard, Olivier. "La Revolution Palestinienne et l'État Palestinien." *Politique Étrangère* 40:5 (1975):475-92.
- Qaddumi, Farouq. "A Palestinian State on National Soil," *Review of International Affairs* 25 (September 5, 1974):10-11.
- . "The PLO Still Hangs Tough." *Palestine Digest* 6 (March 1977):11.
- el-Qassem, Selim. "Discrimination: A Bankrupt Policy." *World Marxist Review* 19 (October 1976):40-41.
- Ro'i, Yaacov. "The Role of Islam and the Soviet Muslims in Soviet Arab Policy," Parts I and II. *Asian and African Studies* 10:2, 3 (1974-75):157-89, 259-80.
- Romaniecki, Leon. "The Arab Terrorists in the Middle East and the Soviet Union." Jerusalem: Soviet and East European Research Centre (1973).
- Rothenberg, Morris. "Recent Soviet Relations with Syria." *Middle East Review* X (Summer 1978):5-9.
- Rouleau, Eric. "The Palestinian Quest." *Foreign Affairs* 53 (January 1975): 254-83.
- . "The Coming Palestine Compromise." *Palestine Digest* 5 (August 1975): 9-11.

- Rubenstein, Alvin. "Soviet Policy in the Third World in the 1970's." *Orbis* XV:1 (1971):104-17.
- Salfiti, Fahmi. "The Situation in Jordan and Communist Tactics." *World Marxist Review* 11 (October-November 1968):43-46.
- Sela, Abraham. "The PLO, the West Bank and Gaza Strip." *The Jerusalem Quarterly* (Summer 1978):66-77.
- Schapiro, Leonard. "The Soviet Union and the PLO." *Survey* 23 (Summer 1977-78):193-207.
- Schopflin, George. "Russia's Expendable Arab Communists." *The New Middle East* (June 1972):20-21.
- Smart, Ian. "Future Political Patterns in the Middle East." *The World Today* 32 (July 1976):243-50.
- Smolansky, Oles. "Moscow and the Arab-Israeli Sector." *Current History* 72 (October 1976):105-8.
- . "Soviet Policy in the Middle East." *Current History* 74 (January 1978): 5-9, 39-39.
- "Special Document: The Soviet Attitude towards the Palestine Problem," *Journal of Palestine Studies* VI:1 (1972): 187-212.
- Tessler, Mark A. "Israel's Arabs and the Palestinian Problem." *The Middle East Journal* 31 (Summer 1977):313-30.
- "Time of the Conferences." *Israel and Palestine* (October 1977)-8.
- Trabulski, Fawaz. "Lebanese Leftist Assesses War Results." *Palestine!* II (February 1977):10-11.
- Tuma, Elias. "The Economic Viability of a Palestinian State." *Journal of Palestine Studies* VII (Spring 1978): 102-24.
- Ullman, Richard H. "After Rabat: Middle East Risks and American Roles." *Foreign Affairs* 53 (January 1975):284-96.
- Valkenier, Elizabeth. "Sino-Soviet Rivalry in the Third World." *Current History* 57:338 (1969):201-6.
- . "New Trends in Soviet Economic Relations with the Third World." *World Politics* XXII:3 (1970):415-32.

- . "L'URSS et le 3<sup>m</sup> Monde." *Politique Étrangère* 38:1 (1972):85-97.
- . "Changing Soviet Perspectives on the Liberation Revolution." *Orbis* IX (Winter 1966):953-69.
- Vilner, Meir. "Peace in the Middle East: A Sheet Anchor for Israel." *World Marxist Review* 20 (April 1977):25-32.
- Walzer, Michael. "Israel Policy and the West Bank." *Dissent* (Summer 1976): 234-36.
- Warrad, F. "National and Class Aspects of the Arab Liberation Movement." *World Marxist Review* 21 (February 1978):77-85.
- Watt, D. C. "Towards a Middle Eastern Settlement? The Policy of Ambiguity." *The Political Quarterly* 49 (January-March, 1978):13-25.
- Whetten, Lawrence. "Changing Soviet Attitudes Towards Radical Arab Movements." *The New Middle East* (March 1970):20-27.
- Yodfat, Aryeh, "The USSR and Arab Communist Parties." *The New Middle East* (May 1971):29-33.
- . "The USSR and the Palestinians." *New Outlook* 19 (June 1976):30-33.
- Younger, Sam. "What Can Syria Do?" *Middle East International* (May 1978): 8-10.



# INDEX

- Abbas, Abul, 161n  
Abd-Rabo, Yassir, 101n  
Abu Daoud, 206, 218  
Abu Iyyad (Salah Khalaf), 71, 73n,  
121, 152-53, 153n, 188-92,  
194-95, 152-53, 153n, 188-92,  
194-95, 197, 205, 207, 218,  
226n  
Abu Jihad, 205  
Abu Mayzar, 117, 169n  
Abu Said, 71  
Abu Saleh (Nimr Saleh), 153  
Afghanistan, 165, 170n, 178  
Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee (of  
the USSR), 7, 11, 48, 85, 147,  
156, 184, 189, 191, 224, 229  
al-Ansar, 12, 27, 166  
al-Fahum, Khalid, 56n, 60n, 202n  
Algeria, 35, 37, 114, 242  
Algiers Conference 1973, 96, 96n,  
229, 231, 233  
al-Hassan, Khalid, 71, 123, 154, 158  
Amir, Ahron, 78  
Arab Foreign Ministers' Conference,  
(Tunis 1977) 148  
Arab-Israeli War of 1948, 6, 83, 84, 89  
Arab League, 102, 239  
Arab Liberation Front, 113, 113n,  
161, 199, 206  
Arab Liberation Movements, 2, 6, 33,  
33n, 35, 36, 37, 157, 229, 242  
Arab National Front, 144  
Arab Popular Conference, 12n  
Arab states, 9, 11, 27, 32, 44, 45,  
54, 60-61, 63, 105, 112, 120,  
123, 129, 142, 220, 246, 247  
(*see also* individual states); and  
combined Arab delegation to  
Geneva, 135 (*see also* Jordanian-  
PLO delegation to Geneva); and  
Communist parties, 173; and  
government-in-exile, 64n; and  
hijacking, 212; and Israel, 9,  
32, 54, 68, 73, 86-87, 92, 105,  
115, 247, 249; and Israel  
Communist Party (Rakah), 174;  
and oil boycott, 54; opposition  
to U.S. peace process, 164; and  
Palestinian state, 51, 249, 250;  
and PLO, 30-32, 34, 36, 42, 46,  
145-147, 160, 163, 177, 198-  
99, 207, 217, 234, 247, 249,  
251; and U.S., 59, 126, 247,  
252; and U.S.-Soviet joint state-  
ment, 126;  
Arab Steadfastness Front, 207, 209  
(*see also* Rejectionists)  
Arafat, Yasser, 11, 13, 53, 57n, 68, 70,  
72, 76, 96, 100, 113, 116, 118,  
123, 133, 139, 151, 152, 153n,  
162n, 170, 175, 177-78, 185,  
190, 207, 209, 229, 231, 240,  
242-43, 244n, 245; and Abu  
Iyyad, 152, 153n, 205, 217-18,  
226n; and Afghanistan, 178; and  
Brezhnev, 14, 74, 116-17, 123,  
239; to China (1970), 12; and  
Communists on West Bank, 172;  
and Geneva Peace Conference,  
64n, 114, 115, 116, 117, 121,  
231; and Gromyko, 82, 96, 118,  
133, 138, 139, 221, 231-32,  
234; and Habash, 113, 156, 162,  
200; and Hawatmeh, 150, 155-

