

The Palestinian Resistance Before Black September:

An Analysis of Influences at the Institutional Level

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Dedication-

This work would not have been possible without the love, support, and assistance of my family and friends. They are far too many to name and I will leave it that way to spare myself the shame of an accidental insult by omission. One person does deserve to go named though. I would like to personally thank Dr. Campos for all her assistance as my thesis advisor. I took advantage of her expertise far less than I should have and she helped me far more than I deserved. Thank you for struggling through this process with me. It has truly been a useful educational experience.

- Jeff Abalos

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Abbreviations

ANM (Arab Nationalists Movement)

IDF (Israeli Defense Force)

NFLP (National Front for the Liberation of Palestine)

PAC (Palestinian Action Command; ANM-PAC)

PDFLP (Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine)

PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine)

PLA (Palestine Liberation Army)

PLA-PLF (PLA- Popular Liberation Forces)

PLF (Palestine Liberation Front)

PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization)

PNC (Palestine National Council)

PRM (Palestinian Resistance Movement)

Chapter One: A Movement Defeated

On July 19, 1971, over fifty Palestinian resistance fighters crossed into Israel from the east bank of the Jordan River. It was immediately clear to the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) soldiers awaiting them on the western bank that this was no commando raid. Many of the *fedayeen*¹ who were crossing into Israel were already wounded. Upon reaching the west bank of the river, the Palestinian fighters surrendered to the awaiting IDF soldiers and were taken into custody by them.² What made those armed Palestinian fighters, who were adherents to the 1968 Palestinian National Charter which declared that “the forces of Zionism and of imperialism” were the primary enemies of the Palestinian liberation movement, cross into Israel and surrender to their sworn enemies?³

The *fedayeen* who crossed into Israel that July day were fleeing the full force of the Jordanian military, which was conducting the final operations of a ten-month campaign to eliminate armed and autonomous Palestinian resistance groups operating within Jordan. By the month’s end, no armed independent Palestinian resistance group would operate within, or from, the state of Jordan again. The conflict that broke out in September of 1970⁴, which lasted until July of 1971 and was punctuated by intermittent ceasefires, is commonly referred to as the Jordanian Civil War. On one side of the conflict was the Jordanian Arab Army, which fought to reassert full control over the entirety of the Jordanian state for the Hashemite monarch King Hussein.⁵ On the other side of the conflict were the *fedayeen* of the Palestinian resistance, coming from many different organizations and supported by a military contingent from Syria. The Palestinians fought to maintain their autonomous safe havens within Jordan, and some also wished to overthrow the monarchy of King Hussein.

¹ *Fedayeen* in Arabic means “those who struggle” and is a term commonly used to describe Palestinian resistance fighters at this time.

² “Iraq Disputes its Ties with Jordan; Frontier is Closed,” *Chicago Tribune*, July 19, 1971.

³ *The Palestinian National Charter* (1968), in *Basic Political Documents of the Armed Palestinian Resistance Movement*, ed. Leila S. Kadi (Beirut, Lebanon: Palestine Liberation Organization Research Center, 1969), 138.

⁴ September 1970 is also known as Black September and will sometimes be referred to as such in this work.

⁵ The Hashemite royal family has ruled Jordan since it gained its independence from the United Kingdom in 1946 (when it was called Transjordan) and still rules it today, as of this writing. Before 1946, Amir Abdullah, a Hashemite and the first king of Jordan, ruled Transjordan within the structures of the British Mandate System.

There is no dearth of narratives and historical studies seeking to explain the causes of the Jordanian Civil War. Some accounts of the Jordanian Civil War view it as a strategic masterpiece of statecraft, planned and enacted by King Hussein with the help of the United States and Israel.⁶ Similarly, most military analyses of the Jordanian Civil War tend to emphasize the actions of the Jordanian Arab Army *in opposition to* the Palestinian resistance. These military analyses view the *fedayeen* primarily as agency-less opponents upon which to gauge the relative effectiveness, or lack thereof, of the Jordanian military at the time.⁷ Bard O'Neill's study *Armed Struggle in Palestine: A Political-Military Analysis* is excellent in that it takes into account a diverse group of factors influencing the Palestinian resistance: popular support, organization, cohesion, external support, environment, and government role.⁸ Unfortunately, O'Neill only tangentially engages with the events of the Jordanian Civil War, since his primary focus is the multi-decade conflict between the Palestinian *fedayeen* and the IDF. Yezid Sayigh's *Armed Struggle and the Search for State* is arguably the most comprehensive work on the development of Palestinian nationalism and armed Palestinian resistance. Sayigh argues that armed struggle was the primary component in "the evolution of Palestinian national identity and in...the formation of parastatal [sic] institutions and a bureaucratic elite [within the Palestinian resistance]."⁹ While Sayigh does highlight the importance of armed struggle, he does not tie the *form* the armed struggle took with the immediate causes of the Jordanian Civil War, as will be argued in this thesis, since his work focuses on the broader history of Palestinian nationalism, not just the Jordanian Civil War.

The vast majority of the works mentioned above only cursorily deal with the events of the Jordanian Civil War, which is often relegated to a few pages within larger analyses of the broader Arab-

⁶ See Clinton Bailey, *Jordan's Palestinian Challenge, 1948-1983: A Political History*, (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1984); Douglas Little, "A Puppet in Search of a Puppeteer? The United States, King Hussein, and Jordan, 1953-1970," *The International History Review* 17, no. 3 (1995): 512-544.

⁷ For a favorable defense of the Jordanian Arab Army's performance during the Jordanian Civil War, see Ali El-Edroos, *The Hashemite Arab Army 1908-1979*, (Amman, Jordan: The Publishing Committee, 1980). For a less than favorable account of the Jordanian military's operations, see Kenneth Pollack, *Arabs at War*, (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2002).

⁸ Bard O'Neill, *Armed Struggle in Palestine: A Political-Military Analysis*, (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1978) 14-34.

⁹ Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1997) vii.

Israeli conflict and the wars of 1967 and 1973 . None have applied an in-depth analytical framework of insurgent warfare and insurgent-safe haven relations on the relationship between Jordan and the Palestinian resistance movement prior to Black September. An insurgency can be defined as the following: “a struggle between a non-ruling group and the ruling authorities in which the non-ruling group consciously uses *political resources*...and *violence* to destroy, reformulate, or sustain the basis of legitimacy of one or more aspects of politics [emphasis in original].”¹⁰ With this definition, the Palestinian resistance’s struggle against the government of Israel can be seen as an insurgent struggle, conducted after 1967 from safe-havens in neighboring states. Although much has been written about insurgent warfare generally, less has been written about external sanctuaries in insurgent warfare and even less on insurgent behavior within external sanctuaries.¹¹ The Palestinian resistance in Jordan, from 1967 until Black September, represents a case of an insurgent movement striking its target country from a safe haven abroad. This thesis will attempt to analyze factors at the institutional level which impacted the behavior of the largest Palestinian resistance groups within Jordan before the Jordanian Civil War.

Furthermore, this thesis will argue that three factors are underrepresented within the literature on the Jordanian Civil War and deserve to be more fully analyzed as causes of the conflict. These factors are the following: ideological formulations, organizational structures and means of resource acquisition. By emphasizing these factors, it is hoped that this thesis will contribute to constructing a narrative of the Jordanian Civil War that gives increased agency to the Palestinian resistance movement as *the* primary actor in escalating tensions prior to the war.

¹⁰ Bard O’Neill, *Insurgency & Terrorism: From Revolution to Apocalypse*, (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2005), 15. Although there is no one single definition of ‘insurgency’ in academia, like most terms, several other prominent definitions are similar to O’Neill’s formulation. See David Kilcullen, “Counterinsurgency *Redux*,” 2, http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/uscoin/counterinsurgency_redux.pdf (accessed March 28, 2013); Gordon H. McCormick, Steven B. Horton and Laura A. Harrison, “Things Fall Apart: The Endgame Dynamics of Internal Wars,” *Third World Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (2007): 322.; Richard H. Schultz, Jr. et al, ed., *Guerilla Warfare and Counterinsurgency: U.S.-Soviet Policy in the Third World* (Toronto: Lexington Books, 1989) xi.

¹¹ Idean Salehyan has written two good articles on safe havens in insurgent warfare, one on the preponderance of safe havens in insurgent warfare and one on the connection safe havens form between inter-state violence and intra-state violence. See Idean Salehyan, “No Shelter Here: Rebel Sanctuaries and International Conflict,” *The Journal of Politics* 70, no. 1 (2008): 54-66; Idean Salehyan, “Transnational Rebels: Neighboring States as Sanctuary for Rebel Groups,” *World Politics* 59, no. 2 (2007): 217-242.

The first factor of importance is the role of ideology on tactical and strategic decision-making within the Palestinian resistance movement (PRM) prior to Black September. Conceptions of revolutionary warfare based on the examples of Vietnam, Cuba, and China were incredibly influential to the leaders of the Palestinian resistance movement as they developed the tactical and strategic means by which they would prosecute their war of resistance against Israel. Commando raids across the Jordan River and acts of terrorism, such as plane hijackings, were crucial sources of tension that pressured King Hussein to act in 1970. Disparities between different Palestinian resistance organizations' ideologies, especially between the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and Fatah on such issues such as *who* the enemy was and *how* to achieve victory, ended up working to the detriment of the larger resistance as a whole by escalating tensions between the PRM and the Jordanian regime.

The second factor of importance that will be examined in this thesis is the impact of organizational structures on the PRM's behavior before Black September. It will be shown that the organizational structures which developed within different PRM organizations hindered efficient command-and-control of *fedayeen* fighters, directly leading to the rapid escalation to war in 1970. Furthermore, certain organizational structures, especially within Fatah, lead to the marginalization of the very mid-level leadership that had the potential to successfully guide the PRM through the events preceding the Jordanian Civil War.

The final factor this thesis will highlight as crucial to the outbreak of war in 1970 is the means by which the various Palestinian resistance organizations acquired manpower and material.¹² Since the Palestinian resistance movement was fractured across a variety of organizations in 1970, this thesis will analyze how the constant competition among the organizations to draw from a necessarily finite amount of manpower and material led to increasingly risky behavior by the Palestinian resistance movement, eventually leading to war.

As previously noted, this thesis hopes to add to the body of works that analyzes the Palestinian resistance organizations as the primary agents in the march to war in 1970. King Hussein only unleashed

¹² Foreign military aid, including direct military intervention, is included in the scope of this factor.

his army after it appeared Israeli reprisal raids and the increased autonomy of the Palestinian resistance within his kingdom threatened the fundamental stability of his monarchy. Furthermore, the claims to the allegiance of the Palestinian people set forth by various resistance groups threatened the essential foundations of the Hashemite monarchy which, since the annexation of the West Bank in 1948, had posited itself as a constitutional monarchy governing both the peoples of the east *and* west banks of the Jordan River.¹³ Although this thesis is only about a single case of a multi-organizational resistance movement operating within a safe haven, it can be hoped that it will help add to a more general understanding of what factors affect the behavior of insurgent groups operating from, and within, safe havens beyond the borders of their target states.

This thesis draws its research from a variety of sources, including oral histories, interviews, memoirs, and ideological publications. Due to the nature of the topic, semi-secretive guerilla groups, there were necessarily access issues confronted by this author in attaining the few sources that do exist. The Palestinian resistance unfortunately did not consider the interests of future historians when they conducted their revolutionary campaign in the 1960s and thus did not often keep detailed records of manpower, financial affairs, and the origins of these resources. This work then necessarily relies on secondary sources far more than can be desired. Fortunately, the highly restricted resistance archives and top and mid-level resistance leaders accessed in these secondary sources gives them enough credence to not hinder this thesis' main arguments. It can only be hoped in the future that the actors making history will take into account the needs of future scholars.

The major unit of analysis for this thesis will be the institutional/organizational level. Since the Palestinian resistance movement in 1970 was a heterogeneous mix of various organizations, switching factional allegiance or joining a splinter group were the major means that individual *fedayeen* could use to voice support or opposition to various tactical and strategic decisions. Specifically, the Popular Front for

¹³ This Hashemite national narrative is also exemplified by King Abdullah's decision to grant himself the title "King of All Palestine" and rename the Kingdom of Transjordan the Kingdom of Jordan, signifying its authority on both banks of the Jordan River. Beverley Milton-Edwards and Peter Hinchcliffe, *Jordan: A Hashemite Legacy*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 34; Naseer H. Aruri, *Jordan: A Study in Political Development (1921-1965)*, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1972), 89.

the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and Fatah will be taken as the three primary actors within the Palestinian resistance movement at the time. Since these three organizations controlled the vast majority of the resources and manpower wielded by the Palestinian resistance movement in Jordan prior to Black September, factors influencing them had the most impact on precipitating the conflict of 1970. Furthermore, the PFLP was the primary oppositional organization to the PLO-Fatah superstructure formed by the ascendancy of the *fedayeen* to dominance over the PLO that occurred in 1968. Within this *fedayeen* dominance, Fatah was largest and most powerful party.

