



## LENIN'S IDEAS, THE PALESTINIAN REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE AND THE DEVELOPEMENT OF RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION

MAJED ABU SHARAR

This is an article written by a man who gave his life for the Palestinian cause.

Majed Abu Sharar was a distinguished PLO leader and he wrote this article in April 1980 for the 110th anniversary of Lenin's birth. In it he discusses the importance for the Palestinian struggle of the example of Lenin's revolutionary work in founding the world's first socialist state and the development of relations between the Soviet Union and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Although some of the aspects dealt with in the article have changed since it was written we are publishing it to further understanding of Palestinian thought and as a tribute to the memory of revolutionary fighters.



*Majed Abu Sharar*

- Member of the Central Committee of the Palestine National Liberation Movement, Fateh.
- Head of the PLO's Unified Information Department.
- Member of the High Work Command in the occupied territories.

Fighter, commander, revolutionary intellectual, educator, and above all and most of all: Palestinian.

This is the way he was, and because of this, he loved all the people who were oppressed and those who had been tortured; he knew his proper role in the struggle; he knew that Palestine, its people and its guerrilla fighters belong to the same front encompassing all the oppressed and exploited, and all freedom fighters in the world.

Because he knew that through armed struggle one cannot win without a clear political line, he was an internationalist Palestinian, and for this reason he was assassinated by Zionist-imperialist agents as he was fighting for Palestine, Oct. 9, 1981 while participating in the International Congress in Solidarity with Palestinian Journalists and Intellectuals in Rome.

We are loyal to Majed, which is our duty to all martyrs.

We should understand what is going on in the world as Majed understood it.

We should be imbued with brave determination as progressive Arab forces, and be part of the international anti-Zionist, anti-imperialist and anticolonialist struggle.

Loyal to Majed.

Loyal to all martyrs who follow the true revolutionary road with their main allies, according to the principles Majed put forth in this article written on the 110th anniversary of Lenin's birth.

*Imad Jada'A*

*PLO representative in Cuba*

**I**would like to speak about my status as a fighter in the ranks of the national liberation movement, committed to its positions, since the Palestinian struggle in this stage is essentially a national liberation struggle; I am convinced that all national liberation movements have two alternatives: progress towards greater development of theory and practice, or stagnation which leads to retreat and ends in defeat. There is no question that we, in this stage of Palestinian national liberation, are trying to develop theory and practice in our national movement.

What do Palestinians have to say on the 110th anniversary of the birth of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, founder of the first socialist state? What do Palestinians have to say, who, during the many years of armed people's revolution, have marched on the cutting edge of the sword taken from the arteries of their hearts, from the shade of Abdel Nasser's tree to the flame of Sadat's desert; the Palestinian who yearns for his homeland, who is imprisoned or buried in one of the Arab capitals? What does the Palestinian have to say who was born under oppression, exploitation slavery and backwardness, who is seeking an identity and a homeland, and who instead of finding them, finds only death? What does the Palestinian have to say who shoulders the burden of emigration and dispersion, and also the weight of his gun and his blood?

Palestinians say that one's homeland is bread, freedom, a passport to peace, and just as Lenin was able to found the first, biggest and most beautiful socialist state in the world according to the revolutionary principles of Marxism-Leninism, Palestinian fighters will also win their national independence in their territory, guided to a great extent by the principles of Marxism-Leninism, highly confident of their unending ability to continue armed struggle and political battles, with the support of all the world's revolutionary forces, headed by Lenin's great country.

Although the seed of the Zionist doctrine was born outside Palestine, the tree of Zionism sprouted in this land, and its roots continue to be harmful, with the support of all the world's imperialist forces and the region's reactionary forces.

Lenin was the first to warn of the danger of the European reaction — which with extensive planning, caused the Zionist movement to emerge and consolidate — when he indicated that it was not just by chance that reactionary forces throughout Europe, and especially in Russia, were opposed to the integration of the Jews, and were deploying their forces to further their isolation.

Lenin didn't leave this matter up in the air; he put forth his point of view very wisely when he said that the workers' enemies are the capitalists of all countries. Among the Jews there are workers, and these are the majority, and they are brothers in the struggle to destroy capital, and our comrades in the struggle for socialism. Among the Jews there are also exploiters, just as among Russians and other nationalities. The rich Jews, just like the rich Russians and those from every country, join together to repress, oppress, plunder and divide the workers.