- 56, 157, 159; idea of Palestinian state, 57, 64n, 65n, 70, 107, 107n, 231; and Israel-PLO contacts, 178; and Jordan, 13n, 101n, 179; and Kosygin, 234; and Lebanese crisis, 178, 182, 184, 194-96, 200, 205-6, 207; and Podgorny, 10n; and Ponomarev, 229, 236; and Qaddumi, 152, 153, 192n, 195, 200; and Rejectionists, 162, 164, 218; and Sadat initiative, 153, 218; and Soviet military assistance, 9, 11, 204n, 207; to Soviet Union (1968), 8; to Soviet Union (1970), 11, 215; to Soviet Union (1972), 14, 47, 228; to Soviet Union (1973), 217, 229, 231n; to Soviet Union (1974), 36, 55n, 62, 115, 116, 130, 131, 132, 145, 155, 223, 231n, 232; to Soviet Union (1975), 57, 72, 97, 117, 118, 155; to Soviet Union (1977), 72-73, 78n, 80, 121, 138-40, 239-40; to Soviet Union (1978), 64n, 204n, 207, 213, 243-44; to Soviet Union (1979), 110, 208; and Syria, 152n, 182, 192n, 194; on terror, 221, 225; U.N. speech (1974), 65; and UNIFIL, 205; and Western leaders, 108, 108n, 154n, 158, 177; to Yugoslavia (1976), 64n; and Zionists, 175n
- Assad, Hafiz, 55n, 76, 101n, 129n, 132, 183-84, 187, 189, 195, 196n, 201-2, 213n
- Austria, 158, 213; *see also* Arafat and Western leaders
- Autonomy plan, 84, 101, 104-10, 172, 241-43
- Avnery, Uri, 78n
- Baader-Meinhof group, 212
- Barghuti, Bashir, 171
- Basel Conference on Palestinian Solidarity, 170
- Ba'ath Party: Iraq, 65n, 173; Syria, 32
- Begin, Menachem, 241
- Belyaev, Igor, 29, 55n, 62, 85-86, 230, 239
- Black September, 217, 220, 221
- Boumedienne, Houari, 55
- Brandt, Willy, 177
- Brezhnev, Leonid, 55n, 56, 61, 95; and Arafat, 14, 74, 117, 123, 239; and Geneva Peace Conference, 128-29, 129n, 130-33, 134, 138; and Israel, 55n, 74, 76, 92-93; and PLO, 75, 131-32, 134n, 138, 233, 235, 239; and refugees, 82; and Security Council resolution 242, 117, 123, 239; and Syria, 185, 191, 196n; and Third World, 17, 19, 24-25
- Brown, Dean, 183, 183n
- Bulgaria, 9n, 53n, 55, 162n, 233, 235, 240n
- Caananites, 78n
- Camp David, 64n, 71n, 104-6, 140, 150, 158, 170, 219, 243-45
- "Carlos," 212
- Carter administration, 58, 70n, 82, 103, 124, 127, 135, 136n, 138, 236
- Castro, Fidel, 25
- China, 6, 12, 18, 21, 26-27, 29, 36, 39, 40, 41, 42, 46, 71, 71n, 115n, 144, 152, 182n, 200n, 252
- CIA, 100
- Committees for National Guidance, *see* National Guidance Committee
- Communism, and PLO, 147, 149, 168, 172n, 179
- Communists (*see also* individual Communist parties), 11, 12n, 16-18, 36, 39, 40, 41, 42, 48, 49, 52n, 53, 67-68, 84n, 85, 93, 96n,

- 100, 110, 151, 154, 158, 165-66, 168n, 170-79, 230, 236, 240, 247, 252, 253-54; and al-Ansar, 12; and Arab Communist Parties meeting (1973), 228, 230; and Arab states, 172; and East Jerusalem, 171-72; and Fatah, 154, 170, 172; and pro-Hashemite elements, 170, 172; international Communist conference (June 1969), 11; and international conference of Communist Parties in Moscow (1969), 46; and Israel Communist Party (Rakah), 179; and Lebanese war, 156, 189; and National Guidance Committee, 170; and Palestine National Front, 166, 171, 179, 217; and PLO, 7-8, 31, 38, 174, 177, 179; and West Bank, 63, 106, 109, 168, 171-72, 179, 217, 245; *see also* Communism and PLO Confederation (*see also* Jordan), 97, 99-102, 105, 115n, 135, 236
- Conference on a Just Peace in the Middle East (Paris, October 1977), 176-77
- Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace, 176, 177
- Cuba, 35, 162n, 203, 213, 191n
- Czechoslovakia, 53n, 175, 212, 233, 240n
- Dayan, Moshe, 222
- Demchenko, Pavel, 79, 193
- Demilitarization, 107, 111
- Eastern Europe (*see also* individual states), 9, 9n, 36, 162, 162n, 165
- East Germany, 123, 162n, 202, 212, 213, 228, 233, 236
- Eban, Abba, 87
- Egypt, 6, 28, 34, 45, 46, 47, 71n, 96, 99-100, 101, 102, 105-6, 118, 126, 131, 135-36, 181, 186, 192n, 200, 231, 234, 241, 243, 245, 248, 249, 253; Egypt-Israel Peace Agreement, 74, 102, 126, 140, 150, 177, 178; Egypt-Israel Interim Agreement, 56, 88, 96, 98, 116, 117, 132, 133-34, 192n; and government-in-exile, 63, 64; and Jordan, 100-1, 109, 142; and Kissinger, 116-17, 132, 133-34; and PLO, 82, 108, 123, 142, 146-47, 182, 236, 238, 243; and Saudi Arabia, 183, 186, 196; Soviet relations to, 52, 56-57, 132, 186n, 189, 195, 231, 251; and Syria, 100, 183, 183n, 186, 189, 195-96, 200; and U.S., 13n, 54-57, 59, 73, 98, 106, 116-17, 124, 132-34, 181, 186, 243, 244, 248
- Eritrea, 157
- Ethiopia, 157
- Fahmi, Ismail, 80, 82, 90, 131, 133
- Fanon, Franz, 18
- Fatah, 27, 29, 32, 33, 45, 70, 100, 109, 114, 121, 123, 151-52, 154, 158, 164-65, 170, 199-200, 216-17; Afghanistan issue, 165; creation of, 7n, 30, 30n, and Egypt, 45; and government-in-exile, 64n; and guerilla warfare, 34; and Habash, 164; and Hawatmeh (FDLP), 148, 154, 156n, 158, 165, 199; ideology of, 32, 44, 151, 153-54, 159, 165, 209; internal struggles of, 152, 153, 200, 206-7; Israel's contacts with, 174-75; Israel, existence of, 10; and Jordan, 32, 55n, 151, 158, 165, 170, 179; and Lebanese crisis, 151-52, 156n, 182, 188-89, 197,