The following chapter will more fully flesh out the chronology of the Jordanian Civil War and the crucial period of tensions preceding it from 1967 to 1970, as well as provide a larger historical context for the conflict and the period of interest. Chapter three will examine the structural and ideological influences on the three major organizations of interest: the PLO, the PFLP, and Fatah. Finally, Chapter Four will examine the influence of resource acquisition, both manpower and material, on the PLO, the PFLP, and Fatah. Although both Chapters Three and Four will both include analyses within them, Chapter Five will provide a concluding analysis that will explain how the factors of interest contributed to the march to war before September 1970.

Chapter Two: The March to War

To fully place the Jordanian Civil War in its context, a brief segment of background information is necessary. This section will chart the development of the Palestinian resistance and the state of Jordan from the first Arab-Israeli war in 1948 to the events of the Jordanian Civil War. Following the first Arab-Israeli war, the Kingdom of Transjordan was in control of the West Bank of the Jordan River and the eastern portion of Jerusalem.¹⁴ In 1950, King Abdullah of Jordan formally annexed these territories into the Kingdom of Transjordan and likewise granted around 810,000 Palestinians citizenship into his kingdom, thus trebling Transjordan's population.¹⁵ The armed Palestinian resistance movement was largely in its formative years during the 1950s, when a broad hope still existed within the Palestinian diaspora that the Arab states would be instrumental in solving the Palestinian problem, and it was only in 1964 that several hundred Palestinian delegates created the Palestine Liberation Organization during a conference in Jerusalem, spurred on by President Nasser of Egypt's aims within the arena of inter-Arab rivalries.¹⁶ As for the other organizations of interest, Fatah was founded at the end of 1958 by no more than a few dozen men, who represented at most a larger network of several hundred Palestinian nationalists dispersed around the region.¹⁷ The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine was not founded until December of 1967 from an amalgamation of various smaller Palestinian resistance groups,

¹⁴ Much debate exists within the historiography of the first Arab-Israeli war as to the nature of the Hashemite regime's connection to the emerging leadership of Israel. Some scholars and Palestinian nationalists charge the Hashemite monarchy with everything from outright collusion with Zionist leadership to tacit acceptance of the partition of Palestine in order to further dynastic aspirations. King Abdullah was assassinated in July of 1951 at the Al-Aqsa Mosque by a Palestinian nationalist, partially due to this controversy. For some relevant historiographies on the debate, see Avi Shlaim, *Lion of Jordan: The Life of King Hussein in War and Peace*, (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), 24-34, 38; Avraham Sela, "Transjordan, Israel and the 1948 War: Myth, Historiography and Reality," *Middle Eastern Studies* 28, no. 4 (1992): 623-627.

¹⁵ Clinton Bailey, *Jordan's Palestinian Challenge 1948-1983*, (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1984) 2.

¹⁶ Malcolm Kerr provides a good analysis of the inter-Arab rivalries during the 1950s and early 1960s, which he describes as the 'Arab-Cold War.' See Malcolm H. Kerr, *The Arab Cold War, 1958-1964*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1965).

¹⁷ Fatah means 'conquest' in Arabic and is a reverse acronym for the organization's larger Arabic name Harakat al-Tahrir al-Watani al-Filastini, which translates to The Palestinian National Liberation Movement. Many of Fatah's early members, and the members of other Palestinian organizations at the time, were students with memories of the 1948 war who lived, worked, and studied in the Palestinian diaspora throughout the region, especially in the Gulf states, Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon.

a full six months after the Six-Day War drastically changed the nature of both the Palestinian resistance and the strategic landscape in the Near East.¹⁸

Before the Six-Day War

Before the 1967 war, guerilla or commando warfare conducted by Palestinian resistance groups was still in its embryonic phase and highly leveraged by Arab regimes to further regional rivalries, particularly through the sponsorship of Egypt and Syria.¹⁹ Furthermore, the frequency of the raids carried out by the Palestinian resistance *before* the Six-Day War paled in comparison to the frequency of commando raids conducted *after* the Six-Day War. For instance, Al-Asifa, the military wing of Fatah at the time, supposedly carried out anywhere from thirty-five to 110 attacks in the year 1965.²⁰ In comparison, the IDF estimates that over 2,000 cross-border incidents occurred *along the Jordanian border alone* in 1969.²¹

All of this would change following the 1967 war. From the 5th to the 10th of June, the militaries of Egypt, Syria, and Jordan were decisively defeated by the IDF. As the fronts stabilized, the three Arab nations found that they had collectively lost the territories of East Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip, and the Sinai Peninsula. An estimated 300,000 Palestinian refugees fled across the Jordan River to the east bank and for the first time citizens of Palestinian origin outnumbered native Jordanians on the east bank.²²

The Six-Day War and its Aftermath

Although the June 1967 defeat was a major setback for both the Palestinian resistance movement and the neighboring Arab governments, some within the Palestinian resistance welcomed the opportunity

¹⁸ The histories of the PLO, the PFLP, and Fatah will be further elaborated on in the ‘formation’ section of the following chapter.

¹⁹ Michael Oren details the use of guerilla strikes as a tool in inter-Arab rivalries between Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Jordan and how these events, and the Israeli cross-border reprisals that followed them, weighed on the Hashemite throne before the Six-Day War in Michael B. Oren, *Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) 24-25.

²⁰ The lower number is the Israeli account and the higher number is Al-Asifa’s reckoning. Since Al-Asifa was the only highly active Palestinian resistance organization conducting commando warfare raids at the time, except for the Arab Nationalists Movement (ANM, which would merge into the PFLP; sometimes referred to as MAN), it is safe to take their raid data as close to representative for the total of that year. Ibid; Sayigh, 111.

²¹ O’Neill, *Armed Struggle in Palestine*, 81.

²² Bailey, 31.

Israel had given them to conduct unconventional warfare. Bard O'Neill notes that prior to the June War, those within the Palestinian resistance advocating guerilla warfare were faced with a "rather ludicrous situation of relying on some 300,000 Arabs in Israel as a popular base for a revolutionary war," a minority portion of the population.²³ O'Neill goes on to quote an unnamed *fedayeen* leader as stating that had the Israelis immediately withdrawn, they would have "set back [the movement] for years: the Palestinians would have been further demoralized, [and] Israel would have won a tremendous moral victory."²⁴ Fortunately, for those advocating guerilla warfare, the Israeli "occupation of the Arab territories created the water (support) within which the fish (guerillas) might swim."²⁵ The months after the Six-Day War would see a renewed thrust towards guerilla warfare, on the part of the Palestinian resistance.

One thrust of guerilla action in the West Bank was a contingent of thirty Fatah fighters, led by Yasir Arafat.²⁶ Arafat and the Fatah fighters attempted to set up a guerilla network centered on the city of Nablus. Arafat's efforts were stymied in the area due to a combination of successful Israeli counter-insurgency efforts and poor operational conduct by Fatah. Fatah next attempted to set up a guerilla network around the town of Ramallah, but these efforts also failed for similar reasons. Following a near escape from IDF forces in December of 1967, Arafat and Fatah decided that a new approach was necessary in their war of resistance, as their guerilla efforts in the West Bank were producing no satisfactory results, short of the small propaganda bonus granted by the appearance of action.²⁷ Across the various Palestinian resistance groups, there were over 200 casualties and 1,000 arrests suffered because of the guerilla efforts of 1967 in the West Bank.²⁸ Fatah, the PFLP, and the other Palestinian resistance

²³ O'Neill, *Armed Struggle in Palestine*, 61.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 62.

²⁶ Yasir Arafat was a Palestinian from the area around Jerusalem that spent his early life in Gaza and Cairo. He went to the University of Cairo and was an active founder and member of the General Union of Palestinian Students. Arafat worked in the Kuwaiti Department of Public Works from the late 1950s until the early 1960s, the same period that he helped develop and found Fatah. John W. Amos II, *Palestinian Resistance: Organization of a Nationalist Movement*, (New York: Pergamon Press, 1980), 48-50.

²⁷ Barry Rubin and Judith Colp Rubin, *Yasir Arafat: A Political Biography*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) 39-40.

²⁸ This does not necessarily mean that all the arrests or casualties were actually *fedayeen* fighters, but these numbers are significant in comparison to the amount of fighters operating at this time, which was only several thousand until the massive manpower surge after the Battle of Karama. Bailey, 30.

organizations relocated their command bases to the east bank of the Jordan River, most densely around the town of Karama, and continued a policy of harassment raids from Jordan.²⁹

The Battle of Karama

The Battle of Karama changed this situation. On March 21st, 1968, the IDF undertook a massive multi-pronged counter-raid on the town of Karama, using “less than a brigade’s worth of armor, an infantry brigade, a paratroop battalion, an engineering battalion, and five battalions of artillery.”³⁰ A combined force of Jordanian soldiers and *fedayeen* fighters engaged the IDF strike force. Jordanian armor held the attacking IDF forces at several locations, but some of the units were able to break through to Karama, especially the paratroopers that were landed directly on the town, and destroy the command and control infrastructure of the Palestinian resistance groups based there. At day’s end, the IDF sustained “28 killed and 69 wounded in addition to losing four tanks, three half-tracks, two armored cars, and an airplane shot down by Jordanian AAA.”³¹ A total of around 100 *fedayeen* fighters were killed and the same number wounded, with 120 to 150 captured and taken across the Jordan River by the IDF. The Jordanian Army suffered “61 dead, 108 wounded, thirteen tanks destroyed, twenty tanks damaged, and thirty-nine other vehicles damaged or destroyed.”³² Both sides claimed victory after the battle. The IDF sustained far more casualties than anticipated and so the *fedayeen* and Jordanian military hailed this fact as a great success. The Israeli objective of interfering with the command and control networks of the Palestinian resistance groups based in Karama also succeeded. Following the battle, the east bank bases were relocated to the Western and Northwestern slopes around Amman. The towns of Salt, Amman, Irbid, Ajlun, and Jerash were also used as urban locations for staging and command.³³ In 1968, a series of Israeli air raids on the bases located outside of population centers, on the outskirts of towns and cities as

²⁹ Bailey, 33.

³⁰ Pollack provides a good military analysis of the battle for those interested in the tactical and strategic aspects of the conflict. Pollack, 332.

³¹ Ibid, 332-334.

³² Ibid, 334.

³³ Locations were chosen for their physical proximity to the Israeli border or because they were home to high density clusters of Palestinian refugee populations, within which resistance organizations could operate. These two reasons for base locations were not mutually exclusive. Bailey, 33.

opposed to *within* them, caused a second wave of relocations. *Fedayeen* bases were this time re-established *directly within* refugee camps and dense population centers, such as Amman, in an effort to increase the difficulty for the Israelis of carrying out successful raids, both tactically and politically.³⁴

The Growth of the State-within-a-state

As the *fedayeen* bases came to be more integrated into population centers, a parallel state began to develop within Jordan, which has been labeled the Palestinian state-within-a-state. This growing challenger to the Jordanian government developed at the same time as, and perhaps because of, a massive explosion in *fedayeen* numbers as the legacy of the Battle of Karama began to draw thousands of new recruits to resistance organizations. Unfortunately, this recruitment boom came at the cost of increased tensions with the Jordanian military, who felt slighted by the *fedayeen* claims to victory at Karama. Abu-Odeh characterizes the relationship between the Jordanian Army and the *fedayeen* as one of “mutual resentment” after the 1968 Battle of Karama due to the competing claims to ‘victory’ espoused by both the *fedayeen* and Jordanian Army.³⁵ Around five thousand new recruits requested entrance into Fatah’s ranks alone following Karama, and the entire strength of the Palestinian resistance movement grew from an estimated 5,000 fighters in 1968 to 12,000 in 1969.³⁶

Increased troop numbers required a vastly more complex supply and command infrastructure, and the Palestinian resistance organizations began to create their “own military police, security apparatus, [and] revolutionary courts.”³⁷ Essentially, the Palestinian resistance groups were establishing what is called in insurgency theory literature ‘parallel hierarchies’ of government.³⁸ A *Washington Post* article, dated from February 22, 1970, opens with a quote from an unnamed Western diplomat stating that “today in Jordan there are in effect two governments: one headed by King Hussein and the other led by the

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Adnan Abu-Odeh, *Jordanians, Palestinians, and the Hashemite Kingdom*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1999) 169-171.

³⁶ Bailey, 33; Rubin and Rubin, 42.

³⁷ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 244.

³⁸ O’Neill, *Insurgency & Terrorism*, 51-52.

