

**Movement of Arab Nationalists (MAN), “Plan for the Liberation of Palestine”. MAN Administrative Committee, 1961. Translated by *The Palestinian Revolution*.<sup>1</sup>**

The Palestinian struggle figured prominently in the discussions at the most recent Arab Nationalist conference. Indeed, Palestine was an area of concern for the central committees throughout 1960. This concern found its practical expression in two forms. Firstly, the preparation of a general action plan on the Palestinian cause to be presented to the Arab Nationalist conference. Secondly, the formation of a central committee, linked to the administrative committee, which will work on the ground in Palestine. The discrete missions of this committee will be described below.

We will discuss the project plan and the Palestine committee second, in an effort to present the full range of opinions, recommendations, and decisions out forward at the latest session of the Arab Nationalist conference.

It goes without saying that the MAN considers the Palestinian cause to be one of the most important. We place serious preparations to reclaim Palestine at the top of our list of difficult duties.

That is why the MAN continuously raises a clear, specific question to its central committee: what is the best path to reclaim Palestine? We seek neither sentiment nor general opinions; rather, we want to lay down a practical and detailed plan to execute this sacred mission. Our inquiry took a great deal of time and produced a number of reports, briefs, studies and opinions. We are unable to discuss all these matters here. We will instead present the conclusions and positions of the Arab Nationalist general conference.

*1 - The central competing forces that can play a role in the struggle for Palestine*

A. The international level:

- i. The Western camp, led by the United States, Britain and France:  
This camp’s fiercely antagonistic position towards the rights of the Arabs in Palestine is well known.
- ii. The Eastern Bloc:

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It is difficult to predict, at this moment, what practical position the Eastern Bloc will take on any decisive battle we might wage to reclaim Palestine. What we can say is that, in general, the Eastern Bloc will not play an actively supportive role. The most we can hope for is that this bloc will adopt a “neutral” position during the decisive battle.

iii. The United Nations, global public opinion, and the Asian and African Camps:

It is also difficult to predict the position of the above groups, though we can say that all will depend on the practical form the decisive battle takes. For example, if the battle takes the form of a direct military confrontation between “Israel” and the United Arab Republic, each group's position will differ accordingly. Whereas if the battle takes the form of a Popular Front to Liberate Palestine made up of Palestinians on the model of the Popular Front to Liberate Algeria, each group's positions will vary from the first example.

B. Opponents: “Israel”, of course, in addition to the global Zionist movement

C. Arab governments

- i. The United Arab Republic, which we consider our heavy hitter among Arab forces that want to battle to reclaim Palestine.
- ii. Other Arab governments, which have varying levels of connection to the Western camp.

D. On the popular level:

- i. The Arab Nationalist parties
- ii. The Arab Higher Committee
- iii. The Palestinian people
- iv. The Arab people as a whole

It is clear, then, that the forces that can play a role in the struggle for Palestine are diverse, critical, and divergent in their political directions as well as their levels of strength. Several outcomes are possible, depending on the positions taken by these forces and the role that each one can play – since a good number will act according to the actions and reactions of others, and the contingencies of circumstance.

Rigorous thinking compels us to sketch out the picture that would give us the best possible result. Below, we will present the complete range of possible scenarios for the battle of Palestine:

## 2 – The Likely Scenarios for the Battle of Palestine

A. The First Scenario: The United Arab Republic battles “Israel” alone – in this case, what would likely happen is as follows:

- i. The Arab people’s role would be to provide emotional and moral support. The people would be revved up, but would not play a central practical role on the battlefield, except to the degree that the United Arab Republic and Arab Nationalist groups work to recruit them for battle.
- ii. Arab governments: The reactionary Arab camp that is associated with colonialism and represented by Jordan, Tunisia and Iraq could conceivably conspire against the UAR. As for the rest of the Arab governments, including those that partially endorse colonialism, they would be spectators. The Arab League would be paralysed in this scenario.
- iii. The international scene: The colonialist camp would undoubtedly stand with “Israel” and fully enter the battle against the UAR – either directly or through the United Nations.
- iv. As for the Eastern Bloc, its support the UAR would be merely symbolic. It cannot be counted on for “active” support. The nations of the West would push the United Nations to openly oppose the UAR, and possibly intervene on the ground.
- v. Our role: To fully support the UAR, marshal all of our resources for the battle, expose all elite conspirators, and push regime leaders to provide active support through popular pressure.

In this scenario, the people of Palestine play no special role.

B. The Second Scenario: Arab states jointly enter the battle for Palestine under the leadership, supervision and coordination of the Arab League, even if only nominally. It is important to indicate that this is a very unlikely scenario, and only a conceptual possibility. The people would play a supportive role, as would the MAN. The international take on this scenario would be less severely critical and softer in this case than the first.

C. The Third Scenario: The people of Palestine themselves begin the decisive battle by carrying out continuous, consecutive attacks that gradually break down “Israel” and make final conquest far easier.