When Lenin came to power after the Tsar was overthrown, he wrote on July 26, 1918, in the text of a document of the People's Council referring to the struggle against anti-Semitism, giving instructions to all

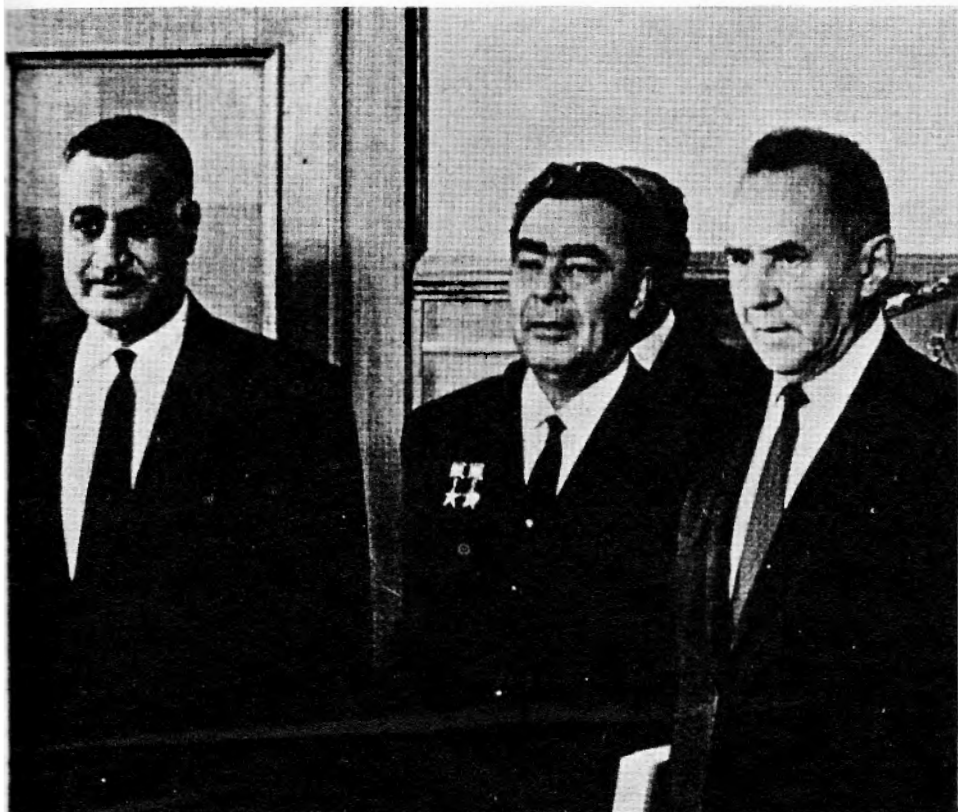
deputies of the Soviet to adopt decisive measures to eliminate all anti-Semitism, and to consider anyone who led or called for attacks on Jews as breaking the law.

At that time, and during the whole struggle waged by the Bolshevik Revolution to protect the country from domestic and foreign enemies, Lenin was concerned and personally tried to find solutions to this problem. Afterward, and during the extremely difficult years in which the Leninist party was devoted to rebuilding the Soviet homeland, inspired by Marxism-Leninism — that is, to fulfill the dream of all the workers of the world: socialist power — Lenin also argued for freedom of nations to their self-determination, an issue he had already dealt with in the 1896 Congress of the International in London, and later in the Russian program worked out in 1902.

During this period, the Middle East went from the era of Turkish colonialism in our countries, to one of British and French colonialism in most of the states of the Middle East region. Before this, in 1917, the Balfour Declaration had been issued granting Jews the right to establish their own homeland in Palestine. The tightening of the British hold in Palestine, the founding of Arab states totally subjected to British and French colonialism, the escalation of persecution by reactionary sectors in Europe against the Jews; the mobilization of world Zionism to promote that persecution in different ways, while attempting to exploit the feelings of the Jews who were victims of that persecution, especially in Nazi Germany; all this gave rise to the beginning of Jewish migration to Palestine, which meant the dangerous settlement of these Jews at the expense of the Palestinian people, with the complete support of the British authorities, culminating in the founding of Israel in a large part of Palestinian territory. This was carried out with the backing of the British and French imperialists; afterward U.S. imperialism took the main role in building this reactionary and fascist military entity, and began to use it as its gendarme in the region, especially after the discovery of oil and the emergence of petit bourgeois nationalist regimes, first in Egypt and Syria, and later in Iraq.