Palestinian commandos.³⁹ The article continues by describing how the strength and power of Fatah is displayed by the fact that “in Amman, they [Fatah cadres] are often more evident than Jordanian police. Their military police, who wear...camouflage jungle suits, patrol downtown Amman.”⁴⁰ Other Fedayeen groups are cited as soliciting ‘contributions’ with force.⁴¹ Other actions undertaken by *fedayeen* in Jordanian cities at the time included refusing to use Jordanian license plates on their vehicles, wearing uniforms and openly carrying arms in urban centers, drafting Jordanian Palestinians into their ranks, extorting local business owners and tourists, and establishing “checkposts [sic] at points of approach that they deemed sensitive.”⁴² In a truly revealing encounter, both King Hussein and Prince Hasan were denied access to Fedayeen strongholds on two separate occasions.⁴³

This growing state-within-a-state increasingly clashed with the Jordanian regime. On November 4th of 1968, a gunfight broke out between *fedayeen* fighters and the Jordanian military in Al-Wahdat refugee camp, located in southern Amman. Despite the use of heavy artillery by the Jordanian Army, the battle stagnated and King Hussein and Yasir Arafat were forced to negotiate a peace.⁴⁴ Fighting broke out again in November of 1969 between the Jordanian military and Fatah. Peace was restored only when Fatah agreed to reign in the rampant autonomy of its fighters in Jordan, although these agreements were quickly violated.⁴⁵ Efforts by King Hussein to enact decrees constraining the *fedayeen* in February of 1970 also resulted in clashes. The decrees were designed to restrict the unauthorized movements of the *fedayeen*, the open carrying of arms and ammunition within cities, the rampant disregard of Jordanian identification and license plate laws, and other symptoms of the state-within-a-state. When clashes broke out the following day, they persisted until February 22nd, when talks between Arafat and King Hussein

³⁹ Jesse Lewis Jr. "Guerillas, King Vie for Control." *Washington Post Foreign Service*, Feb 22, 1970.

⁴⁰ Lewis, Jr.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Bailey, 34; Michael Hudson, "Developments and Setbacks in the Palestinian Resistance Movement 1967-1971," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 1, no. 3 (1972): 67.

⁴³ Bailey, 34.

⁴⁴ Gerard Chaliand, "The Palestinian Resistance Movement in Early 1969," Trans. by Fifth of June Society, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, 1969, 19-20.

⁴⁵ Rubin and Rubin, 48.

once again eased tensions.⁴⁶ Fighting also broke out between the *fedayeen* and the Jordanian military in June, July, and August of 1970. An assassination attempt on King Hussein's motorcade occurred on September 1st, amidst ongoing fighting which had begun on August 26th and which did not cease until September 5th.⁴⁷

Black September: The War Starts

The peace would be short lived. The PFLP, on September 6th, carried out four simultaneous airline hijacking operations, three of which succeeded. One of the planes, an El Al Boeing 707, was rerouted to London after being re-secured by armed guards. A second plane, a Pan American Boeing 747, was successfully hijacked and landed in Cairo. The final two planes, a TWA 707 and a Swissair DC-8, were landed in Dawson Field, an abandoned Royal Jordanian Air Force strip located north of Amman.⁴⁸ A British Overseas Airways Corporation VC10 was hijacked by the PFLP on September 9th and also landed at Dawson Field.⁴⁹ Although the majority of the hostages were released by September 13th, fifty-four hostages were dispersed to various PFLP safe-houses in Amman and several other Jordanian cities.⁵⁰ These hijackings, and the ensuing escalation of international tensions caused by them, became the proximate causes for King Hussein's authorization of military action against the *fedayeen* in mid-September.

The Jordanian army moved into Amman and other urban centers on September 17th, marking the beginning of Jordanian military operations during Black September. That same day, the PLO Central Committee in Amman "declared the establishment of three 'liberated provinces' in Irbid, Jerash, and Ajlun."⁵¹ Although intended to be a 48-hour operation, by September 20th the Jordanian military had still not achieved its objective of removing armed *fedayeen* from Amman and Northern Jordan.⁵²

⁴⁶ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 246-247.

⁴⁷ Neville Brown, "Jordanian Civil War," *Military Review* (1971): 38-39; Rubin and Rubin, 50.

⁴⁸ Brown, 39.

⁴⁹ David Raab, *Terror in Black September: The First Eyewitness Account of the Infamous 1970 Hijackings*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) 70-72.

⁵⁰ Brown, 39.

⁵¹ This open hostility and opposition to the Jordanian regime represented a relatively swift change of policy for the PLO, and Fatah that ruled it at the time, since Fatah's ideological stance on Arab regimes was one of 'non-

September 20th was the beginning of another decisive point of crisis during Black September. A Syrian force, numbering 300 armored vehicles and over 16,000 men, entered Jordan from the northern border.⁵³ Most accounts of the Syrian invasion note that the tanks were hastily painted with Palestine Liberation Army (PLA) markings to disguise their true origin but the fact that the force sent from Syria far outnumbered the armored capabilities of the PLA at the time makes it plain that the force was in actuality at least partially from the Syrian regular army.⁵⁴ Throughout the intervention, the Syrian air force remained grounded, which allowed the Royal Jordanian Air Force free reign of the skies. By September 22nd, the Syrian invasion force had stalled. Owing to a lack of reinforcements and air support, the Syrian invasion force retreated, with the last elements crossing back into Syrian territory on September 23rd.⁵⁵

The Hashemite regime and the fedayeen finally reached a ceasefire agreement on September 27th. This was largely achieved through the efforts of Egyptian president Nasser, who would die the following day. From October 1970 to April 1971, the Jordanian military forcibly pushed the *fedayeen* out of all major Jordanian urban centers, such as Irbid and Amman, and forced them to redeploy to the forests and mountains in the area between Ajlun and Jarash. Beginning in April 1971, the Jordanian army besieged the Fedayeen forces in their mountain bases and in July 1971 the last prominent *fedayeen* concentration in

interference' at the time. These ideas of 'non-interference' within Fatah and the PLO will be explored in the ideology section of the following chapter. Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 264.

⁵² Pollack, 336-338.

⁵³ Accounts differ as to both *why* Syria intervened and why the intervention took the *form* it did. Both Neville Brown and Norvell De Atkine argue that the Syrian intervention was hindered by infighting within the Syrian regime and that Syrian Defense Minister Hafez al-Asad grounded the Syrian air force during the intervention in order to let it fail. David Raab contends that Asad was attempting to maintain a degree of 'plausible deniability' for the Syrian regime to ease future Syrian-Jordanian relations and that the Soviets were highly involved in all aspects of the Syrian invasion. Patrick Seale, in his biography of Asad, contends that Asad had already consolidated his power within the Syrian regime by Black September and only wished to establish a safe haven for the *fedayeen* in the north of Jordan, thus explaining the muted effort on the part of the Syrian military as *not* an attempt to overthrow King Hussein. For Syria, *fedayeen* operations from Jordan represented a potentially useful tool for leveraging relations with Israel, Egypt, and Jordan and the Syrian regime was willing to fight, to a degree, to maintain the *fedayeen*'s presence in the Hashemite kingdom. Brown, 45; El-Edroos, 455-456; Norvell De Atkine, "Amman 1970, A Memoir," *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 6, no. 4 (2002): 80; Patrick Seale, *Asad of Syria: The Struggle for the Middle East*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 157-162; Pollack, 476; Raab, 173-200.

⁵⁴ Brown, 45.

⁵⁵ Pollack, 339-340.

Jordan was expelled from the country. From July 1971 on, King Hussein would no longer face any challenge from the Palestinian resistance comparable to any of the incidents from the pre-1971 period.⁵⁶

A sufficient historical context has now been achieved to begin discussing directly the three organizations of interest. What will now follow is a more comprehensive history of the origins of these organizations: the PLO, the PFLP, and Fatah. These histories will be divided into two critical sections: an examination of the development of organizational structures and an examination of the development of pertinent ideological stances within each organization. An analysis of the organizational development of these three groups will allow a fuller understanding of how these organizations were constrained by institutional structures in the conduct of their resistance efforts.⁵⁷ An understanding of the evolution of revolutionary ideology within each organization will likewise show how tactical and strategic concepts, formulated due to certain emphases within each group's ideology, drove each organization's resources into specific avenues of behavior.

⁵⁶ El-Edroos, 451-463; Pollack, 336-342.

⁵⁷ Although not necessarily done through the exact same framework as Graham Allison's highly influential government politics and bureaucratic process models, the organizational structures section of the following chapter will tangentially look at how pre-existing structures, operating procedures, and inter-institutional rivalries influenced the behavior of the Palestinian resistance groups being examined. For a better understanding of Allison's theories on bureaucratic behavior, which can be applied to the Palestinian resistance at the organizational/institutional level, see Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, (Boston: Little Brown, 1971).

Chapter Three: Organizational and Ideological Influences

The purpose of this chapter will be to analyze and explore two underrepresented factors that influenced the major constituent organizations of the PRM prior to Black September. Specifically, developments in organizational structures and ideological formulations will be examined to elucidate the role that each played in constraining and influencing the actions of Fatah, the PLO, and the PFLP in the period before the Jordanian Civil War. These analyses will be conducted at the institutional level and will be prefaced by brief overviews of each organization's origin, alongside examinations of the revolutionary tactics and strategies used by each organization, in order to better contextualize the organizational structures and ideological formulations of interest and display how these factors translated into actual organizational behaviors.

Fatah

Formation, Organizational Development, and Revolutionary Action

Formation

The powerful Fatah of 1969, which controlled the PLO and had thousands of guerilla fighters under its command, was formed rather humbly in a private residence in Kuwait during a gathering of around twenty men on October 10, 1959.⁵⁸ The men, who represented a network of no more than 500 Palestinians spread across the region, had gathered to finalize the political, ideological, and organizational details of the budding Palestine National Liberation Movement, which would become Fatah.⁵⁹ The majority of Fatah's founders came from Gaza or Palestinian refugee families in Egypt, such as Khalil al-Wazir (Abu Jihad) whose family became refugees in Egypt when he was thirteen.⁶⁰ For al-Wazir, the driving impetus to establish Fatah, after several years of participating in other militant organizations that were heavily

⁵⁸ Abu Iyad, *My Home, My Land: A Narrative of the Palestinian Struggle*, trans. Linda Butler Koseoglu (New York: Times Books, 1981) 29; Rubin and Rubin, 25.

⁵⁹ Amongst these men were Abu Iyad (Eyad) and Yasir Arafat. Abu Iyad clarifies discrepancies that exist concerning the origins of Fatah's name. Although Fatah's name was agreed upon by Fatah's founding members in 1958, it was not used in any official capacity until the Kuwait meeting more firmly established Fatah's existence. It should also be noted that although Fatah reckons its official beginning with the start of its armed struggle in 1965, the underground activities of the organization officially began following the October 1959 meeting. Iyad, 27, 29.

⁶⁰ Sayigh, 80-81.

under Egyptian control, was that “existing Arab reality would never allow even the establishment of a Palestinian organization, and so there was no alternative for the Palestinians but to go underground and adopt absolute secrecy in their organization.”⁶¹ This underground independent Palestinian organization manifested, for al-Wazir and the other founders, in the form of Fatah. The history of Fatah after its foundation is very easily charted alongside internal organizational changes, and thus it will be charted below. Primarily, there are two important phases of Fatah’s development that will be discussed, the delineation of which is largely the author’s own. The first stage is Fatah’s underground-network phase, in which it focused on building its underground apparatus and maintaining operational secrecy. This first phase of Fatah’s existence lasted from 1959 until 1964. The second stage of Fatah’s development is its guerilla-militant phase, which occurred after the 1967 War and intensified exponentially after the Battle of Karama, during which Fatah became a more conspicuous organization with its focus placed on open armed struggle.

Revolutionary Action

Fatah’s militant activity in the period before Black September took three forms, all of which can be subsumed under the larger umbrella of guerilla warfare. First, Fatah attempted to conduct cross-border sabotage missions from bases in Syria, by way of Jordan or Lebanon, in the pre-1967 period. In the months following the June defeat of the Arab armies, Fatah attempted to conduct an imbedded guerilla war within the occupied territories which largely failed. Finally, from the failure of the imbedded guerilla war until Black September, Fatah conducted cross-border raids and shelling operations from safe havens in Lebanon and Jordan.

Prior to 1964, Fatah was primarily concerned with developing its clandestine network throughout the Middle East and, to a limited degree, the globe. Fatah’s guerilla components were only in their embryonic phase in 1964 when internal debates began within Fatah’s leadership about when to begin the armed struggle. These debates were spurred in part by the formation of the PLO in 1964, which presented a new rival within the PRM, and Fatah’s leadership finally decided to commence the armed struggle in

⁶¹ Al-Wazir is quoted in Sayigh, 83-84.