- 205-6; military supplies to, 9n; and PLO, 7n, 11, 13n, 30, 44, 151-52, 154, 158, 160, 164, 172, 177-78; and Rejectionists, 153, 165, 170, 179; and Sa'iqa, 13, 159, 160; to Soviet Union, 13, 151-52, 153, 154, 207; strength of, 179, 200; and Syria, 7, 42, 152, 182, 200 and terrorism, 9, 10, 34, 35, 159, 212, 213, 216, 217, 218, 223-25; and U.S., 165, 172; and West Bank Communists, 108-9, 154, 170-72, 179
- Feiler, Eliezer, 81
- Ford, Gerald, 131
- France, 103, 122, 176, 218n
- "Front of Palestinian Forces Rejecting Capitulationist Solutions," 163n
- Gaza Strip, 166, 219, 241; and Egypt, 104, 243; Israeli withdrawal from, 56, 85, 92; Palestinians, living in, 60, 91n, 238; Palestinian state in, 53-54, 54n, 56, 65, 79, 84n, 85, 87, 90, 94, 96, 102, 103, 103n, 104-7, 109, 110, 126
- General Union of Palestinian Labor, 7
- General Union of Palestinian Students, 7
- General Union of Palestinian Women, 7
- Geneva Convention of 1949, 239
- Geneva Peace Conference, 55n, 55-56, 62, 69, 74n, 74-75, 78, 87, 94, 97, 113-42, 146, 159, 161, 173, 186, 220, 233, 240, 249; and Arab combined delegation (*see also* Jordanian-Palestinian combined delegation), 135, 137, 138, 146; boycott of, 139, 140; and Brezhnev, 128-29; 129n, 130-32, 134, 138; efforts to reconvene, 72-73, 114, 116, 117n, 119, 122, 124-25, 126, 128, 131-32, 134-35, 137-38, 140-41, 156, 181, 196, 197, 235; and Habash, 114, 115, 123, 123n; and Hawatmeh, 156-57, 162; and PLO, 34, 113-40, 145-46, 161, 197, 230, 231, 235, 236-40, 247, 249; and Sadat, 131; and Soviet proposal, (October 1976), 134, 135, 196, 197; and U.S., 54, 117, 124, 129, 131, 133-34, 135, 140, 141, 142, 181, 196, 238n
- Gibert, Stephen, 39, 252
- Glukhov, Iurii, 79
- Golan Heights, 96
- Government-in-exile, 62, 63, 64, 64n, 111, 146, 149, 155, 249
- Great Britain, 6, 96n, 122
- "Greater Israel," 68
- Gromyko, Andrei, 55, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 78, 81-82, 88, 89, 93, 131-33, 138-39, 220, 221; and Arafat, 82, 84n, 96, 122, 133, 138, 139, 222, 231, 231n, 234; and Qaddumi, 194, 195; speech to Geneva Conference, 78, 87, 88, 89, 92
- Guarantees, 71, 75, 88, 92, 93, 107, 108n, 249
- Guerilla warfare, 14, 22, 27-28, 32-35, 35n, 210, 214-17, 241
- Habash, George, 107, 148, 168n, 229; and Afghanistan, 178; and Arab Liberation Front, 161; and Arafat, 113, 156-57, 162, 200; contacts with Soviet Union, 57n, 107n, 115n, 160, 161, 164-65, 200, 218; to East Europe, 162, 162n; extremism (including terrorism), 29n, 150, 154-55, 156, 160-61, 161n, 163-64, 213, 216, 218; and Geneva Conference participation, 114,



- 115, 123n; and Hawatmeh, 156, 158, 164; and Israel, 88, 113, 161, 168n; and Israel Communist Party (Rakah), 168n; and Jibril, 161; and Jordan, 179; and Lebanon crisis, 189; and negotiations, 113, 162, 164; and Palestinian state, 53, 58, 87-88, 161, 164, 168n; and Rabat Conference, 162; and Security Council resolution 242, 69; 113-15, 123n; and Syria, 132; and Soviets and Syrian Communist Party, 161n; and UNIFIL, 205-6; and West Bank 1976 municipal elections, 167
- Haddad, Wadia**, 213
- Hamami, Said**, 68, 225
- Hashemite (pro-) elements**, 109, 170, 172, 248
- Hassan, Crown Prince**, 101, 245
- Hassan, Ibrahim**, 170, 245
- Hawatmeh, Nayif**, 34, 157-59, 164, 229; and Arafat, 150, 156, 159; and contacts with Israelis, 176, 201n; and contacts with Western leaders, 108n, 158; and Fatah, 148, 154, 156n, 158, 164, 199; on Geneva Peace Conference, 156, 157; and government-in-exile, 62, 63, 155; and Gromyko, 155; and Habash, 156, 158, 164; and internal PLO unity, 148, 156, 157; on Israel, 72, 73, 157-58, 176; and Lebanese crisis, 156-57, 189, 206-7; as Marxist, 34, 151, 154, 157, 163, 178; and Palestinian state, 53, 54n, 57, 85, 88, 155, 164; and PLO-Jordanian rapprochement, 101, 108, 158; and Ponomarev, 157; and refugees, 80, 157; and Rejectionists, 150, 156-57, 158, 163, 165, 170; on Security Council resolution 242, 114, 122-23; to Soviet Union (1973), 63, 154-58, 207; and Syria, 156, 191; and terrorism, 155, 159, 219; and UNIFIL, 207
- Hijacking** (*see* terrorism)
- Hourani, Abdullah**, 81
- Hungary**, 10, 53n, 176, 233
- Hussein, King**, 31, 45-46, 98-100, 115n, 129, 133, 170, 235, 235n, 241n, 247; and combined Arab delegation, 137; and Rejectionists, 244; and Sadat, 129, 130n, 233; to Soviet Union, 96, 97-98, 198, 235-36
- Hussein, Saddam**, 115n, 133, 173
- Ideology** (*see also* Fatah, Communism, PLO, Hawatmeh, Habash, Marxism), 31-34, 36-40, 41, 53n, 56, 186,
- Iran**, 279
- Iraq**, 38, 47, 53n, 58n, 76, 113, 114n, 115n, 133, 161n, 172-73, 186, 196, 219; Iraqi Communist Party, 115n, 173; and Conference on a Just Peace in the Middle East (Paris, October 1977), 176-77; and Jibril, 115n; and Kosygin visit (May 1976), 179; and Rejectionists, 115n, 163, 173; and Syria, 201n, 253
- Ireland**, 212
- Islamic Revolution**, 109, 170, 170n
- Israel**, 8, 26n, 43, 46, 50-51, 60n, 67, 71-73, 77, 86-87, 91-94, 95, 99n, 101, 105, 127, 133, 137, 139, 145, 157-59, 160, 176, 199, 201, 201n, 202n, 203, 205, 207, 211, 213, 214, 220, 234, 241, 244n, 245, 248; autonomy plan, 104-10, 241, 242; and Black September, 220; borders of, 60, 69, 71, 73n, 75, 82-95, 102n, 103, 110-11, 112, 122-23, 127, 247; and Brezhnev, 55n, 74, 76, 92-93; compensa-