- i. In this case, the role of Arab governments – especially the UAR – would be four-pronged. First of all, to protect their borders from Zionist counter-attack. Secondly, to supply Palestinians with moral and material support. Thirdly, to back the war against “Israel” diplomatically and enforce a strict boycott. Finally, to prepare for the final military battle.
- ii. Our role, in this scenario, would be to take responsibility organising the people of Palestine militarily into a revolutionary force that will succeed in the mission they take on.
- iii. As for the position taken at an international level, ideally international actors would ignore us on the whole. This is because, through organising the people of Palestine, we would be able to find an explicitly “Palestinian” leadership front wanting to liberate its homeland. And this work would be justified in international forums.

D. The Fourth Scenario: The United Arab Republic would continue its battle for unification, which in practice means absorbing Iraq and Jordan. The UAR could then enter the final fight in its new form. The battle for Palestine would remain prominent throughout the fight for unification. This scenario differs from the first in that the Arab front would be in a stronger position to assure victory. Meanwhile, the positions taken by the international community would not differ fundamentally from the first and second scenarios.

### *3 – The Ideal Scenario (in our opinion)*

These are the various scenarios we can imagine for our battle with “Israel”. It’s worth noting that none of these scenarios can occur independently of the one another. When a decisive battle actually begins, the people often play a decisive role in pushing Arab governments to adopt positive positions. The people may even attempt to take radical action to remove reactionary regimes and pressure all Arab arenas to help in the struggle. It is also worth noting that what we view as the “best” scenario is not necessarily the most likely. Our goal is to sketch the outlines of the best scenario and try to push the various Arab forces to adopt it.

We think the best scenario would be a fusion of the fourth and third, meaning that the UAR would continue on its path to unification while the people of Palestine simultaneously organise themselves to take charge in the decisive battle. This would differ from the fourth scenario in that the Palestinian cause would be prominent and ignited during the fight to absorb Jordan and Iraq. This would be an optimal period for the people of Palestine to organise

activity amongst themselves, while preparing and sharpening their skills for the final battle to be fought alongside the UAR.

This scenario assumes, at least partially, that the Arab Higher Committee – backed by the Arab camp in league with colonialism – would make a concerted effort to take the initiative away from the people of Palestine.

As for the West, it would try to fabricate projects and conspire to eliminate the Palestinian cause. At the same time, it would vigorously support the reactionary camp and the High Arab Higher Committee to prevent the UAR from taking initiative in organising the refugees. The final military stage of the battle would be completely backed by the UAR, which would recruit Palestinians for the frontline of the Arab fighting force. In other words, the battle would be waged under the banner of the “Palestine Liberation Front.”

#### *4 – Organising the People of Palestine*

Organising the people of Palestine and recruiting them to fight is an essential condition for realising the scenario we have drawn up. It is also a complex, many-sided task for several reasons. For instance, Palestinians are not in one geographical area: they are scattered across the UAR, Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq. Furthermore, they have differing relationships with the regimes under which they live, which also differ from one moment to the next. Some of these regimes have granted Palestinians freedom of movement and independent political action, while others deny them all these things. Yet another complicating factor is that the general morale among refugees, 11 years after the *Nakba*, is dominated by individualism and dependence often shot through with a kind of hopelessness and aversion to any organised political action.

Clearly, organising Palestinians and recruiting them to fight must involve creating one revolutionary command for this organisation that oversees its different activities and branches. This same leadership must force the reactionary leaders collaborating with colonialism off the battlefield.

#### *A. The Movement and the Organisation*

- i. MAN must assume responsibility for founding this organisation in its various arenas. MAN members, along with allies of the movement, will form the backbone for the organisation to build on, whatever form it may decide to take.

- ii. MAN will draw up a general plan for this organisation's work and its various leaders. This leadership will then put together more detailed plans that emerge.

## B. The Structure of the Organisation

What cannot yet be determined is the shape that the organisation will take. This requires a period of study and analysis. We also need more time to monitor how experiments with The Palestinian Pan-Arab Federation in the northern regions and Gaza develop, so we can evaluate how to what extent they might be considered the ideal form of organising inside the UAR. What we can say now regarding form, however, is that the organisation must be secret and independent from any Arab state, and interact with the public through above-ground front groups. That said, the UAR must be advised of, and indeed agree to, the formation of a such an organisation. This is because, whatever the organisation ends up looking like, military actions will be its most important – and this will require active support from the UAR.

## C. The Organisation's Activities

- i. The organisation's main tasks can be split into two categories: work connected to the daily life of the people of Palestine, and work concerning the cause in general.
- ii. Above-ground groups can undertake the work connected to daily life, such as Youth Groups and Clubs, workers organisations and social service institutions, or workshops in the Palestine Federation. All of this would be out in the open.
- iii. Most of the work for the general Palestinian cause – including studies, communiqués, military training, intelligence gathering, etc. – must be done in secret, especially in areas where the authorities forbid refugees from organising.
- iv. As for work on the cause as a whole, such as representing the Palestinian perspective in international forums and at the Arab League, and coordinating general Palestine conferences, the National Palestinian Federation will take the lead, with assistance from Palestinians labour and social groups, student leagues and clubs, women's federations, and other organisations.