December of 1964.⁶² Fatah had formed its first training camps for commandos in Syria and Algeria in the early 1960s, with the official consent and assistance of both states' governments, prior to the decision to begin the armed struggle.⁶³ Fatah launched its first strike into Israel from Lebanon, because Syria restricted attacks across *its* border with Israel, on December 31, 1964.⁶⁴ The Fatah guerilla team attempted to attack an Israeli water pumping station but it was intercepted and captured by a Lebanese border patrol.⁶⁵ A second Fatah strike the next day, in the border region south of the Sea of Galilee (Lake Tiberias), in which another Fatah commando team sought to demolition a canal, failed when the explosives did not detonate.⁶⁶ Regardless of the actual success of Fatah's first operations, Fatah hailed it as the beginning of the armed struggle. Fatah released statements declaring this new development in its conduct of the revolution under the name Al-Asifa (The Storm), in order to distance Fatah from any political fallout stemming from the commencement of guerilla operations.⁶⁷ Fatah's further operations over the next two years, until the Six-Day War, predominately took the form of sabotage operations, like its first two attacks but occasionally more successful, or other types of commando raids.⁶⁸

Following the June defeat of the Arab armies in 1967, Fatah attempted for a brief period to enact a new tactic of imbedded guerilla warfare, in which the fighting cadres would remain within the target population, specifically the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Fatah's leadership set the start date for the recommencement of guerilla operations as August 28, 1967.⁶⁹ Fatah had established its guerillas in the West Bank, both those who remained behind after the Israeli occupation and those who infiltrated from June to August of 1967, into either "armed cells" which were "nested" in particular locations or into "roving guerilla bands" of ten to fifteen men that operated in the hills and countryside.⁷⁰ As previously mentioned, Arafat personally led a thirty-man team into the West Bank and attempted to establish a

⁶² Rubin and Rubin, 31.

⁶³ Ibid, 32.

⁶⁴ Sayigh, 107.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 107-108.

⁶⁸ Rubin and Rubin, 33.

⁶⁹ Sayigh, 161.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 162.

guerilla-ring centered on the city of Nablus.⁷¹ Arafat's Nablus effort failed and a similar effort centered on Ramallah ended with Arafat barely escaping IDF forces and making it back to the east bank of the Jordan River.⁷²

As Fatah's guerilla aspirations began to fail in the West Bank, Fatah's leadership shifted its focus towards establishing sedentary safe havens in the east bank from which to strike across the border into the occupied West Bank.⁷³ Similar base-building operations were occurring in southern Lebanon at the time, but these efforts, although important to Palestinian-Lebanese relations, were given secondary priority to Fatah's efforts in the Jordan Valley.⁷⁴ From both Jordan and Lebanon, in the period from 1967 to 1970, Fatah conducted cross border raids and cross border shelling attacks as the primary means of enacting the armed struggle.⁷⁵ These often were responded to by Israeli counter-raids, the most famous of which is the previously mentioned Battle of Karama, in which Fatah members were the largest component of the *fedayeen* force that took place in the battle.⁷⁶ Fatah's participation in the battle brought to the organization enormous amounts of prestige and manpower from Jordan's Palestinian population.

As previously noted, Fatah conducted three distinct types of guerilla actions prior to Black September: cross-border sabotage missions, imbedded guerilla operations, and cross-border commando raids and shelling operations. All of Fatah's operations prior to Black September occurred either within or from Israel, the occupied territories, or the front-line Arab states which border Israel. Noticeably absent from Fatah's military efforts at this time were international acts of terror like those conducted by the PFLP. These will be described and examined later in the chapter.

Organizational Development

There are two important organizational factors that influenced Fatah prior to Black September. The first was its transition from a clandestine network to a conspicuous guerilla organization, which caused a

⁷¹ Rubin and Rubin, 39.

⁷² Ibid, 39-40.

⁷³ Ibid, 42.

⁷⁴ For a more in depth study of Fatah's actions in Lebanon, which culminated with the granting of *fedayeen* privileges through the 1969 Cairo Agreement, see Sayigh, 189-192.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 202-205.

⁷⁶ Sayigh places the number of Fatah fighters at 220 to 250. Sayigh, 178.

structural change in Fatah's organizational makeup and positioned it to conduct fundamentally different types of operations. In the years before its official formation at the Kuwait meeting, the embryonic Fatah grew predominately through clandestine means. Abu Iyad described Fatah's structure and growth pattern at the time as such:

We chose the "vertical" organizational model, with each of us linked to a single militant who in turn recruited another and so on. The resulting "chain" seemed to us less vulnerable than cells grouping three or more members all of whom knew each other. Our meetings [between secret Fatah members] were generally held in coffeehouses (my favorite was the Al Kamal) where we played backgammon or dominos while talking in low voices.⁷⁷

The clandestine formation of Fatah's organizational structure only intensified after its official formation in 1959. Fatah's objectives at the time, as described by Abu Iyad, were to "set up an organization which would enable us to launch the armed struggle and become a mass movement."⁷⁸ From 1959 to 1964, Fatah gradually expanded and set up "hundreds of cells, not only in the areas bordering on Israel...but also within Palestinian communities in the other Arab countries, Africa, Europe, and even North and South America."⁷⁹ Fatah cell members, due to the secret nature of their membership, were able to infiltrate civil organizations, local governments, and national governments.⁸⁰ In this period as well, 1959 to 1964, secrecy was still maintained as a primary virtue. Iyad states that:

Each cell consisted of a maximum of three members who knew each other only by code names which were changed from time to time for additional security. The cells generally met in public places in full view of everyone. Telephone or postal contacts were strictly forbidden, and all messages were delivered orally even if the leadership had to send emissaries to other countries for this purpose.⁸¹

The transition from the vertical organizational model to the cell model indicates that Fatah was slowly growing during this period and needed larger operational units. To increase membership during this time, Fatah also absorbed some smaller Palestinian organizations. Fatah succeeded in absorbing completely, including the neutralization of original structures and command hierarchies, "thirty-five to forty

⁷⁷ During this time, Iyad was both a school teacher and a secret Fatah cadre in Deir al-Balah in the Gaza Strip. He would become a member of Fatah's Central Committee. Iyad, 27.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 36.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Iyad is unclear though in the exact benefits gained through these infiltrations, though it can be assumed that Fatah members could use their positions to aid the movement as a whole. Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

Palestinian organizations” that had developed within the Palestinian diaspora population in Kuwait at this time.⁸² Whereas the PFLP and the PLO, as will be shown below, absorbed or joined with other organizations in a coalitional manner that allowed for easy fracturing, Fatah’s total absorption ensured greater stability within the organization further down the line.

The beginning of armed struggle by Fatah, in 1964, marked a crucial shift in Fatah’s organizational structure. Previous to the armed struggle’s beginning, the establishment of sedentary and guerilla bases by Fatah in Algeria and Syria can be viewed as presaging the coming shift. This trend was exasperated by the massive manpower increase that immediately followed the Battle of Karama. As thousands of new recruits sought to join Fatah, the organization was forced to rapidly expand to accommodate them, or risk losing them to rival organizations within the PRM. Fatah established a geographical command structure in Jordan, with three guerilla sectors, to streamline the absorption of new recruits and more efficiently spread out the new manpower.⁸³ Each sector had “its own commander..., deputy-commander, and operations officer, as well as a training camp to absorb new recruits.”⁸⁴ This sprawling military bureaucracy, with each sector able to accommodate anywhere from 1,500 to 2,000 men, was a marked change from the clandestine, single-link network, or even three-person cell structure, established during Fatah’s expansion phase from 1959 to 1964. With this transition, Fatah established itself in a situation that severely constrained its decision-making. Operating from sedentary bases which were separate from the larger population centers removed Fatah’s ability to exist and operate clandestinely.

A second important organizational aspect influencing Fatah before Black September was the high-degree of power centralized in Fatah’s Central Committee, the command organization at the head of its hierarchy. This centralization was useful in establishing efficient authority within Fatah, but this occurred at the expense of negating local regional Fatah leaders influence on Fatah’s decision-making. Fatah’s Central Committee operated on a “collegial consensus” model, perhaps best exemplified by the

⁸² Ibid, 37.

⁸³ Sayigh, 181.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

decision made by it to begin the armed struggle in 1964.⁸⁵ When arguing the merits of beginning the armed struggle in autumn of 1964, Abu Iyad notes that the Central Committee leadership was split on the decision and thus decided to call a larger assembly of the leadership cadres in command of the cells around and within Palestine. These cadres split along similar lines as the Central Committee but, after several days of negotiations, a consensus was reached to begin the armed struggle.⁸⁶ Further reinforcing the primacy of the collegial model over Fatah's Central Committee is the fact that Abu Iyad remembers his decision to appoint Yasir Arafat as the spokesman for Fatah as the "one occasion" when he had to deviate from the Central Committee's operational-structure of collective consensus. The uniqueness of Iyad's unilateral decision adds weight to the fact that the collegial model was the standard operating procedure of Fatah's highest circle of leadership.⁸⁷

As Jordan became the primary base of focus for Fatah, the Central Committee began to increasingly absorb the duties of Fatah's regional command in Jordan. Sayigh characterizes the Central Committee's absorption of control in Jordan, even against the efforts of local Fatah cadres to assert themselves vis-à-vis the Central Committee, as manifesting through "its power over appointments and by sidelining intermediary bodies and avoiding firm organizational structures and rules of procedure."⁸⁸ Thus, Fatah's Central Committee members, many of who were the original founders that predominately came from Gaza and Egypt, took over direct management of Fatah's operations in Jordan, sometimes ignoring the advice of local cadres who had more expertise in operating within the Hashemite kingdom.

Two important organizational aspects influenced Fatah prior to Black September. First, the transition from a clandestine network structure to a sedentary, guerilla force severely limited the types of operations that Fatah could conduct and the type of organization Fatah *could be*. Fatah effectively eliminated its option to exist and operate as a clandestine force in Jordan within the Palestinian 'sea' that existed there. A second important organizational factor influencing Fatah was the intense centralized

⁸⁵ Ibid, 223.

⁸⁶ Iyad, 43.

⁸⁷ For Abu Iyad's account of the appointment of Arafat as Fatah's spokesman, see Iyad, 60-61.

⁸⁸ Sayigh, 223.

power of Fatah's aptly named Central Committee. While this centralized power did allow Fatah to efficiently enact hierarchical decision making, it also meant the marginalization of Fatah's most experienced cadres within the Hashemite kingdom, to the detriment of the organization as a whole.

Ideology

There are a variety of important themes and ideas present in Fatah's ideology, both broad theoretical formulations and tactical/strategic formulations, which are important for their role in constraining and guiding Fatah's actions prior to the Jordanian Civil War. The first two of these ideological formulations of interest are present also in the PFLP's ideology. These are ideological formulations positing the primacy of *immediate* political violence for the revolution and formulations concerning the need for safe havens in neighboring Arab countries from which to conduct revolutionary actions. The other two ideological themes of importance, non-interference in Arab regimes and non-violence in interactions with fellow Palestinian resistance organizations, are important for understanding why Fatah failed to follow courses of action that may have either averted the Jordanian Civil War or better prepared Fatah for the conflict. Specifically, non-intervention in the internal affairs of Arab regimes meant that Fatah did not prepare for open conflict with the Jordanian regime until it was too late. Non-violence towards fellow Palestinian resistance organizations meant that Fatah was unable to reign in and suppress the more antagonistic and tension-raising actions of fellow PRM organizations like the PFLP.

The primacy of armed struggle is prominent in a variety of Fatah's ideological statements. It is presented not only as *a* strategy for the liberation of Palestine but as *the* strategy. In a 1970 ideological tract, Fatah proudly proclaimed that "armed revolution is *the* [emphasis added] road to return and to victory."⁸⁹ In a 1969 speech by Fatah delegates to the Second International Conference in Support of the Arab Peoples, the delegation stated that the resistance resorted to arms only after "all other means [had]

⁸⁹ Although undated, this text can reasonably be placed between January 1970, which it celebrates as the five-year anniversary of the armed struggle, and September 1970, which it fails to mention. All documents written after Black September mention it with the same frequency, if not more, than the 1948 and 1967 conflicts. The Palestine National Liberation Movement, Fatah, *Revolution Until Victory*, 5, http://www.freedomarchives.org/Documents/Finder/DOC_12_scans/12.revolution.until.victory.pdf (accessed March 14, 2013).

been exhausted” and the “only alternative left to the Palestinians was armed revolution.”⁹⁰ Indirectly commenting on peace efforts that sought a mediated settlement to the state of tensions in 1969 between Israel and the Arab regimes, the Fatah delegation reiterated that “we [Fatah] will not accept any substitute to a war of national liberation.”⁹¹ Fatah did not only conceptualize armed struggle as necessary, but it also had to be constant and *immediate*, especially following the defeat of the Arab armies in June of 1967. Abu Iyad most succinctly states why Fatah felt it had to immediately resume guerilla action following the Six-Day War, even though it could have postponed action in order to achieve a higher level of military preparedness, in an interview with *Al-Tali’ah*:

First, it was not healthy from the political, military and psychological points of view to freeze the organizations and the fighters after the degree of training we had reached. Second, freezing with no movement made us more vulnerable to dangers. Third, the enemy began to sense and hear about a number of our secret bases.⁹²

These practical reasons were equally supported by ideological arguments for the immediate commencement of guerilla action. Abu Iyad characterizes two competing viewpoints as existing within Fatah’s leadership concerning the appropriate time to begin the armed struggle. One view held that armed struggle should only begin once Fatah’s “popular and military roots had become stronger so that its strength and continuity could be ensured.”⁹³ This view, as characterized by Abu Iyad, lost out to the belief that “armed struggle must begin even with the minimum resources, as these, through action, would develop, become stronger and deep rooted.”⁹⁴ Since the dominant strain of thinking within Fatah’s leadership believed that the armed struggle would induce the strength the revolution needed, to end commando action, such as in an effort to reduce tensions with the Jordanian regime, would be to deliberately weaken the resistance.