tion for Arab losses, 5, 80n, 96 (see also Refugees); creation of, 66, 87, 171n; declaration of independence, 68; diplomatic relations with Soviet Union, 73, 88, 160; existence of, 9-10, 26, 34, 43-44, 50-51, 65, 65n, 67-68, 72, 75-76, 78, 78n, 81-82, 83n, 87, 90, 111, 112, 143, 155, 252; and Geneva Peace Conference, 94, 132, 181, 197, 244n; and Habash, 88, 113, 161, 168n; hostilities toward, 7, 8, 64, 214, 215; Jerusalem (see Jerusalem); and Jordan, 56, 96, 100, 129, 137-38, 232-33, 247; and Lebanese crisis, 65n, 181, 190, 193, 202-7, 215, 226; and Mohsen's assassination, 159-60; occupation of Arab lands, 29, 35, 54, 65, 79n, 83-84, 86, 87, 89, 91, 92-93, 105, 106, 107, 125, 127, 215, 219; Palestinian contacts with, 158, 174-76, 177-78; and Palestinian state, 59, 65n, 67-68, 78n, 79-80, 82-83, 92-93, 95, 104, 110, 112, 249, 251, Palestinians, recognition of, 142, 175 (see also PLO: recognition of Israel); peace with, 69, 70, 93, 122, 127, 161, 251; and PNF, 168, 168n; recognition of, 35, 43, 58, 58n, 69-72, 73-75, 78n, 84n, 113, 119-20, 124-25, 139, 153, 157, 160, 161, 168n, 174, 230n, 237, 239, 244n; and a settlement, 43, 59, 66-67, 89, 92, 250; settlements, 84, 90, 106, 122; and Syria, 55n, 76, 117, 129, 129n, 189n, 201, 203, 232, 251; and terror against Arabs, 215, 216n, 220, 221; and UNIFIL, 204-5; and U.S., 13n, 54-56, 72, 75, 76, 79n, 85, 90, 95, 106, 112, 118, 124-25, 127, 130, 137, 231-33, 236-38

Israel Communist Party (Maki), 171n  
 Israel Communist Party (Rakah), 57-58, 61, 61n, 67-68, 74n, 81, 91, 93-94, 103-4, 158, 167, 168n, 174n, 174-79  
 Israel-Egyptian Interim Agreement, 56, 88, 96, 98, 116, 117, 132, 133-34, 192n  
 Israel-Egyptian Peace Agreement, 74, 102, 126, 140, 150, 177, 178  
 Israeli Arabs, 29-30, 60-62, 91n, 111, 174, 215, 242  
 Israel Labor Party and Rakah, 176, 177  
 Italy, 212  
 Jallud, Abdul Salaam, 240  
 Japan, 212  
 Jerusalem, 65, 94, 96, 102-3, 103n, 106, 110-11, 171, 229n  
 Jewish people, 26, 26n, 65-66, 77, 77n, 78n, 224  
 Jibril, Ahmed, 57, 113, 115n, 161, 162, 162n, 163n, 221  
 Jordan, 30, 45, 97-98, 98n, 99-103, 105, 107-10, 127, 130, 132-33, 136-38, 170, 179, 233-34, 244-45, 247; and autonomy plan, 105, 106, 108; and Egypt, 100-1, 109, 142; and Fatah, 32, 55n, 151, 158, 170, 179; and Israel, 56, 96, 100, 129, 137-38, 232-33, 247; Jordanian civil war (1970-71), 12, 31, 36, 46-47, 52; Jordanian-Palestinian delegation, at Geneva Conference, 117n, 128n, 128, 129, 130, 131, 131n, 135, 138n, 233n; and Palestinian state (including Confederation), 59, 65, 95-96, 99-102, 106, 110-11, 172, 249; and PLO, 31, 36, 97, 98, 98n, 100-1, 105, 107-9, 117n, 127, 128n, 133, 135, 137, 142, 151, 152n, 157-58, 164, 172, 178-79, 233, 241, 248, 252; and Sadat's peace

- initiative, 63; and Syria, 46, 98, 99-100, 100n, 135, 159, 186, 186n; and U.S., 54-56, 97-100, 101, 106, 108-9, 111, 130, 137, 158, 181, 231-33; and West Bank, 96n, 97n, 98, 101-2, 102n, 105, 109, 138, 171n, 243, 249; and Yom Kippur War, 54n
- Jordanian Communist Party**, 54, 63, 84n, 93-94, 96, 165-66, 169, 170n, 171-172, 174, 179; and contacts with Israeli progressives, 176n; and guerilla and terrorism, 27, 215, 221; and Israel Communist Party (Rakah), 103, 174-75; and Jordan, 101n, 172; and Palestinian Communists, 120, 137n, 146-47, 171, 174; and PNF, 12, 165, 168; and return of refugees, 1972; and Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, 144
- Jumblatt, Kamal**, 12n, 185, 191n
- KGB**, 214
- Khaddam, Abdel Halim**, 75, 133, 184-85, 185n
- Khrushchev, Nikita**, 6, 15-17
- Kies, Naomi**, 178
- Kissinger, Henry**, 56, 88, 97, 116-18, 129, 130-34, 187n, 232
- Kosygin, Aleksei**, 7, 11, 54, 182-83, 187, 188, 189n, 234, 240
- Kozyrev, Semen**, 192
- Kreisky, Bruno**, 158, 177
- Kudryavtsev, Viktor**, 48, 79-80, 84, 147, 223
- Kutachkov, P. S.**, 98
- Kuwait**, 29, 126, 157, 235, 240
- Kuznetsov, Vasilii**, 233
- Lahore Moslem Conference (1974)**, 96, 231-32
- Lebanese crisis**, 63, 128, 145, 153, 156n, 161n, 180-209; and Abu Iyyad, 152, 188; and Brown, Dean, 183; and cease-fires, 191-92, 194-95, 201, 209; and Christians, 184, 207; and Habash, 189; and Hawatmeh, 156-57, 188, 206-7; and Israel, 65n, 181, 181n, 190, 193, 202-7, 215, 226; and Lebanese left, 180-83, 185n, 187-88, 192, 194-95, 207; and Mohsen, 182; and PLO, 31, 45, 145-46, 156, 160, 163, 168, 173, 178, 180-209, 217-18, 235; and Palestinian presence in Lebanon, 151, 185, 195, 197, 198, 204, 208, 236; and partitioning of Lebanon, 181, 181n, 203; and Qaddumi, 153n, 191, 195; and Saudi Arabia, 187-88, 196; and Syria, 128, 135, 152, 159-60, 161n, 173, 180-88, 189n, 189-93, 195-96, 199, 201, 208-9; and Syrian Communists, 173; and U.S., 65n, 181-83, 190, 208
- Lebanese war**: and Arafat, 178, 182, 184, 194-96, 200, 205-6, 207; and Egypt, 181; and Fatah, 151-52, 156n, 182, 188-89, 197, 205-6; and Lebanese Communist Party, 156, 188, 191, 204; and Middle East Crisis, 196-97, 208; and Palestinians, 45, 159, 180-82, 184, 187-88, 193, 194, 196, 197, 205, 208, 239; and PDFLP, 156, 188; and Rejectionists, 146; and settlement, 181, 183, 187, 192, 194-96, 208; and Soviet military aid, 182, 182n, 190, 191n, 197-98, 202-5, 207
- Lenin, V. I.**, 15-16, 21-23, 32, 37, 39, 77n, 165, 224
- Libya**, 76, 114, 150, 163-64, 186, 189, 196, 240
- Lithuanian nationalists**, 28n, 211
- Malenkov, G. M.**, 15