When the partition of Palestine occurred in 1947, the Soviet Union was one of the countries voting for the agreement. At that time, Soviet-Arab relations were virtually nonexistent. I still remember that the Soviet ambassador to the United Nations tried a number of times, right before the agreement was approved, to contact Arab ambassadors, but he was unable to get a reply from any of them. We should recognize here that the Soviet Union's support for partition left a negative impression among Palestinians and Arabs regarding the USSR, especially since the region was governed by reactionary regimes, almost totally subjected to imperialist and Zionist propaganda. The voices raised at that time to warn of the danger of the poisonous propaganda campaign unleashed against the Soviet Union had little room to move in because during that period the Soviet Union did not have a strong direct influence on events in the Middle East. As we know, the Soviets were then immersed in rebuilding their country which had been destroyed by the Nazi aggression.

In fact, if we compare the real effect and influence of the USSR on the course of the Arab struggle in general and the Palestinian struggle in



Gamal Abdel Nasser, during a visit to the Soviet Union. These relations contributed to the development of links between the Palestinian Resistance and the USSR.

particular, we can see that the Soviet Union has been influential and has taken a basic position in favor of the Arab and Palestinian struggle starting at the time when both the Arab and the Palestinian Liberation Movements were able to project themselves to the world as anti-imperialist, anti-Zionist and antireactionary national movements, which also meant that the Arab Liberation Movement (ALM) had to review its position on the issue of alliances in the Arab region.

Unquestionably, the first to play a fundamental role in acquainting the Arab nation with the genuinely progressive and revolutionary role of the Soviet Union in supporting the peoples fighting against imperialism, Zionism, and reaction, was Gamal Abdel Nasser, through a series of alliances which began with the first purchase of arms from the USSR, the first between an Arab and socialist country. With this alliance, Abdel Nasser began his fight against the U.S., British and French imperialists, with the Soviet Union's support, which was clearly demonstrated during the tripartite aggression against Egypt in 1956. The Soviet warning which forced Great Britain and France to withdraw their forces from the Suez Canal and Port Said had a great effect on Arab public opinion because it gave a true picture of the Soviet Union and its firm support for the Arab Liberation Movement.

U.S. imperialism then began to play an important role in the Middle East, giving unlimited military and financial aid to Israel, converting it into a hostile and expansionist base, terrorizing nationalist Arab regimes, hindering their development and progress, and leading them at times to assume defensive positions, and in others to conciliation and retreat.

In the middle of this situation in the Arab region, the idea began to crystallize of organizing the Palestinian revolutionary struggle. This came about at the initiative of the Palestinian people themselves, who analyzed their own and the Arab nation's reality at that moment and decided that launching the revolutionary struggle was the correct way to deal with the Arab-Israeli conflict. It's true that at the beginning the Palestinian revolution had to deal with the fact that many people questioned its legitimacy and it had to work out many other problems; this was to be expected since it was not until September 1970 that the Palestinian struggle was able to project a clear political identity to the world, making it possible to determine who are its friends and who are its enemies. Similarly, the Palestinian revolutionary struggle emerged to express the will of the Palestinian people, who are part of the Arab nation. This means that the Palestinian revolutionary struggle has an influence on the Arab situation and vice versa.

Until September 1970, the Palestinian struggle was a captive of the circle of Arab alliances, which meant that the revolution was continually exposed to attacks and being isolated. Probably Black September\* demonstrated in one of its aspects, the problems of the Palestinian revolutionary struggle in terms of breaking out of the circle of Arab alliances to form broader alliances offering stronger support and greater protection.