⁹⁰ Al-Fatah, *Address by the Al-Fateh Delegation to the Second International Conference in Support of the Arab Peoples*, (Cairo, January 1969), 4, [http://www.freedomarchives.org/Documents/Finder/DOC12_scans/12.address.by.al fateh.1969.pdf](http://www.freedomarchives.org/Documents/Finder/DOC12_scans/12.address.by.al%20fateh.1969.pdf) (accessed March 14, 2013).

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² At this point, Fatah fighters, excluding those who had already acquired prior military experience serving in non-Palestinian Arab armies, were trained primarily in commando tactics at government sponsored sites in Algeria and Syria. Lufti al-Khouli, “The Resistance: A Dialogue between Al-Fateh and Al-Tali’ah,” *Al-Tali’ah*, (June 1969) in *Basic Political Documents of the Armed Palestinian Resistance Movement*, ed. Leila S. Kadi (Beirut, Lebanon: Palestine Liberation Organization Research Center, 1969), 61.

⁹³ Ibid, 55.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

The tactical decision to maintain sedentary commando bases within the territory of the Arab states bordering Israel, particularly Jordan, also has its roots in Fatah ideology. Fatah is not alone in formulating a theory of ‘safe havens,’ as will be shown below concerning the PFLP’s own tactical decision-making. Fatah, in its *Political and Armed Struggle*, sets forth a theory of a two-stage Palestinian People’s War made up of a Stage of Avoiding Decisive Battles and a Stage of Decisive Battles, in opposition to traditional People’s War Theory which postulates that there are three stages which comprise a People’s War (the strategic defense stage, the strategic balance stage, and the strategic counter-attack stage).⁹⁵ During the Stage of Avoiding Decisive Battles, the resistance movement should conduct guerilla raids and focus primarily on “the direction of the major strike- namely, the establishment of a secure base.”⁹⁶ The secure base is defined by Fatah as “a place in which the revolutionaries have complete authority and control.”⁹⁷ The characteristics which the secure base should have are as follows: it should be proximate to the enemy’s territory, it should be located where the revolution’s intended beneficiary population lives, and it should be established in such a manner that the revolutionaries operating within the secure base are able to resist attacks by the enemy upon it.⁹⁸ Thus, the Jordan Valley was chosen as the site for the secure base from which to strike the West Bank “battlefield.”⁹⁹ Once the secure base was established, the resistance would be able to transition to the Stage of Decisive Battles. In this stage, the

⁹⁵ This text can be dated between 1967, since it references the resumption of guerilla activities in August of that year, and 1969, since it calls for a commando coordination organization which was realized in 1969 with the formation of the Palestine Armed Struggle Command (PASC). Much of Fatah’s ideology had its origins in either the original precepts established at the 1959 Kuwait meeting or the pages of the magazine *Filastinuna* (Our Palestine), an early Fatah mouthpiece whose first editor was Khalil al-Wazir. Al-Wazir, followed by Arafat, was the primarily contributor to the magazine. Besides for al-Wazir, most of Fatah’s Central Committee, such as Abu Iyad and Yasir Arafat, were active in the formation of Fatah’s *limited* ideology. Much of Fatah’s leadership was well versed in the guerilla theory of the time and several, such as Arafat, visited China on multiple occasions at the invitation of the communist government. One of the main proponents of the three stage People’s War was Mao Zedong of China. Amos, 53; Sayigh, 84; The Palestine National Liberation Movement Fateh, *Political and Armed Struggle*, 12, [http://www.freedomarchives.org/ Documents/Finder/DOC12_scans/12.political_armed.struggle .pdf](http://www.freedomarchives.org/Documents/Finder/DOC12_scans/12.political_armed.struggle.pdf) (accessed March 14, 2013).

⁹⁶ Ibid, 13-15.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 15.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 19.

resistance uses a Popular Liberation Army, which resembles a conventional military force, to conduct a campaign of liberation, since “guerilla war cannot achieve liberation” on its own.¹⁰⁰

The final two ideological formulations prominent within Fatah theory are crucial for understanding the constraints on Fatah’s strategy and tactics in the period from 1967 to 1970, in terms of relations with both Arab regimes and fellow Palestinian resistance movements at the time. The first of these ideological formulations is the strategy of non-violence Fatah adopted in its relations with other Palestinian resistance organizations. Abu Iyad most succinctly formulated this idea of non-violence when he stated that Fatah does “not believe in force as a principle and basic method [in interacting with the multitude of Palestinian resistance organizations which emerged after the Six-Day War].”¹⁰¹ Instead, Fatah attempted to follow “the method of persuasion and direct dialogue” by “going over the heads of the leadership [of these organizations]” and engaging in dialogue with the members of rival organizations directly.¹⁰² An approach to the fragmented nature of the PRM along the lines of an ‘Algerian Solution,’ which would entail the compulsory unification of the PRM, was not feasible or necessary.¹⁰³ This approach was not necessary because Abu Iyad and Fatah’s leadership determined that the Palestinian resistance had “not yet taken final form” and thus there was still room for revolutionary growth and reorganization within the movement.¹⁰⁴ Forced unification was not feasible, in the thinking of the majority bloc of Fatah’s leadership at the time, because of the potential reaction from Arab governments concerning assaults against Palestinian organizations under their patronage, such as al-Saiqa (The Thunder) of Syria, and the dispersed nature of the Palestinian population, which made centralized unification difficult.¹⁰⁵ After the Jordanian Civil War, Arafat is quoted as stating that out of the “two ways of dealing with [the] phenomenon [of a fragmented resistance movement], democratic dialogue or bloody

¹⁰⁰ Fateh, *Revolution Until Victory*, 7.

¹⁰¹ al-Khouli, 44.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Many of Fatah’s leaders looked at the Algerian Revolution, concluded in 1962, as a hopeful omen for their own struggle. It was only once the revolutionary regime in Algeria took power that Fatah’s interactions with Algeria, particularly in terms of aid, intensified.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ This analysis is based on interviews with Fatah leadership conducted by Yezid Sayigh. Sayigh, 238.

violence,” violence was not an option because the “revolution [would] die if we [Fatah] followe[ed] the path of violence.”¹⁰⁶ Thus, although Fatah’s approach of non-violence towards fellow resistance movements did have practical reasons behind it, Fatah’s leadership also believed that the revolution was still in a phase of growth during which it could be molded into a more useful organizational structure by peaceful means.

The second major ideological formulation of importance present in Fatah thinking is the conception of non-interference in the domestic affairs of Arab regimes. This ideological formulation meant that Fatah’s guerilla apparatus was ill prepared for the coming conflict with the Jordanian regime throughout the period from 1967 to 1970. Instead of structuring itself for a guerilla conflict in Jordan, Fatah merely maintained conventional military bases arranged for conflict *solely* with Israel and not the Hashemite regime. Furthermore, the conception of the Hashemite regime as the ‘enemy’ did not evolve within official Fatah ideology until only shortly before Black September. Once again, Abu Iyad lays out the reasoning for the idea of non-intervention in Fatah ideology. Abu Iyad states that Fatah believes “the progressive slogans of the Arab nation cannot be achieved except through the war of Palestine and its liberation.”¹⁰⁷ The ideas of “socialism...unity...[and] an advanced social life” cannot be achieved in the Arab states until the Arab “war machine” can shift its focus from the “aggressive colonialist enemy [Israel]” towards peace-time aims of production.¹⁰⁸ This message is reiterated in a Fatah tract entitled *The Freedom Fighters*. Out of five global media quotations chosen to be representative of Fatah’s desired image abroad, Fatah noticeably chooses the following quotation from *The Economist*: “Al-Fatah bows to nobody; its neutralism in Arab politics is less a matter of balancing than of efficiency.”¹⁰⁹ In another document, this one self-titled *The Palestine National Liberation Movement Al-Fateh*, the idea of non-intervention is once more presented, when Fatah states:

¹⁰⁶ Arafat is quoted in Sayigh, 239.

¹⁰⁷ al-Khouli, 67.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 67-68.

¹⁰⁹ Al-Fatah, *The Freedom Fighters*, 5, http://www.freedomarchives.org/Documents/Finder/DOC12_scans/12_freedom.fighters.pdf (accessed March 14, 2013).

While this process is taking place [the mobilization of the Palestinian people and the awakening of the Arab people's to the idea of revolution], the Palestinian revolution of al-Fateh will not interfere in the internal affairs of the Arab countries. Simultaneously, al-Fateh *expects no interference in its own affairs* [emphasis added] and considers the independence of its revolution as a basic condition for its success.¹¹⁰

The last sentence is instrumental in potentially understanding Fatah's shifting attitude towards escalation and conflict, in relation to the Hashemite regime, during 1970. As previously mentioned, Fatah's two-stage theory of revolutionary war hinged on a first stage, the Stage of Avoiding Decisive Battles, during which the revolutionary movement must establish a secure base from which to conduct the armed struggle. It is thus clear that although Fatah supported non-intervention in the internal affairs of the Arab regimes until the liberation of Palestine was completed, or at least until the Palestinian and Arab masses were further mobilized and organized for the revolutionary struggle, this idea of non-intervention is nullified once an Arab regime interferes with the internal affairs of Fatah. Intervention in the internal affairs of Fatah, in the case of Jordan, would be the Jordanian regime's efforts to maintain control over the PRM's 'secure base' in that country, which Fatah stipulated must be under the "complete authority and control" of the revolutionary forces.¹¹¹

Several of Fatah's ideological formulations can be shown to play an important role in Fatah action before Black September. Some of these ideological ideas, such as the primacy of *immediate* violence and the necessity of safe havens to the armed struggle, are not unique to Fatah thinking and will be shown to have also been strongly present in PFLP ideology at the time. Fatah's approach of non-violent interaction with fellow Palestinian organizations limited and constrained the options allowable to Fatah leadership in their efforts to unify the PRM. Similarly, Fatah's proposition of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of Arab states, at least until the PRM had progressed to a new revolutionary stage, meant that Fatah was not positioning itself

¹¹⁰ Al-Fatah, *The Palestine National Liberation Movement Al-Fateh*, 11, http://www.freedomarchives.org/Documents/Finder/DOC12_scans/12.palestine.national.liberation.pdf (accessed March 14, 2013).

¹¹¹ The Palestine National Liberation Movement Fateh, *Political and Armed Struggle*, 15.

appropriately prior to the Jordanian Civil War for an open conflict with the Jordanian regime and when it did, just prior to the conflict, it was far too late.

The PLO

Formation, Organizational Development, and Revolutionary Action

Formation

The immediate impetus for the Palestine Liberation Organization's formation was the desire expressed at the January 1964 Arab Cairo Summit Conference, a gathering of influential regional leaders, to create an umbrella organization which would act as a unified front for Palestinian nationalist aspirations.¹¹² Tasked with carrying out the desire of the Arab Cairo Summit Conference was Ahmad Shuqayri, who called a Palestinian conference in the Jerusalem Inter-Continental Hotel in east Jerusalem with the intention of forming a new Palestinian entity.¹¹³ The conference was attended by over 400 delegates and succeeded in drafting the Palestine National Covenant of 1964, which established an executive apparatus, the PLO, and a governing body, the Palestine National Council (PNC). The PNC was intended to be a quasi-legislative body that would meet annually to deal with such issues as the formation of policy and the appointment of the PLO's chairman and executive committee.¹¹⁴ Perhaps unsurprisingly, Shuqayri was appointed the PLO's first chairman.¹¹⁵

Immediately after its formation, Shuqayri and the PLO set about establishing an armed-wing, which was to be an all Palestinian army. The early nucleus of the developing Palestine Liberation Army, as it would come to be called, had its first start in nominal authority transfers to the PLO of the Palestinian Borders Guard, established under Nasser's Egypt to operate in the Gaza strip.¹¹⁶ The PLO and the PLA were officially recognized by Arab governments at the Second Arab Summit Conference held in

¹¹² Avner Yaniv, *Palestine Liberation Organization*, (Jerusalem: Israel Universities Study Group for Middle Eastern Affairs, 1974), 7.