- Malik, Yacov**, 118, 234  
**Mandatory Palestine**, 52n, 65-68, 70, 78, 95, 111, 174, 251  
**Mao Tse-Tung**, 18, 221  
**Mapam**, 177  
**Marxism**, 14, 21, 22, 32, 34, 39, 57, 62, 72, 81, 151, 154, 157, 159  
**Matveyev, Viktor**, 88  
**Matzpen**, 175, 175n  
**Mencheviks**, 210  
**Mohsen, Zuhair**, 29, 72-73, 115n, 150n, 159-60, 160n, 182  
**Moro, Aldo**, 212  
**Morocco**, 83n  
**Muslim Brotherhood**, 29
- Nasser, Gamal Abdel**, 6, 8  
**National Guidance Committee**, 106, 170  
**National liberation movements**, 6-7, 11-12, 14-29, 32, 35, 37-40, 41-42, 44-46, 48-49, 51-52, 53n, 77, 91n, 174n, 186, 221, 226, 247, 250  
**NATO**, 42  
**Negotiations**, 43, 47, 54-55, 111, 113-14, 118, 120-21, 124-25, 126-27, 128-29, 135, 141, 142, 143, 145, 147, 162, 164, 179, 230, 232, 233, 239, 241, 248-49, 263 (*see also* Geneva Peace Conference, Israel, Settlements)  
**New Left**, 18  
**Nixon, Richard**, 129, 138  
**North Korea**, 213
- Occupied territories**, 27, 35, 44, 56n, 83-84, 91n, 102, 103-5, 149, 169, 215-18, 235, 238, 242n, 243, 248; and withdrawal from, 11, 27, 56, 69, 79n, 83n, 85, 89, 92-93, 102-3, 104n, 122, 124, 127, 157 (*see also* Palestine and the occupied territories)
- October Revolution**, 14
- Pakistan**, 96n  
**Palestine, partition of**, 52n, 60, 65-66, 78, 78n, 82-87, 88, 91, 91n, 94-95, 118n (*see also* UNGA resolution)
- Palestine Liberation Front**, 161n  
**Palestine National Council (PNC)**, 31, 33, 56n, 57, 63, 70, 71n, 74n, 120, 146  
**Palestine Resistance Movement**, 29, 198, 222, 228-29, 231, 236  
**Palestinian Communist Organization**, 63, 93, 101n, 120, 137n, 146-47, 169, 170n, 171-72, 174, 176n  
**Palestinian Communist Party**, 172-73  
**Palestinian entity**, 165, 179  
**Palestinian-Jordanian delegation, at Geneva Conference**, 117n, 128, 128n, 129, 130, 131, 131n, 135, 138n, 233n  
**Palestinian Popular Struggle Front**, 69  
**Palestinians**, 9-11, 31, 33n, 44, 46-47, 48, 49, 52n, 52-54, 59-61, 73, 74, 82, 83-84, 89, 90-91, 91n, 92, 94-95, 98, 102, 103, 108, 114-15, 117-18, 118n, 120-21, 124, 125-26, 128n, 128-29, 130-31, 134-35, 141, 144, 163, 167, 171, 173-74, 199, 200, 203, 205, 214, 237, 238, 241, 244, 248, 249-52 (*see also* PLO and specific topics); administration of, 241; and autonomy plan, 100, 106, 241-43; and Egypt, 34; contacts with Israelis, 115, 158, 174; "homeland," 59, 72, 106, 122; and Israel Communist Party (Rakah), 174-78; and Jordan, 12, 34, 52, 65, 95, 96, 97, 99, 109, 129, 151, 186, 233, 249 (*see also* Jordan and PLO; Jordan and Palestinian state);

- and Lebanese crisis, 151, 159, 180-82, 184, 193, 194, 196-97, 198, 204-5, 209, 236, 239; "legitimate rights of," 6, 11-13, 52n, 53, 55, 58, 70, 114, 125, 127, 141, 199, 237; legitimate national rights, 5, 52-53, 55n, 58, 60, 85n, 93, 114-15, 128, 174; living outside Israel, 60n, 61, 62, 91n; as a "nation," 6, 10, 14, 26-27, 51, 52n, 66, 77n, 114, 115, 233, 234; Palestinian national authority, 56; and "national home," 56, 122, numbers of, 60, 60n; and the occupied territories, 57, 61, 65, 79n, 84, 102, 109, 173, 238, 243-44; Palestinian self-rule, 90, 105; and Syria, 7, 44, 79, 99, 159, 185, 185n, 188, 201, 203; and Syrian Communist Party, 91n, 143, 172, 172n; and U.S., 6, 58-59, 74, 82, 106, 109, 124, 125, 129, 135, 141-42, 172, 249; and Yom Kippur War, 54n
- Palestinian state**, 50-51, 55-56, 58-59, 62, 66, 67-68, 79, 83-84, 84n, 85n, 89-93, 96, 101, 110, 151, 168, 171, 197, 249-50, 251-52; administration of, 50; borders of, 51, 52n, 58, 82, 83, 84, 84n, 95, 103n, 110, 129, 149n, 249; and Communism, 149n; as democratic secular state, 65, 65n, 66, 67, 78, 111; demilitarization of, 107, 110-111; and Egypt, 99-100; and Habash, 53, 58, 87-88, 161, 164, 168n; and Hawatmeh, 53, 54n, 57, 85, 88, 155, 164; idea of, 14, 26, 50-52, 54, 55n, 56-63, 68, 78n, 78-79, 83, 93, 96, 99, 101-2, 106, 107, 111, 112, 130, 145, 153, 156, 171, 178, 179, 186, 233, 241n, 247; and Israel, 59, 65n, 67-68, 78n, 79-80, 82-83, 92-93, 95, 104, 110, 112, 249, 251; and Iraqi Communist Party, 173; and Israel Communist Party (Rakah), 175; and Jordan, 59, 63-65, 95, 99-102, 106, 172, 249; location of, 34, 52n, 53, 54, 54n, 55, 56, 58, 59, 60, 62, 64, 65, 70, 78n, 79, 79n, 83, 84, 84n, 85, 85n, 87, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95-96, 102, 103, 103n, 105, 106, 109, 110, 113n, 126, 145, 146, 155, 157, 161, 164, 166, 168, 232, 252; and U.S., 58, 59, 65n, 100, 107n, 149n
- Palestinian-Syrian unified command**, 132
- Pavlov, N.**, 77n
- PDRY**, 38
- Peoples Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP)**, 114, 150, 158, 159, 161, 165, 178, 199 (*see also* Hawatmeh); and Camp David accords, 158; and Fatah, 148, 154, 156n, 199; and Lebanon crisis, 156, 188, 189, 199
- PLO: Afghanistan and (local) Palestinian Communists**, 170n; and al-Ansar, 12, 27; and Arab National Front (Iraq), 144; and Arab states, 30-32, 34, 36, 42, 46, 145-47, 160, 163, 177, 198-99, 207, 217, 247, 249, 251 (*see also* individual Arab states); and autonomy plan, 104, 106, 108-9, 235; and Brezhnev, 75, 131-32, 134n, 138, 233, 235, 239; and Camp David, 105-6, 150, 219; and Central Council, 12-13, 70n, 119-23, 126, 146, 200; and Charter of 1968, 65, 68; and China, 6, 29, 36, 71, 71n, 144, 252; and Communism, 147, 149, 168, 172n, 179; and Communists, 7-8, 31, 36, 38, 174, 177,