I still remember that one of the main topics dealt with in the Third General Congress of the Fateh Movement in 1971 was: How can we break out of the circle of Arab mediation? We then realized to what extent the Palestinian revolutionary program was in contradiction with the programs of the Arab governments. We also realized that to achieve independence of the Palestinian national will — which was not just a slogan — it was necessary above all to change our policy and create a new base of broad alliances which could protect the revolution and ensure that its program would always determine its politics, and which would protect it from retreats relative to the programs of the Arab regimes. In that Congress we decided to approach the Soviet Union. The first PLO delegation paid an official visit to that country in December 1971, headed by comrade Yasser Arafat. I would call that visit an introductory one; it was conducted in the framework of the Soviet Committee of Solidarity with the Peoples of Asia and Africa, which was natural.

From that visit we learned that the more one struggles and the greater one's political clarity, the more understanding and support one receives. We thought that our visit would accomplish great things, but we discovered that our size meant that we only got three lines on the third page of *Pravda*.

\* Attack by King Hussein of Jordan against the Palestinian liberation movement.



A military patrol in Jordan during the period in 1970 known as "Black September."

As I said, from this visit we learned that to obtain more support from our friends, we had to fight more, be clearer politically, and develop a very strong anti-imperialist and antireactionary struggle not only in our program, but also in practice.

That visit was the beginning of support from the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries. Two years later we realized that the door had been opened for relations with the other revolutionary forces in the world, both the national liberation movements and the democratic and progressive parties and forces in Europe and other countries.

In 1973 the Palestinian revolutionary struggle had to face one of its most difficult tests in Lebanon. We still remember the important message



Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat was received in the USSR by Andrei Gromyko as a show of solidarity with the Palestinian cause.

sent at that time by Soviet leaders to President Suleiman Franjeh, reaffirming the Soviet Union's interest in the progress of the Palestinian revolution.

That day we Palestinians began to understand how important was the Soviet Union's role in supporting our cause. We began to note that this political support — which was both different and greater than from others — was not just limited to an unreal and theoretical verbal support. The image of the Soviet Union began to change in the minds of the Palestinian people, who like other Arab peoples had been victims of the lies and slander against the Soviet Union. This campaign began right after the victory of the great Bolshevik Revolution, continued when Abdel Nasser and the Soviet Union formed an alliance and when the Palestinian revolution began to develop a closer alliance with the USSR as well.

In short, our people began to appreciate the importance of friendship among the peoples; they began to understand that the Soviet Union is at the vanguard in terms of friendship among the peoples and of support for national liberation movements and all those seeking freedom from the yoke of colonialism, oppression and backwardness.

After the October 1973 war came the issue of finding a solution to the Middle East conflict. For the first time, we Palestinians found ourselves compelled to provide a way to settle the problem, something we had not done in 1947-48, although we were indeed the ones who paid the price of the settlement reached at that time. That was one of the lessons learned, one of the errors committed, which we didn't want to make again.



The issue of finding a settlement was then discussed among the Palestinians themselves. On this issue there was much debate and many differences of opinion emerged which appeared to threaten Palestinian unity. We were quite correct at that point when we decided not to take any steps alone in solving this problem; instead we decided to coordinate with our main ally, the Soviet Union, which had played an outstanding role in its aid to Syria and Egypt in the October 1973 war and in helping turn the October victories into real political triumphs. We approached the Soviet Union to coordinate with it, because we had lost the land of Abdel Nasser. Sadat had expelled Soviet technicians from Egypt. I still remember the editorial written that day by the martyr Kamal Nasser in *Falastin Al-Thawra* under this title: "We are not defending the Soviet Union, but rather ourselves," in which he stated that by expelling the Soviet technicians, Sadat was scorning a valuable weapon of the Arab nation and the Palestinian people, needlessly handing over the future of the Palestinians to the United States and Israel.

By coordinating with our Soviet friends on a solution to the Mideast problem we were able to achieve the following:

First, the PLO became a basic political force in the Middle East.

Second, we could respond to the issue of a solution of our problem through a 10-point program — the Program of National Power — which was discussed with all our friends, especially the Soviet Union. In that program the Palestinians made no concessions to the United States and Israel. This is confirmed by the fact that it has been and still is a real obstacle to the imperialist formula.