¹¹³ Ahmad Shuqayri was born in 1908 in Acre, which today is located in northern Israel. Before acquiring his position as Chairman of the PLO, Shuqayri had served as a minister for the All Palestine Government in 1948 and as Saudi Arabia's representative to the United Nations. Sayigh, 96; Yaniv, 7.

¹¹⁴ Sayigh, 98; Yaniv, 7.

¹¹⁵ Sayigh, 98.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 102.

September of 1964.¹¹⁷ Due to the high-level of support displayed by Arab regimes for the PLO and the top-down origins of its formation, fellow PRM organizations were necessarily wary of joining with the newly formed umbrella organization. Khalad Hassan, a high-level member of Fatah since the late 1950s, described his and Fatah's initial interpretation of the PLO as a "child of the Arab regimes," that would potentially place the interests of Arab regimes over the interests of the greater PRM.¹¹⁸

The PLO remained largely under the control of Ahmad Shuqayri until the June War and the defeat of the Arab armies, although he had to continually struggle to assert himself in relation to other high-level officials within the PLO's governing structure.¹¹⁹ The poor showing of the PLA in the June War and the continual internal power struggles between Shuqayri and the other PLO ruling elite finally resulted in Shuqayri's removal from power in December of 1967.¹²⁰ After 1967, the PLO lapsed back into a more communal command structure, guided by Yahya Hammuda, until Yasir Arafat ascended to the position of the PLO's chairman in 1969 at the head of a newly reorganized, commando-oriented PLO.¹²¹

Revolutionary Action

Until the formation of the PLA-Popular Liberation Forces (PLA-PLF) in 1968 and except for a brief joint-endeavor with the Arab Nationalist Movement (ANM) through the formation of the Abtal al-Awda (The Heroes of Return), the PLA remained the only military-wing and militant component of the PLO until after the Six-Day War. The PLA was dependent on Arab host governments for both resources and territory, specifically Egypt, Syria, and Iraq.¹²² Shuqayri's PLO, which maintained the PLA in its original form as a conventional military force, was consistently slow to react to the move towards guerilla action that began to develop in the 1960s within the PRM, particularly highlighted by the commencement of armed struggle by Fatah's Al-Asifa and the ANM's Struggle Apparatus in February 1965 and November

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ *Palestine Lives: Interviews with Leaders of the Resistance* (Beirut, Lebanon: Palestine Research Center and the Kuwaiti Teachers' Association, 1973), 41; Sayigh, 84-85.

¹¹⁹ William B. Quandt, Fuad Jabber, and Ann Mosely Lesch, *The Politics of Palestinian Nationalism*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 68-69.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 69.

¹²¹ Before briefly serving as chairman of the PLO, Hammuda worked as a lawyer. Ibid, 69-71; Sayigh, 172.

¹²² Sayigh, 113.

1964 respectively. The entirety of the PLO's active participation in the armed struggle before the Six-Day War consisted of the co-optation of existing resistance groups into the PLO's power structure through high-level executive appointments of resistance officials, as in the case of the PLO's interactions with the Palestine Liberation Front-Path of Return, and some resource and command sharing between the PLO and the ANM's Struggle Apparatus, which the PLO mistakenly believed was a separate and jointly shared organization called Abtal al-Awda.¹²³

During the June War, the PLA did participate but the outcome was far from what Shuqayri or the PLA's leadership could have hoped. In Gaza, the PLA forces that were positioned there in May fought limited defensive engagements that ultimately ended with the Israeli Defense Force killing or capturing thousands of PLA soldiers from the PLA units operating from Gaza and Egypt. The PLA units operating out of Syria did not engage in any open combat but it did help occupy the Golan Heights for a short time and screen the retreating Syrian army as it reformed in the aftermath of the June War. Finally, the PLA's 421 Commando Battalion attached to the Iraqi expeditionary force briefly crossed the Jordan River on June 6th before retreating. In all three cases, the PLA's operations remained subservient to the larger strategic and operational interests of the Arab states conducting the war and the PLA fared as poorly as all of their militaries.¹²⁴

Eager to take part in the guerilla movement that was exponentially growing following the 1967 War, the PLA established a guerilla-wing that was formally announced by the PLO in March of 1968 as the PLA-Popular Liberation Forces.¹²⁵ The PLA-PLF set up commando bases in the Jordan valley and within Lebanon, from which it conducted limited commando raids into Israel in the period from 1967 to 1970.¹²⁶ One of the most notable of the PLA and the PLA-PLF's actions during this period was their participation, through a joint-contingent of around 80 men, in the incredibly important, in terms of

¹²³ Ibid, 134-137.

¹²⁴ Ibid, 169-170.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 177.

¹²⁶ Ibid, 192-193.

prestige for the guerilla movement, Battle of Karama.¹²⁷ Since the PLA was a conventional fighting force and since the governments of Egypt and Syria, the two main territories within which the PLA operated, did not desire commando operations to be conducted from their soil, the PLA played only a minor part in the border conflicts of the 1967 to 1970 period. As the guerilla movement began to increasingly dominant the PLO in 1968, culminating in the declaration of Yasir Arafat as the PLO's chairman in February 1969, the revolutionary actions of the PLO can be characterized as largely falling under the control of these armed resistance groups, particularly Fatah.¹²⁸

Organizational Development

There are two organizational factors that are important for understanding the PLO and its component organizations. Specifically, the high degree of autonomy displayed by the PLA's leadership, and that same leadership's high dependence on their host regimes for materials and support, meant that the PLO throughout the 1960s was only loosely able to display efficient command and control over its conventional armed wing. Although the PLA-PLF was more directly controlled by the PLO as a guerilla organization, it was formed too late to gain enough momentum within the *fedayeen* movement to become a crucial aspect of it. A second organizational problem influencing the PLO's actions before Black September is the fact that the coalitional nature of its membership meant that its power was limited to the willingness of its component members, such as Fatah or the PFLP, to act.

The 1964 Jerusalem Conference that established the PLO, comprised of 422 diverse delegates from the Palestinian diaspora, became the Palestine National Council that was to be the "highest authority in the PLO, empowered to legislate, approve budgets, and set overall policy for implementation by an elected executive committee on an annual basis."¹²⁹ For the handling of day-to-day affairs an executive-arm was established in the form of the PLO's Executive Committee.¹³⁰ The PLO's Executive Committee

¹²⁷ Ibid, 178.

¹²⁸ Quandt, 70-71; Rubin and Rubin, 43.

¹²⁹ Sayigh, 98.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

established a Military Committee to provide oversight for the PLA, which had a traditional military command structure, but the Military Committee's control over the PLA was weak.¹³¹

Although the PLA was structured like a conventional military, the crucial factor inhibiting the PLO's control of the PLA was a lack of total control over both command appointments and the allocation of resources. The Egyptian government from 1964 to 1965 turned down over "six requests from the PLO involving over 230 Palestinian officers" which the PLO wanted to appoint to commands in PLA units operating in Gaza and the Sinai Peninsula, who were then serving in either Iraq, Syria, or in retirement in Jordan.¹³² Similarly, the PLO faced difficulties in appointing officers within PLA units in Syria. Two notable occasions of Syrian interference in PLA officer appointments were when the Syrian government refused "to accept the transfer of 134 Palestinian officers from Iraq" and also when the appointments of over 60 Palestinian officers who had served in the Arab Salvation Army were denied by the Syrian government because of their political views.¹³³ Iraq, the third primary base for the PLA, was slightly more open to the idea of officer transfers and allowed 60 Palestinian cadets in 1965 to enter Iraq for training.¹³⁴ As a non-'frontline' country, and due to the limited PLA presence in Iraq, Iraqi openness in PLA relations did little to change the fact that the PLO held tenuous control over the PLA before 1967.¹³⁵

The tension between the PLO Executive Committee and the PLA's officer corps, who were beholden to host regimes' governments for their positions, persisted after the Six-Day War. Yahya Hammuda, the chairman of the PLO following Shuqayri's ousting after the Six-Day War, set about in 1968 reorganizing the PNC to be more inclusive of the burgeoning *fedayeen* movement by allocating, through negotiation, a number of seats in the PNC for the larger organizations, such as Fatah and the PFLP.¹³⁶ The February 1969 meeting of the PNC, with the newly reorganized allocation of membership seats, allowed Fatah to form a ruling majority and appoint a new PLO Executive Committee under its

¹³¹ Ibid, 113.

¹³² Ibid, 116.

¹³³ The Arab Salvation Army was an irregular force which participated in the First Arab-Israeli War. It was organized by the League of Arab States. Sayigh, 58, 117.

¹³⁴ Ibid, 118.

¹³⁵ Iraq hosted only one battalion of PLA forces, the 421 Commando Battalion. Sayigh, 118.

¹³⁶ Quandt, 69.

control. The new eleven-man PLO Executive Committee had four Fatah members on it and, most notably, was led by Yasir Arafat as the PLO's new chairman, replacing Hammuda.¹³⁷ Arafat attempted to centralize the Executive Committee's control over the PLA financially by transferring control of the PLA budget from the Palestine National Fund (PNF) directly to the PLO Executive Committee.¹³⁸ Abu Iyad most aptly summed up the continuing issues the PLO had, even after the *fedayeen* rise to prominence within the organization in 1968, in controlling the PLA by stating that "[the PLO cannot] change the chief-of-staff without consulting this Arab country or that...[and] this army [the PLA] is not the army of the PLO, it lacks free will."¹³⁹ These PLA control issues persisted until Black September.

The coalitional nature of the PLO and the continued autonomy of its member organizations meant that the PLO's ability to control the armed PRM organizations was limited to the willingness of its most powerful constituent member to act, which in the period from 1968 to 1970 was Fatah. Efforts *were* made by the PLO to create unified *fedayeen* command organizations though, most notably the failed Palestine Armed Struggle Command (PASC). The PASC acted as both a military police for the *fedayeen* and a unified command organization, through which "rival claims" for guerilla action would be adjudicated by having guerilla organizations within the PASC deposit their operational plans before conducting missions.¹⁴⁰ The intention was that pre-logged operational plans in the hands of the PASC could be used to verify which organization actually conducted specific operations, since PRM organizations often published competing statements of responsibility for guerilla operations. The PASC was unfortunately rarely utilized and failed in its efforts to coordinate guerilla actions.¹⁴¹

Two major issues arose to hinder the PLO's efforts to control the PRM before Black September. First, loose institutional control of the PLA by the PLO meant that the main military recourse of the PLO was largely out of the Executive Committee's control for the years before Black September. Also, the continued autonomy granted to guerilla organizations that joined the PLO, such as Fatah and the PFLP,

¹³⁷ Ibid, 71.

¹³⁸ Sayigh, 241.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 204.

¹⁴¹ A latter effort called the Unified Command of Palestine Resistance Organizations likewise failed. Brown, 40.

meant that the PLO and its constituent bodies remained more an arena of guerilla competition than an umbrella for unified action, exemplified by the failed attempts at coordination undertaken by the PLO, such as the PASC.

Ideology

Since the PLO was envisioned as an umbrella organization that could lead, guide, and unify the larger PRM, its ideology was necessarily formulated to be as minimalist and inclusive as possible, so that potential member organizations could reasonably approve of joining it. In the official proclamation of the PLO's formation delivered on May 28, 1964 from Jerusalem by Ahmad Shuqayri, the PLO's stated purpose was to be "a mobilizing leadership of the forces of the Palestinian Arab people to wage the battle of liberation... a shield for the rights and aspirations of the people of Palestine," and "a road to victory."¹⁴² The broad nature of the PLO's objectives meant that the PLO did not spend a vast amount of time formulating complex ideology. This does not mean, of course, that constituent organizations within the PLO did not publish a variety of ideological and propagandist works. Some examples of these organizations are the PLO's Research Center in Beirut, established as a publishing house and research center aimed at advancing the PLO's goals, and the Palestine Liberation Army- People's Liberation Forces' monthly magazine *Resistance*, published out of Damascus.¹⁴³

For the purpose of understanding ideology's influence on the PLO prior to the Jordanian Civil War, the primary focus of interest is on the main ideological text underpinning the PLO's formation and objectives, namely the Palestine National Charter. Specifically, changes between the Palestine National Charter of 1964 and the Palestine National Charter of 1968 are instructional in their ability to display the changing nature and objectives of PLO ideology. The 1968 Charter was a more strongly nationalistic declaration, with an increased emphasis on the armed struggle aspect of the Palestinian revolution and on the primacy of the *fedayeen* guerilla fighter within the armed struggle. These increased emphases meant that whatever organization or coalition of organizations was dominating the PLO had to be careful to not

¹⁴² Ahmad Shukaairy, *Statement of Proclamation of the Organization*, May 28, 1964, <http://www.un.int/wcm/content/site/palestine/pid/12355> (accessed March 16, 2013).