179; and contacts with Israelis, 158, 163, 174-78, 247; and Egypt, 82, 108, 123, 142, 146-47, 182, 236, 238, 243; and executive committee, 57n, 150; and extremism, 8, 28, 32, 37-38, 42, 43-44, 143-46, 150, 154-55, 162, 215-17, 221, 248, 252; and Fatah, 7n, 11, 13n, 30, 44, 151-52, 154, 158, 160, 164, 172, 177-78; and founding of 1964, 5-6, 30; and Geneva Peace Conference, 34, 113-40, 145-46, 161, 197, 230, 231, 235, 236-40, 247, 249; and government-in-exile, 64n, 146; and ideological character of, 8, 29, 31-34, 36-38, 43, 45, 143-44, 146, 149, 151, 156, 174, 186, 251, 253; and internal differences, 31, 34, 42, 43, 46, 52, 56-57, 121, 141, 143-79, 185-86, 193, 198-99, 206-7, 220, 227, 241, 248, 250, 251-52, 253; and internal organization of, 30, 46-47, 146-47, 198; and Iraq, 115n, 172-73; and Israeli Arabs, 174; and Israel Communist Party (Rakay), 163, 174-76, 177, 179; and Israeli recognition of, 72, 119, 237, 239, 244; and Jordan, 31, 36, 97, 98, 98n, 100-1, 105, 107-10, 117n, 127, 128n, 133, 135, 137, 142, 151, 152n, 157-58, 164, 172, 178-79, 233, 241, 241n, 248, 252; and Jordanian delegation, 117n, 128n, 135; and Kuwait, 29, 126; and leadership of, 31, 33, 36-37, 44, 141, 143, 146, 150-51, 154, 157, 185, 197, 200, 206, 208, 221, 240, 249-50; and Lebanese crisis, 31, 145-46, 156, 160, 163, 168, 173, 178, 180-209, 217-18, 235; and legitimacy of, 35, 236, 238, 239; and as

national liberation movement, 6-7, 11n, 11-12, 26-29, 32, 35, 39, 45, 48, 174n, 186, 247, 250; and negotiations, 109, 118, 120-21, 124-25, 143, 145, 151, 230, 233, 241, 252-53; and opening of offices, 7, 14, 98, 198, 228, 233, 236, 238-39, 247

PLO, operations of, 217n; and Athens airport, 220; and hijacking Air France plane to Uganda (1976), 212-213, 224; and Kiryat Shmoneh attack, 221, 225; and Lod airport attack, 121; and Ma'alot, 155, 159, 222, 225; and Munich Olympics, 218n, 219-21, 222; and Rome airport, 220; and Sudan murder of Western diplomats, 219; and Tel Aviv highway, 202n, 203, 205, 218, 225, 226n; and Vienna train, 213

PLO, and Palestine National Council (PNC), 56n, 57, 63, 70, 71n, 74n, 120, 146; and 1971 session of, 13, 33, 36; and 1972 session of, 31; and 1973 meeting, 36; and 1974 session, 35, 36, 70, 88, 114, 120, 129, 144; and 1977 session, 68, 70, 120, 120n, 147, 155, 164, 169, 175, 175n, 202n, 219; and 1979 session, 149-50, 154, 164, 177, 219

PLO, and Palestine National Front, 53, 64, 65n, 67, 87, 93, 106, 109, 110, 140, 165-79, 223; and autonomy, 169; and West Bank Communists, 13, 165-66, 168, 170, 179, 217; and creation of, 12, 31, 33, 35, 36, 165, 168, 171, 217-18; and Israeli Communist Party (Rakah), 167; and occupied territories, 166-67, 168n, 168-69, 179, 214, 217, 223, 245; and Rejectionists, 170; strength of, 169; and West Bank

- 1976 municipal elections, 167, 168n, 177
- PLO, as Palestine's sole legitimate representative, 14, 97n, 106, 108, 128, 129, 130, 136n, 137, 138, 169, 229-34, 235-38, 238n, 240-44, 247, 253; and PNF, 147, 165-69, 177-78, 179, 232; and "Peace Plan," 82, 103; and PDFLP, 156, 158-59; and Peace Committee, 81; and PFLP, 148, 164, 200; recognition of, 37, 62-63, 73, 130, 231-32, 235-36, 240-42, 247; and recognition of Israel, 35, 73, 75, 84n, 113, 119-20, 124-25, 139, 134-35, 239, 241, 244, 247; and Rejectionists, 147, 151, 158, 163, 164, 207, 226, 250; and Sadat's initiative, 164; and Sai'qa, 144, 156, 182, 199-200; and Saudi Arabia, 29, 59, 59n, 144, 146-47, 151, 158, 187-88, 200, 218, 250, 252; and Security Council resolution 242, 70n, 73n, 113, 115, 117, 119-25, 126-28, 139, 146, 247; to Soviet Union (1970), 13, 215; to Soviet Union (1972): 14, 228; to Soviet Union (1973), 161, 217, 229; to Soviet Union (1974), 55n, 62, 69, 115n, 115-16, 130, 131, 132, 145, 155, 161, 223, 232, 247; to Soviet Union (1975), 57, 70, 72, 97, 116-17, 155-56; to Soviet Union (1977), 60n, 72-73, 78n, 121, 138-40, 329-40; to Soviet Union (1978), 64n, 204n, 207, 213; to Soviet Union (1979), 110, 208; and Soviet military aid to, 13, 182, 190, 197-98, 203-4, 207, 214, 218, 247; and strength of, 29-30, 51, 64, 145, 179, 186, 194-95, 235, 241, 248; and Syria, 135, 145, 147, 152, 156-57, 159-60, 172-73, 180-83, 185-88, 190-91, 192, 199, 201-3, 235, 244, 252; and terrorism, 28, 37, 143, 148n, 167, 211-12, 215-17, 219, 220-21, 223n (*see also* PLO, operations of); and U.N., 37, 125-26, 135, 235, 239, 240n; and U.S., 13n, 74, 105, 109, 124n, 133-34, 135, 139, 149, 151, 172, 177, 218, 234, 238-39, 248, 249, 250-51, 252
- PLO, and U.S.: on Geneva Peace Conference, 141, 142, 240n; on Jordan, 108, 111, 137; on legitimacy of, 151, 236, 238n; and on Palestinian state, 59, 108n; and on recognition of Israel, 75, 124; and on resolution 242, 70n, 123-25, 126, 127-28; and West Bank municipal elections, 167; and West Bank support, 30, 109, 167n, 170, 232, 237, 242, 242n, 245; and West European contacts, 170n, 177;
- Podgorny, Nikolai, 10n, 55, 55n, 95, 131, 219
- Poland, 53n, 123, 233, 253n
- Ponomarev, Boris, 13, 48, 51, 117n, 157, 229, 232, 236
- Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), 57, 69, 150, 161, 162, 162n, 163, (*see also* Habash); and PLO, 148, 161, 163-64, 200; and Rejectionists, 163, 200
- Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—General Command (PFLP—GC), 57, 161, 163n (*see also* Jibril)
- Popular Struggle Front, 161
- Primakov, Yevgeny, 61, 77n, 79, 85, 91, 107
- Qaddumi, Faruk, 136n, 152n, 152-53,