Third, we were strengthened by political-diplomatic activities throughout the world, to the point that we were granted observer status in the United Nations; in fact, we were the first liberation movement to achieve this status in the UN. The role played by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries was very important in aiding the PLO to attain such a prominent international political-diplomatic status.

Fourth, in coordination with the Soviet Union we were also able to get a series of resolutions passed by the UN General Assembly, the most important of which was Resolution 3236 which grants the Palestinians greater rights than those acknowledged in previous resolutions. Here I must note that the Soviet Union would not have been able to achieve what it did in the UN without corresponding Arab actions which was what had been missing when the decision was made to partition Palestine in 1947.

Subsequently the Palestinian revolution had to go through and is still going through many other trials and tribulations; I'm referring to the civil war in Lebanon, which we believe did not come from a Lebanese conflict or a Lebanese-Palestinian conflict, but rather was caused by the United States, which took advantage of the country's explosive situation to ignite a war in order to attack the Palestinians and their strategic ally, the Lebanese Progressive National Movement, a movement which historically has been on the side of every national cause, especially the Palestinian one; moreover, it is the movement which lent a helping hand to the Palestinian revolution after Black September in 1970 and throughout 1971, to make Lebanon a progressive nation, and even took



up arms to defend the Palestinian revolution and Lebanon's integrity and unity.

In this case as well, the Soviet Union's firm position in favor of the Palestinian revolution and the Lebanese National Movement was extremely important in preventing the complete implementation of the U.S. plan. Soviet political and diplomatic pressures and activities were influential in making it impossible to wipe out the Palestinian revolution and the Lebanese National Movement — the armed revolutionary forces which are still targeted by the enemy since they constitute a new form of Arab struggle and the expression of the organized, armed and combat-trained masses; the enemy found it necessary to destroy this struggle to prevent it from then spreading to other Arab countries.

When the Lebanese conflict began, we believe that Soviet support was most clearly shown when comrade Brezhnev officially welcomed brother Abu Ammar (Arafat), which was the first meeting held between a Soviet leader and a leader of a national liberation movement. This meeting was very important; the Soviet Union began to be convinced that the Palestinian liberation movement was a responsible one and had considerable influence in the Middle East conflict. This was expressed in joint declarations when Palestinian delegations visited the Soviet Union, and joint declarations by the Soviet Union and other countries in which there



The civil war in Lebanon and Israeli aggressions are part of a Yankee plan to strike at the Palestinian Revolution.

---

were clear affirmations on the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, to return to their homeland and to establish an independent state — in essence the total acceptance of the Palestinian revolution's 10-point program. This fact is even more important since we Palestinians know that this program was totally rejected, not only by Israel and imperialism, but also by all the reactionary Arab states. Two months earlier Carter had declared that the Arab countries were opposed to the creation of an independent Palestinian state, which was true in terms of the reactionary countries.

Therefore, to all those who think that the Soviet Union does not have to be more Arab than the Arabs I say that in the light of this difficult period, we believe that in practice the Soviet Union is more Arab than many Arabs.

How was the Palestinian-Soviet relationship established? Was it easy or was it necessary to overcome obstacles? Unquestionably, this relationship has its enemies, since the opponents of the Palestinian-Soviet alliance — U.S. imperialism and Israel — with weapons in one hand and vile slander in the other, are trying to wipe out the Palestinian revolution; they have been spreading even more lies to try to turn people away from the Program of National Power, by attempting to create illusions in the minds of some Palestinians, giving the impression that the United States can provide a solution to the Palestinian problem in

line with this people's hopes and aspirations. In this context must be seen the U.S. proposals put forward in recent years, which have almost found willing listeners among some Palestinians; but we haven't been fooled, since we can see through every one of these lies and determine who is open to them and under their influence.

Another enemy of the Palestinian-Soviet alliance is the Arab reaction, which comes carrying money, not to aid but rather to coopt and then abort the revolution. That's why we say that the Arab reaction is still carrying money in one hand and arms in the other, to use them, as has already happened, at the right moment. Our battles against the reaction have been hard ones and undoubtedly there are many more to come, since the reaction still gives highest priority to aborting the armed struggle and surrendering the region to U.S. imperialism's and Israel's wishes.