¹⁴³ Sayigh, 177.

appear lax in conducting the armed struggle and supporting the *fedayeen*. Such an appearance could cause that dominant organization to lose popular legitimacy and clout within the PLO. In 1970, Fatah was that dominant organization.

The changing emphases of PLO ideology are visible first in the very names of the two charters. The 1964 version of the Charter uses the Arabic word *qawmi* for ‘national’ in the title, which carries a certain “pan-Arab and ethnic” nationalist connotation, whereas the 1968 Charter uses the Arabic word *watani*, which is more indicative of a territorial and local patriotism.¹⁴⁴ Furthermore, Article 9 of the 1968 Charter emphasizes that “armed struggle is the only way to liberate Palestine” and it is “the overall strategy, not merely a tactical phase.”¹⁴⁵ These formulations of the armed struggle and its inherent primacy to the Palestinian struggle are not present in the 1964 Charter. Articles 10 and 30 of the 1968 Charter further increase the importance of the armed struggle and present formulations not present in the 1964 Charter. The first line of Article 10 states that “Commando (Feday'ee) action constitutes the nucleus of the Palestinian popular liberation war.”¹⁴⁶ Article 30 of the 1968 Charter reiterates this by formulating that “fighters and carriers of arms in the war of liberation are the nucleus of the popular army.”¹⁴⁷ By placing the commando as the primary component of the liberation forces, the PLO’s ideology established a situation in which a PLO leadership hostile to the *fedayeen*, or merely a leadership attempting to reign in the *fedayeen*’s actions in Jordan, would potentially be marginalized by peers in the PLO and lose popular appeal. This loss of popular appeal and marginalization by peers would cause the PLO’s dominant organization, or the entire PLO as a whole, to be relegated to a situation within the PRM akin to its position before Fatah’s takeover in the late 1960s, when the PLO languished at the margins of the PRM.

Two articles were also added to the 1968 Charter, which were absent in the 1964 Charter, that set forth ideas of non-violence amongst Palestinian organizations towards each other and non-intervention

¹⁴⁴ Yaniv, 12.

¹⁴⁵ The Fourth Palestine National Congress of 1968, *Palestine National Charter of 1968*, 1968, <http://www.un.int/wcm/content/site/palestine/pid/12362> (accessed March 15, 2013).

¹⁴⁶ *Palestine National Charter of 1968*.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

between the PLO and Arab regimes, with the caveat that Arab regimes do not interfere with the internal affairs of the PLO and the conduct of the revolution. These ideological formulations are very similar to those set forth by Fatah above and may partially be attributed to Fatah's rise within the PLO that was occurring at the time. Article 8 of the 1968 Charter states that due to the phase which the Palestinian revolution is in, during 1968, all of "the conflicts among the Palestinian national forces are secondary, and should be ended for the sake of the basic conflict."¹⁴⁸ Article 27 of the 1968 Charter sets forth that the PLO, in its relations with Arab regimes, will "adopt a neutral policy among them in light of the requirements of the battle of liberation; and on this basis [will] not interfere in the internal affairs of any Arab state."¹⁴⁹ Since the Palestine National Charter was the founding document of the PLO and the foundation of its objectives and ideology, these reformulations of the National Charter shaped the ideological structure within which the PLO's leadership could act.

Compared to Fatah and the PFLP, the nature of the PLO as an umbrella organization and framework for the channeling of support and the coordination of resistance meant that the PLO necessarily kept a minimalist ideology, to ensure it could be as inclusive as possible to the diverse Palestinian resistance organizations. Regardless, changes in the Palestine National Charter from its 1964 form to its 1968 form highlight an increased shift in the prominence of commando action and new formulations of non-violence, in relations amongst PRM groups, and non-interference, in terms of the PLO's relations with Arab regimes.

PFLP

Formation, Organizational Development, and Revolutionary Action

Formation

The formation of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine was first announced in December of 1967, although the component organizations that merged into the Popular Front and the leadership that came with them have a history spanning several decades before the Popular Front's birth. The PFLP

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

began as a joint effort by Abtal al-Awda, the Palestine Liberation Front (comprised of the Abd al-Latif Sharuru division, the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam division and the Abd al-Qader Al-Husayni division), the National Front for the Liberation of Palestine (Youth of the Revenge/NFLP), along with “several other Palestinian groups in the homeland,” the latter of which are unspecified even in the PFLP’s official declaration of formation.¹⁵⁰ The purpose of the PFLP was, in its own words, to join these organizations together because “the dimensions of the battle of destiny and of enemy forces make imperative the unification of the efforts of our people and of their revolutionary ranks.”¹⁵¹

The Palestine Liberation Front (Jabhat al-Tahrir al-Filastiniyya/ PLF) was founded in 1959 by Palestinian officers serving in the Syrian army. The main leadership was comprised of Ahmad Jibril, Ali al-Bushnaq, and Abd-al-Latif Shururu.¹⁵² Due to its origins, the PLF received extensive support from Syria and recruited members from both Palestinians living in refugee camps and those who were or had served in various Arab militaries, especially the Egyptian and Syrian militaries. The PLF eventually reached a total strength in 1965, as estimated by Sayigh, of 150-200 members, dispersed throughout the countries bordering Israel.¹⁵³ The PLF came close to a merger with Fatah during the pre-1967 period, but personal rivalries between each organizations’ leaders, primarily between Arafat and Jibril, and vastly different organizational cultures, one being comprised primarily of civilian intellectuals and the other comprised of professional soldiers, caused the merger to fall through.¹⁵⁴ In the period from the Six-Day War to the formation of the PFLP, the PLF sought to establish “secret cells and safe houses” in Jordan, in order to more readily infiltrate members into the West Bank and establish a clandestine presence there.¹⁵⁵ Although the PLF declared on October 13th of 1967 that it had begun its war of liberation, it did not

¹⁵⁰ The Youth of the Revenge is also sometimes translated as the Revenging Youth and the Youth of Vengeance, amongst other names (all a result of different translations of Munazzamat Shabab al-Tha’r). The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, “First Political Statement Issued by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine,” *Al-Hurriyah*, December 11, 1967, in *International Documents on Palestine 1967*, ed. Fuad A. Jabber (Beirut: The Institute for Palestine Studies, 1970), 725.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² Sayigh, 125.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 126.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 126-128.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 165.

actually conduct aggressive operations against Israel until a failed attack on Lydda airport on December 11th of the same year, carried out alongside other members of the newly formed PFLP as an active display of the PFLP's official formation that same day.¹⁵⁶

The Heroes of Return was nominally formed as a joint effort between the Arab Nationalist Movement and the Palestine Liberation Army, the PLA being largely under the command of then Ahmad Shukairy's Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).¹⁵⁷ In reality, the Heroes of Return, led by Fayiz Jabir and Subhi al-Tamimi, was almost entirely the same organization as the ANM's Struggle Apparatus (al-Jihaz al-Nidali) and thus under the control of the ANM.¹⁵⁸ The Heroes of Return launched their first raid on Israel from Southern Lebanon on October 19, 1966. The Heroes of Return would launch a further seven raids before the Six-Day War.¹⁵⁹

The Youth of the Revenge was a moniker taken by the Palestinian Action Command (PAC) of the Arab Nationalist Movement and thus, since the Heroes of Return were subsumed under the command structure of the ANM also, the paths of the two organizations are parallel until they merged in December of 1967 with the formation of the PFLP.¹⁶⁰ The Arab Nationalist Movement has its roots in The Committee for Resisting Peace with Israel, among whose members were future PFLP leaders George Habash, also the committee's founder, and Wadi Haddad.¹⁶¹ In 1955, Habash turned the committee into the ANM under the slogan of "unity, liberation, revenge."¹⁶²

The ANM held, since its creation and due to the nature of its founders, a strong focus on the liberation of Palestine. This objective was to be achieved through larger sweeping pan-Arab objectives.¹⁶³ The ANM developed a "compartmentalized and hierarchical structure" that grew in areas such as

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 165, 167.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, 137.

¹⁵⁸ Jabir and al-Tamimi were close aides of Wadi Haddad, a Greek Orthodox Palestinian and a good friend of George Habash since their days together at American University in Beirut, who would go from being an important leader in the ANM to being an important leader in the PFLP. The ANM's Struggle Apparatus was founded as the military action wing of the ANM's Palestinian Action Command, which would supply a large number of the PFLP's early membership. Ibid, 109-110, 137; Amos, 76.

¹⁵⁹ Sayigh, 137-138.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, 130.

¹⁶¹ George Habash was born into a Greek Orthodox family in Lydda in 1926. Amos, 73.

¹⁶² Ibid, 74.

¹⁶³ Sayigh, 73.

Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, and Jordan, predominately amongst student populations.¹⁶⁴ In the late 1950s, the ANM even made small headways into Iraq, Yemen, and Aden, although membership participation and activity was limited in these branches.¹⁶⁵ At this same time, the ANM was growing membership within the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, the latter of which the ANM did not have a presence in until 1956.¹⁶⁶ During this time and until the Six-Day War, membership in the ANM remained low because of an extremely difficult membership process and a strong focus on secrecy.¹⁶⁷

The Palestine Action Command (PAC or the National Front for the Liberation of Palestine/NFLP) was formed within the ANM in 1963 and gained full autonomy in 1964 due to increasing pressure on the ANM to react to Fatah's growing influence within the armed struggle aspect of the Palestinian resistance.¹⁶⁸ The PAC gained authority over the Palestinian members of the ANM in Lebanon, Syria, Kuwait, and Egypt, as well as nominally over the ANM's regional command in Jordan.¹⁶⁹ With the formation of the Struggle Apparatus, which was previously mentioned as being effectively the same organization as the Heroes of Return, the PAC would make its first foray into guerilla warfare. The PAC conducted its first operations at the end of 1964 and lost its first member to a Jordanian patrol on November 2nd of that year. This is notable because, as Sayigh writes, it is "two months before Fateh claimed the launch of the armed struggle for itself."¹⁷⁰ Sayigh notes that the ANM does not immediately proclaim this instance of guerilla action, either for "propriety or concern that it would embarrass Nasir [President Nasser of Egypt]."¹⁷¹ These operations, and all other ANM-PAC revolutionary action, were conducted by the Heroes of Return until the 1967 war.

Initially, following the defeat of the Arab armies in 1967, the ANM attempted to methodically build up its struggle network and support apparatus in Israel, the occupied territories, and neighboring

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, 73-74.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, 74.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 73.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, 108.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, 108-109

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, 109-111.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 111.

Arab countries. This was a quite difficult task for the ANM, since one ANM member, in a report to Dr. Habash in Beirut, is quoted as stating that “we have no organization in the West Bank or Jordan, everyone is in prison and those who have escaped have lost confidence and distrust their colleagues.”¹⁷² Following Fatah’s renewed guerilla activities in the second-half of 1967, the ANM leadership felt a renewed pressure to resume operations, even against the advice of Mustafa al-Zabri, the ANM’s senior cadre in command of the ANM’s cells in the West Bank.¹⁷³ In order to aid their capacity for militant activity and increase the speed at which military readiness was achieved, the ANM leadership reached out to the PLF to establish some type of partnership or union, particularly because of the PLF’s highly martial nature.¹⁷⁴ These talks would eventually lead to the formation of the PFLP and the resumption of guerilla actions in December of 1967.¹⁷⁵

Revolutionary Action

The PFLP conducted revolutionary actions of two primary types from 1967 to 1970. The first type of revolutionary action undertaken by the PFLP was traditional guerilla action in the form of cross border raids into Israel and embedded attacks from within the Occupied Territories. PFLP guerilla fighters conducted such actions as cross-border shelling operations, demolition and mine-planting operations, and direct assaults on military and civilian targets.¹⁷⁶ The PFLP conducted these operations from bases in southern Lebanon and Jordan, as well as through guerilla networks within the Gaza Strip.¹⁷⁷ These strikes were very much along the lines of those conducted by fellow guerilla organizations such as Fatah.

The second major form of revolutionary action undertaken by the PFLP, which set it aside from Fatah in terms of tactics, was international terrorist action in the form of violent attacks on targets abroad, primarily with explosives or firearms, and the taking of hostages through airline hijackings. The first

¹⁷² Ibid, 159.

¹⁷³ Ibid, 164-165.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, 165.

¹⁷⁵ As Zabri thought, the resumption of guerilla activities by the ANM was disastrous to their infiltrated networks in the occupied territories. 186 members of the ANM in the West Bank and 70 members of the ANM in the Gaza Strip were arrested by Israeli authorities following the resumption of guerilla activities in December of 1967. Ibid, 167.