- 166, 175n, 191n; and Abu Iyyad, 152, 153n; and Arafat, 152, 200; and autonomy plan, 105-6; and China (1976), 71, 152, 182n, 200n; and demilitarization, 107; and government-in-exile, 64; and Gromyko, 194, 195; and Kozyrev, S. P., 192; and Lebanese crisis, 153n, 191, 195; and Palestinian state, 84n, 85, 107; and Security Council resolution 242, 71, 123, 160; to Soviet Union, 195, 200; and Soviet military aid, 214; and Syria, 152, 191, 194-95
- Quislings, 106, 242
- Rabat Conference (1974), 56, 56n, 62, 97, 115n, 130-32, 155, 162, 173, 223; decisions of, 115n, 137, 138n, 233, 236, 239, 243
- Radical Arab states, 38, 43, 47, 56, 67, 73, 92, 98, 131, 146, 163, 186, 208, 232, 241, 244, 248, 249, 254 (*see also* Rejectionists)
- Red Brigades, 212
- Refugees, 5, 6, 8, 10, 51, 55, 61, 65, 79, 80-82, 92, 110-11, 112, 114-15, 126, 247; in Lebanon, 198; 1948 U.N. resolution, 80, 80n, 81; right to return or compensation, 5, 8, 50, 59-61, 78-81, 82, 82n, 111, 122, 126, 157, 172, 175
- Rejection Front (Rejectionists), 58n, 63-64, 68, 69, 100-1, 105-6, 108, 108n, 146, 148-49, 153, 160-61, 162, 163-64, 178-79, 186, 196, 209, 245; and Arafat, 162, 164, 218; and Fatah, 153, 165, 170, 179; and government-in-exile, 64n; and Hawatmeh, 150, 156-57, 158, 163, 165, 170; and Hussein, 244; and Jordanian-Palestinian rapproche-  
ment issue, 158, 165; and Lebanese crisis, 146, 164, 206; and PFLP, 163, 200; and PFLP-GC, 163n; and PLO-Central Council, 163; and PLO, 226, 250; and PLO leadership, 151; and PLO-Rakah 1977 Prague meeting, 175; and 1977 PNC resolution, 121, 163; and PNF, 170; and radical Arab states, 163, 164, 174, 250; and resolution 242, 73, 121, 122-23; and Sadat visit to Jerusalem, 178; and Sa'iqa, 160; and Tripoli 1977 conference decisions, 164; and West Bank politics, 109, 170, 179
- Revolutionary warfare, 14, 20n, 21-22, 24, 34-35, 36-37, 38, 42, 44, 212
- Riyadh Conferences (1976), 99, 183, 196-97
- Rogers Plan, 85
- Rome Conference (1979), 178
- Rosenau, James, 40-41
- Rumania, 233
- Russian Social Democrats, 210
- Sabah, Abd al-Jawad, 168
- Sadat, Anwar, 14, 47, 56, 62, 63, 100, 207, 213n, 243; and Geneva Peace Conference, 131; and government-in-exile, 64n; and Jordan, 101n, 129, 130n, 233; and U.S., 132, 149
- Sadat peace initiative (including visit to Jerusalem), 101, 103-4, 123, 142, 148, 152n, 171, 207, 209, 226n, 236-38; and Abu Iyyad, 153; and Arafat, 153, 218; and PLO, 164, 242n; and Rejectionists, 178
- Sa'iqa, 13, 29, 32, 72, 114, 159, 160n, 172, 173, 182, 199-200, 213
- SAM defense system, 98, 99n
- Sarkiss, Elias, 196



- Saudi Arabia, 42, 45, 59, 82, 99, 100, 124n, 183, 186; and government-in-exile, 63; and Lebanese crisis, 187-88, 196; and PLO, 29, 59, 59n, 144, 146-47, 151, 158, 187-88, 200, 218, 250, 252
- Sebai, Youssef el-, 225
- Self-determination, 50, 52, 58, 61, 67, 69, 80, 96, 127, 141
- Settlement of Arab-Israeli conflict, 10, 44, 53, 55, 56, 69, 79, 86-93, 95-96, 109, 118, 135, 232, 247, 249-51, 253; and Israel, 59, 66-67, 89, 92-93; 250; and Soviet proposal for, 60, 86, 196
- Shak'a, Bassam, 109, 170
- Shelepin, Petr, 10, 27, 45, 48, 53n, 95
- Sheli Party, 176, 178
- Shukeiry, Ahmed, 6-7, 31-32, 44, 67, 68
- Sinal, 96
- Six-Day War, 7-9, 27, 29-30, 32, 43, 44, 52n, 65, 83, 171
- Slovakia, 213
- Social Revolutionaries, 210
- Soldatov, Aleksandr, 183n, 185, 193
- Somalia, 157
- Sons of the Village, 94, 174n
- South Vietnam, 242
- South Yemen, 253
- Soviet Communist Party: Central Committee of, 132, 157; Congresses of, 13, 17, 19, 75, 92, 134, 235
- Soviet Mediterranean Squadron, 42, 190
- Stalin, Josef, 6, 14, 20, 42
- Strauss, Robert, 126
- Sudan, 47
- Suslov, Mihail, 13, 48, 51
- Syria, 7, 8, 44, 47, 53n, 63, 79n, 96, 99-100, 114, 127, 132, 145, 150, 152, 182, 185, 186n, 187-88, 190, 203, 213; and Abu Iyyad, 189-90; and Arafat, 152n, 182, 192n, 194; and Egypt, 100, 183, 183n, 186, 189, 195-96, 200; and Fatah, 7, 42, 152, 182, 200; and Habash, 132; and Hawatmeh, 156, 191; initiative at the U.N., 7, 117, 118, 134-35, 181, 186, 187, 193, 196, 203, 208, 234-35, 251; and Iraq, 201n, 253; and Israel, 55n, 76, 117, 129, 129n, 189n, 201, 203, 232, 251; and Jibril, 162n; and Jordan, 46, 98, 99-100, 100n, 135, 159, 185n, 186; and Lebanese crisis, 128, 135, 152, 159-60, 161n, 173, 180-88, 189-93, 195-96, 199, 201-2, 208-9, and military aid, 14, 185, 191; and Mohsen, 159n; and PFLP-GC, 163n; and PLO, 135, 145, 147, 152, 156-57, 159-60, 172-73, 180-83, 185-88, 190-91, 192, 199, 200n, 201-3, 235, 244, 252; and Qaddumi, 152, 191, 194-5; and Sa'iqa, 182, 200, 213; and Saudi Arabia, 186-87, 196; and U.S., 99n, 117, 181-84, 187
- Syrian Communist Party, 161n, 173, 230; and Palestinian Communist Party, 172-73; and Palestinian issue, 13, 50-51, 67, 77n, 91n, 143, 172, 172n, 230; to Soviet Union, 13, 50-51, 66, 76, 77n
- Terrorism, 34-35, 35n, 46, 64, 155, 158-59, 164, 167, 210-227 (*see also* PLO operations); and Fatah, 34-35, 159, 212-13, 216-17, 218, 221, 223-25, 249; and PLO, 28, 37, 143, 148n, 211, 212-13, 215, 216, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 223n, 224, 225; and Syria, 213
- Third World, 14-22, 27, 44, 48, 165, 247, 251, 254
- Tito, Josip Broz, 25, 240