- D. The Organisation and the reactionary leadership that will attempt to exploit the Palestinian cause.

We can list the reactionary elements as follows: the Arab Higher Council, King Hussein of Jordan, and the government of Abd al-Kareem Qasim. It is also clear that the Arab Higher Council is the sole leadership, on a popular level, that can play any role in leading Palestinians.

For that reason, we must carefully study its activities, capacity and plans so that we can introduce parallel plans to eventually guarantee its exclusion from the leadership.

#### *5 – The Stages of the Project*

- A. The First Stage: establishing cells for effective leadership of the organisation, and elaborating essential, detailed studies and plans for the organisation as a whole. In addition to participating in the experiments of the Palestinian Pan-Arab Federation in the North and Gaza, while trying to create above-ground fronts in Lebanon.
- B. The Second Stage: actual organising in all areas, and the proclamation of a General Palestinian Conference where the leadership is free to represent the people of Palestine and speak in their name, and exclude the Arab Higher Council from the arena.
- C. Effectuate the plans to recruit Palestinians.
- D. The last stage is the military battle, that is to say, beginning the armed struggle inside the occupied regions.

#### *6 – Our plan for 1961*

- A. Develop the core leadership of the Palestinian Organisation – the core movement-builders.
- B. Push forward the Palestinian Pan-Arab Federation model currently underway in the northern regions.
- C. Mass outreach to refugees in Lebanon.
- D. Study the status of the Palestinian Pan-Arab Federation in Gaza, draw up a plan to fuse it with the Federation in the northern regions, and pressure the UAR to execute this plan.

- E. Studying the status of the Arab Higher Council and its plans, while coming up with parallel plans as a first step to engage and exclude the High Arab Council from the scene.

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What remains to be discussed is the Palestine Committee, which the MAN formed as the leadership responsible for the Palestinian sphere and cause, and which is linked to the Administrative Committee. The strongest ideas we can offer for this committee moving forward have emerged from surveys of the nature of its responsibilities and achievements in the last months of 1960, together with our plan for 1961.

#### *1 - The Committee's Responsibilities*

The committee is the leadership intended to oversee the Palestinian cause and arenas. It is responsible for:

- A. Analysing the situation from all angles, producing the necessary plans for and coordinating work in each of its areas.
- B. Monitoring discourse on the Palestine issue at the global and Arab regional levels. It is charged with recording any communications, and clarifying MAN's position based on MAN's political plan.
- C. Thoroughly studying and monitoring the enemies' activities, plans and programmes in all areas: political, economic and military.
- D. Detailed and selfless management MAN units working with refugees in their various contexts, for example Lebanon, the northern regions, and the Pan-Arab Federation efforts. The Committee is also responsible for refugees on the level of above-ground institutions and front groups: plans for clubs, student leagues, etc. anywhere circumstances allow.
- E. At the level of popular leadership, following the work of refugee leaders, and working towards excluding the reactionary leadership and distancing them from the people.
- F. Studying daily life among refugees, monitoring the activities of aid organisations, and producing parallel plans.
- G. Finally, overseeing the implementation of the MAN's general plan for Palestine.

These are the most important points for the committee. As for what it has achieved in the months since its formation, it has:

1. Produced studies on the refugees and collected near-complete surveys on them in the northern regions.
2. The topic of The Palestinian Pan-Arab Federation was closely examined by the committee in the north, especially during the period of Federation's founding elections, during which MAN secured a clear mandate to lead this movement.
3. The committee oversaw the founding of a Palestine club in the Damascus area, as well as its activation and programmeme.
4. The committee oversaw movement activities of refugees in Lebanon and produced some reports in this regard.
5. The committee produced a detailed report on the High Arab Council and its different activities. And oversaw a preliminary plan to exclude them from the refugees.
6. The committee monitored the aid agencies' work among refugees, and oversaw the leadership of some of the secondary fights to block to the work of the colonialist aid agencies.

This concerns the committee's achievements in the past few months. It is going to endeavor in the following year to carry out all of its responsibilities, focusing especially on the following:

1. Executing MAN's line to help the Palestinian Pan-Arab Federation effort in the north succeed.
2. In terms of our above ground work: the committee will draw up the work plan for our Palestinian student leagues and the Palestinian Student Federation. Just as the committee will support above ground institutions working on refugees especially the Palestinian Club.
3. The committee is preparing a plan to support and strengthen our movement activities with refugees especially in Lebanon and Gaza.
4. Following and monitoring all of the reactionary and colonialist institutions working among refugees especially UNRWA and the Arab High Council, and preparing a plan parallel to these institutions.
5. Finally, since MAN felt the importance of the role that the Palestine committee can play, the Pan-Arab Conference committed to supporting the committee with new, and strong individuals so it can rise to level MAN has laid out for it.

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