The third enemy of the Palestinian-Soviet alliance are those misguided theoreticians or those political forces who always tend to confuse friend and foe, and consider the Soviet Union and the United States, because they are the two great world powers, to be in the same situation, have the same characteristics and the same goals. These forces are also those who tend to use the term "foreigner" referring to both people from the United States and the Soviet Union, just as with everyone who is not Arab and among them those who are members of the Palestinian national liberation movement, in an antiprogressive ideological framework; that is, those who give higher priority to their ideological positions than national political needs in the stage of national liberation.

These forces are more important and more dangerous because they are among us, because they work among us and because they disguise their deviations with nationalist and patriotic rhetoric or religious declarations.

The Islamic revolution in Iran, which is now one of the most important issues in the Arab world, should be analyzed by all progressives in the Arab world. Probably the example of the relationship between the Tudeh Party and Iman Khomeini is worthy of study, to learn from it and have our masses understand the difference between the religion we inherited from colonialism, the reactionaries and exploiters for centuries in its service and the religion of the current Islamic revolution — a religion that puts at the head of the list of the revolution's tasks the total struggle against the United States, the reaction, the exploiters and oppressors and against all the enemies of mankind and peace.

But when we look at broad sectors of the Palestinian people, we find that their revolutionary struggle and the Soviet Union together, through this strategic alliance, have been successful in making this alliance clear in the minds and consciousness of the Palestinian people. I still remember an interview broadcast by the Palestinian revolution's radio station with a nine-year-old "lion cub scout" (pioneer) in Ar-rachidia refugee camp. When he was asked by a journalist who were the friends of the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples, he answered: Cyprus, the French Communist Party, the Italian Communist Party and the Soviet Union.

That interview was conducted during the years of the blockade. The boy was standing on a dock in the port and asked: "Where do the boats come from?"

They came from Cyprus, the Italian Communist Party, the French Communist Party and the Soviet Union. I mention this example to indicate that the best way to convince is the combination of correct theory and consistent practice.

How do we view the future of relations with the Soviet Union? Without any doubt, these relations have been strengthened, they have taken root to the extent that there is no longer any possibility — as long as the Palestinian revolution continues to exist — of damaging or ending these relations. However, these relations will always be menaced and exposed to plots by reactionary Arab countries and many non-Arab states. For example, one of the most notable examples of this type of conspiracy was to begin to talk about a European proposal after the failure of Camp David in terms of Palestine was almost a fait accompli, and when it was natural and logical that we would begin a new stage of political work in coordination and collaboration with the Soviet Union. Then the United States appeared pushing Europe to make this proposal to block any serious Palestinian-Soviet action in this area.

We, the patriots of the Palestinian revolution, also have the duty to continue to spread the concepts of friendship and building alliances among our people. We Palestinians are asked to understand that our people is a small one which can't win its victory without friendship, collaboration and alliances with all the forces of the world which cherish progress, freedom and peace.

Finally, I think that Lenin's ideas and principles have strongly influenced the Palestinian revolutionary struggle throughout its long fight, its revolutionary construction, its deficiencies in many areas and achievements in others, and especially in relation to work among the masses in the occupied territories, and in establishing and consolidating relationships and alliances.

What characterizes the present stage of the struggle is not exactly a settlement, because this involves shifting the balance of forces in favor of the imperialist and Zionist enemy, under the umbrella of Camp David or based on it; because it is a settlement at the expense of Palestinian rights, at the expense of the right of the Arab nations to develop and control their own wealth, and build their national democratic societies. Therefore, the nature of the current stage of the struggle is to intensify the fight to make the Camp David agreements fail, to ruin the plan to divide the region into sectarian mini-states and make new changes in the political map of the region. We must take maximum advantage of the revolutionary conjuncture provided by the victory of the revolution in Iran and the consolidation of the revolution in Afghanistan as the result of Soviet backing; this will make it possible for the Arab Liberation Movement to begin serious work to unite its ranks and work out a program appropriate for the current situation, providing an opportunity for the Steadfast and Confrontation Front to take effective steps to determine which are the progressive and which are the reactionary forces in the region, and establish a strategic relationship with the Soviet Union against the enemy camp, because without this alliance we cannot liberate our homeland, and not only this, we cannot maintain ourselves as anti-imperialist, anti-Zionist and antireactionary forces.