- Tolnukov, Lev, 36, 155, 222  
 Toubi, Tawfiq, 81  
 Trade unions, 95, 229-30  
 Tripoli Conference (1977), 123, 126, 140, 163-64  
 Trotsky, Leon, 221  
 Troyansky, Oleg, 240n  
 Tunisia, 83n, 148, 240
- Uganda, 224  
 Ukraine, 95  
 Ulyanovski, Rotislav, 27  
 UNIFIL, 204-7  
 United Nations, 11n, 60, 64, 66, 75, 80, 117, 119 (*see also* Syrian initiative at U.N.); Charter, 11n, 60; discussions of on Palestinian issue, 80, 83, 115, 117, 118n, 167, 233, 234; and peacekeeping forces of, 107, 107n; and PLO, 37, 125-26, 134, 135, 238n, 239; and resolutions on hijacking, 28n, 212; and Zionism, 167
- United Nations resolutions: on Jerusalem, 104; on Palestinian issue, 34, 80-81, 85n, 116, 117, 122, 124n, 126, 134, 239; on the partition of Palestine, 60, 65-66, 78, 78n, 82-87, 88, 91, 91n, 94-95, 118n; on refugees, 64, 80-81; Security Council 242, 14, 43, 53n, 69-72, 89, 113-14, 115n, 117, 119-26, 127-28, 139, 141, 153, 160, 239; Security Council resolution 338, 54, 89, 113-14, 115n, 118, 123, 126; General Assembly resolution 3236, 81, 116, 117-18, 123, 124n, 134, 234; General Assembly resolution 3237, 124n
- United States, 36, 39-40, 42-43, 45-46, 47-48, 51, 54, 58-59, 120, 125-26, 130, 132, 145, 148, 164, 186, 201, 241, 244, 249, 253; and Abu Iyyad, 190-91, and Arab-Israeli War of 1948, 6; and autonomy plan, 106; and Egypt, 13n, 33, 54-57, 59, 73, 98, 106, 116-17, 124, 132-34, 181, 186, 243, 244, 248; elections in, 135; and Fatah, 165, 172; and Geneva Peace Conference, 54, 124, 129, 131, 133-34, 135, 140, 141, 142, 181, 196, 238n; and Israel, 13n, 36, 54-56, 72, 75, 76, 79n, 85, 90, 95, 106, 112, 118, 124-25, 127, 130, 137, 231-33, 236-38; and Jordan, 54-56, 97-100, 101, 106, 108-9, 111, 130, 137, 158, 181, 231-33; and Kissinger, 56; and Lebanese crisis, 65n, 181-83, 190, 208; and legitimacy of PLO, 151, 234, 240n; and Palestinians, 6, 29, 58-59, 74, 106, 109, 124, 125, 129, 135, 141, 142, 172, 249, 250; and Palestinian state, 58, 59, 65n, 100, 107n, 149n; and PLO, 13n, 74, 105, 109, 124n, 125, 126, 127, 135, 139, 149, 151, 172, 177, 218, 231, 234, 238-39, 248, 249, 250, 252; and PLO on Geneva Peace Conference, 133-34, 140, 141, 142, 238; and PLO on Jordan, 108, 111, 137; and PLO on Palestinian state, 59, 107n; and PLO recognition of Israel, 75, 124; and refugees, 82; and Sadat, 149; and Saudi Arabia, 186; and settlement of Arab-Israeli conflict, 95; and Security Council resolution 242, 70n, 72, 115n, 119, 121-26, 127-28, 433-37; and Security Council resolution 338, 54; and Sixth Fleet, 42; State Department, 73n; and joint Soviet statement (1977), 58-59, 64n, 69, 76, 81, 93, 125, 127, 128, 140, 141, 176, 238; and Syria, 117, 181-

- 84, 187; and Vladivostok summit, 88, 131; and Western Europe, 108n; and Yom Kippur War, 53n, 54
- Vance, Cyrus, 72, 121, 124, 138-39
- Vietnam, 35
- Vinogradov, V. V., 97, 133
- Vladivostok summit, 88, 131
- Warrad, Faye, 170n, 172n
- Warsaw Pact, 11
- West Bank, 56, 90, 109, 138, 219, 232; and autonomy plan, 106, 241; and Communists, 63, 106, 109, 168, 171-72, 179, 217, 245; demilitarization of, 107; and Fatah, 32, 108, 179; internal disorders in, 159, 167, 223; Israeli settlements in, 84, 90; and Jordan, 96n, 97n, 98, 101-2, 102n, 105, 109, 138, 171n, 232, 243, 249; and mayors of, 108-9, 154, 169-70, 237, 242, 245; 1976 municipal elections, 167; Palestinians living in, 61, 91n, 174, 238, 243-44; Palestinian state on, 53-54, 65, 79, 85, 87, 92, 94, 102, 103, 103n, 106, 109, 110, 113n; and PNF, 166-67, 168-69; 179, 217, 223, 245; and Rejectionists, 109, 170, 179; and return of refugees, 79, 126; and settlement of Arab-Israeli conflict, 96, 232; support for PLO, 30, 109, 170, 232, 237, 242, 245
- West Europe, 108n, 214
- West Germany, 212
- Wilner, Meir, 90, 176
- World Committee for a Just Settlement in the Middle East, 177
- World Peace Council Conference (Basel 1979), 178
- World Peace Council Conference (Paris 1977), 81, 170
- World Zionist Organization, 68
- Yemen, People's Democratic Republic of (*see* PDRY)
- Yom Kippur War, 14, 47, 53, 54, 62, 83, 114, 155, 167, 171, 213, 228, 229, 232
- Young, Andrew, 127
- Yugoslavia, 64n, 123, 233, 236
- Zionism, 26n, 32, 68, 69, 77, 83, 118n, 155, 163, 167
- Zionists, 36, 60n, 78, 107, 158, 175-76, 193, 219; contacts with, 175-76, 177-78,