¹⁷⁶ Quandt, 121.

¹⁷⁷ Amos, 200-201.

airline hijacking conducted by the PFLP took place on July 22, 1968, when a three-man PFLP cell hijacked an El Al flight from Rome to Tel Aviv and diverted it to Algiers.¹⁷⁸ Habash, speaking to one reporter, rationalized attacks on El Al flights and other targets abroad since “El Al is a military objective because it transports military personnel and material.”¹⁷⁹ The PFLP, following their first initial foray into international terrorism, conducted a variety of other operations in the years preceding Black September, including the following: an attack on an El Al plane in Athens Airport, fire-bombings of London department stores with trade links to Israel, the hijacking of a TWA flight which was diverted to Damascus, and grenade attacks on several Israeli embassies in Europe.¹⁸⁰ Perhaps the most important of the PFLP’s international terrorist operations in the period before the Jordanian Civil War is the PFLP’s multi-hijacking operation undertaken on September 6, 1970 which resulted in three airline hijackings, out of an attempted four.¹⁸¹ The PFLP flew two of the planes to an abandoned Royal Jordanian Air Force field north of Amman and landed them there, while the third plane was flown to Cairo.¹⁸² Three days later, the PFLP conducted another hijacking operation and flew the plane to the desert north of Amman, where it became the third hijacked plane to rest on Dawson Field.¹⁸³ These hijackings were the culmination of months of simmering tensions between the Jordanian regime and the *fedayeen* and are often cited as the proximate cause in the outbreak of the Jordanian Civil War in September of 1970.

Organization

Two organizational features were important in influencing the PFLP’s actions prior to Black September. The first of these features is the coalitional nature of the PFLP which meant that, since its formation, the PFLP’s constituent organizations maintained a large amount of autonomy that caused horizontal control

¹⁷⁸ John K. Cooley, *Green March, Black September: The Story of the Palestinian Arabs*, (London: Frank Cass and Company, 1973), 146-147.

¹⁷⁹ The reporter was John K. Cooley, who worked as a Middle East correspondent for *The Christian Science Monitor* in the 1960s. Cooley, 146.

¹⁸⁰ Amos, 335-337; Cooley, 147-150; O’Neill, 132.

¹⁸¹ Sayigh, 256-257. For a first-hand account of the hijackings from the perspective of one of the younger hostages, see David Raab, *Terror in Black September: The First Eyewitness Account of the Infamous 1970 Hijackings*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

¹⁸² Sayigh, 257.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

across sub-units to be quite difficult, whilst vertical hierarchies were still comparatively effective. Each of the major founding members of the PFLP (Abtal al-Awda, the PLF, and the NFLP) brought into the organization “its own leadership structure and resource base,” whose autonomy was fiercely maintained.¹⁸⁴ Furthermore, each component organization of the PFLP maintained its own distinct membership and guerilla force.¹⁸⁵ Efforts by the PFLP’s leadership to rectify these unification issues in the PFLP’s first year of existence resulted in little more than ‘joint-actions’ by the various guerilla groups, which maintained their individual natures and separate contingents even within these operations.¹⁸⁶ The problems arising from the coalitional nature of the PFLP are best exemplified by the series of cleavages that occurred in the PFLP’s composition as component organizations gradually split with the Popular Front. The first of these occurred in October of 1968, when the PLF, along with several former members of the Za’rur group of the NFLP, split from the PFLP and formed the PFLP-General Command.¹⁸⁷ A second major split occurred in February of 1969 amongst the PFLP membership that had joined the Popular Front from the ANM. A strong tension existed between the leftist membership of the ANM, who were devoted Marxist-Leninists, and the rightist membership, who were interested more in Palestinian nationalist aims. These two ‘factions’ within the PFLP’s ANM membership competed for control of the PFLP’s Inside Command (*qiyadat al-dakhil*), the control apparatus of its guerilla forces in the West Bank.¹⁸⁸ After a series of tension raising events, including violent clashes within several PFLP offices in Amman during February of 1969 that resulted in at least one death, the leftist faction of the ANM broke away from the PFLP and formed the Popular *Democratic* Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP).¹⁸⁹ The coalitional nature established at the PFLP’s creation, and the fact that constituent

¹⁸⁴ Amos, 72.

¹⁸⁵ Sayigh, 227.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, 228.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, 229.

¹⁸⁸ These clashes often stalled PFLP guerilla activity in the West Bank as each faction of the PFLP fought for control of weapons and supplies and sought to sway subordinate members of the Popular Front. Ibid, 207-208.

¹⁸⁹ The PDFLP is also sometimes referred to as the PDF or the DFLP. The leftist faction of the ANM received outside support, including military, material, and financial support, from Fatah, the PLA, and the Syrian Ba’th Party in order to facilitate a rapid and final split with the PFLP. Sayigh argues that the PFLP’s rightist faction may have undertaken the attacks at Athens airport (December 1968) and Zurich airport (February 1969) as efforts to display revolutionary commitment and win the loyalty of PFLP members unsure of their stance on the rift. Sayigh, 230.

organizations maintained a high-level of autonomy, meant that the PFLP's leadership had difficulty expressing control over the duplicate hierarchies of command. The PFLP's separation from the Popular Front displays the fact that fractures along other lines, besides for those relating to the coalitional nature of PFLP's origins, were possible with outside support.

The second organizational factor influencing the PFLP was the nature of the PFLP's tactical command structure, which allowed for a high degree of autonomy and created a difficult command and control situation for the PFLP's leadership, especially during crisis situations. Two specific instances will display the differences in vertical hierarchical command within the PFLP during crisis situations versus more stable decision-making periods. First, the decision to resume the armed struggle by the ANM-PAC's leadership, following the Six-Day War, resembles an instance of a successful effort by the embryonic PFLP's leadership to exert control down a vertical hierarchy, even against mid-level bureaucratic resistance.¹⁹⁰ In 1967, the ANM's leadership feared that Fatah's resumption of the armed struggle would marginalize the ANM, and so also the embryonic PFLP, within the larger Palestinian resistance movement. The ANM's leadership thus decided to resume the armed struggle immediately. Ahmad Khalifa, a "former PAC member" tasked with rebuilding the ANM's West Bank branch, opposed the decision to immediately resume guerilla action since the ANM's guerilla apparatus required "extensive preparation" before it would be fully ready.¹⁹¹ The ANM leadership achieved its desired outcome though, even against the misgivings of Khalifa and other ANM West Bank commanders, in the form of the Lydda airport attack on December 11th that was intended to violently hail the formation of the PFLP.

The second useful instance that highlights the problems within the PFLP's command structures occurred during the high crisis environment of the Black September hostage situation at Dawson airfield,

¹⁹⁰ It is important to note that although this decision is occurring before the official declaration of the PFLP in December of 1967, the hierarchies of authority within the ANM discussed are almost exactly the same as they were under the newly formed PFLP, due to the coalitional nature of PFLP membership previously discussed.

¹⁹¹ Khalifa was vindicated, along with the other West Bank commanders, when he and 160 other ANM members of their underground network were captured by Israeli forces in retaliatory operations that shattered the ANM's West Bank network. Sayigh, 164-166.

immediately preceding the Jordanian Civil War. On the night of September 11, 1970, five days into the hostage situation, eighteen of the hostages were spirited away, beyond a Jordanian military cordon and the watching eyes of fellow PFLP cadres, by a PFLP force of eight fighters. Eventually the PFLP fighters, who were from a small PFLP splinter-group that felt the Popular Front's leadership in Amman was too close to an 'unsatisfactory' negotiated solution with Western governments, took the hostages to a PFLP safe house in Zarqa. At the height of a crucial hostage crisis, the PFLP's leadership was unable to effectively control subordinates and ensure the carrying out of high-level decisions that would have ramifications for the entire Palestinian resistance.¹⁹²

Two organizational features affected the PFLP prior to the outbreak of the Jordanian Civil War. First, the coalitional nature of the PFLP, and the means with which member organizations joined with their original institutions largely intact and separate, meant that the PFLP was easily fractured along those same lines. Secondly, weak control over low level cadres during high crisis situations meant that the PFLP was unable to assert vertical authority in the precise moments when it was most necessary.

Ideology

Several ideological formulations played an important role in both constraining and driving the PFLP's strategies and tactics prior to Black September. The tactics spawning from PFLP ideological formulations of revolution were crucial in exacerbating tensions between the *fedayeen* operating within Jordan and the Hashemite regime. Within the PFLP's ideology, there are three important factors which led to heightened tensions with the Hashemite regime. First, PFLP ideology placed a primacy on not only violence, but on *immediate* and *continuous* armed struggle, even at the risk of acting before proper preparation and organization were achieved. This primacy of violence is not unique solely to the PFLP though, as was presented by the analysis of PLO and Fatah ideological formulations above. The second important theme within PFLP ideology was the global formulation of the struggle against imperialism and Zionism, which postulated the Jordanian 'reactionary' regime as a viable target, as well as supported the active use of terrorist tactics abroad to disrupt Israel's larger aerial and maritime infrastructure. The international

¹⁹² Raab, 91-104.

formulation of the Palestinian struggle is exemplified by attacks on airplanes and airports conducted by the PFLP. This second ideological theme within the PFLP set it largely at the margins of the larger PRM, especially in relation to organizations such as Fatah which was not, prior to 1970, actively engaged in international terrorism or actively engaged in efforts to overthrow the Jordanian regime. Finally, an ideological belief in the need for safe havens outside of Palestine from which to conduct the War of Popular Liberation, which would be manifested in an ‘Arab Hanoi,’ also added to escalating tensions prior to the outbreak of the Jordanian Civil War.

Since the very beginning of the PFLP, political violence was conceived of by its members as *the* means of conducting the Palestinian resistance. From the “Founding Document of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine” comes the proclamation that “the only weapon left to the masses...is revolutionary violence.”¹⁹³ Furthermore, the PFLP’s first declaration sets forth the primacy of “one slogan,” which is “*only* armed resistance [emphasis added],” since the “armed resistance is the only effective method” for the masses to resist “the Zionist enemy.”¹⁹⁴ Political violence was crucial at the very founding of the PFLP. The importance of political violence to the Popular Front would only continue to grow within its ideological formulations.

In February of 1969, the Popular Front would release another ideological text called *The Political, Organizational and Military Report of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine* which the leadership of the PFLP intended as a clarification and advancement of the original December 1967 declaration of the Front’s existence. This text would reiterate the previously mentioned idea that “the political aim...can only be achieved through armed struggle.”¹⁹⁵ The PFLP’s 1969 report further clarifies *how* the primacy of political violence is to be enacted by stating that “the leadership should direct its most

¹⁹³ The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, “Founding Document of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine- December 1967,” <http://pflp.ps/english/2012/12/founding-document-of-the-popular-front-for-the-liberation-of-palestine-december-1967/> (accessed March 2, 2013).

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, *The Political, Organizational and Military Report of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine* (1969) in *Basic Political Documents of the Armed Palestinian Resistance Movement*, ed. Leila S. Kadi (Beirut, Lebanon: Palestine Liberation Organization Research Center, 1969) 239.

strenuous efforts to the fighting...all organizational, political, information and financial efforts should be related to the fighting.”¹⁹⁶ The primacy of political violence to the PFLP’s revolutionary ideology is further supported by the fact that the 1970 PFLP ideological text *Palestine: Towards a Democratic Solution* states that “armed struggle alone is capable of destroying the aggressive imperialist entity... [and] the course most capable of liberating those classes which are victims.”¹⁹⁷ The three ideological tracts all mentioned above are important for the fact that they establish that a consistent and strong theme of political violence’s primacy existed within the PFLP’s ideology at the time.

The PFLP’s 1970 *Military Strategy of the PFLP* once again honed the nature of political violence within the PFLP’s ideology by explaining that it not only had to exist continuously, but that the PFLP had a duty to conduct aggressive operations *immediately* following the defeat of June 1967. Specifically, the PFLP wrote that it understood “conditions were not completely ripe” for the resistance movement following 1967 but to postpone “the resistance until the objective conditions had ripened... was impossible.”¹⁹⁸ The PFLP was duty bound to react to aggression “promptly and with all possible means,” even in opposition to organizational concerns or issues of revolutionary preparedness.¹⁹⁹

A second important aspect of PFLP ideology was its global formulation of the revolutionary struggle, which encompassed the ‘reactionary’ regimes in the Middle East, including Jordan, and the larger infrastructure of the Israeli state, including aerial traffic and maritime shipping. These ideas were largely present only within the PFLP at the time and not a major part of Fatah or PLO thinking. Rather, the PFLP formulated the larger struggle in opposition to Fatah’s idea of ‘non-interference’ in the internal affairs of Arab states. The first clear and strong call in opposition to Fatah’s formulation of ‘non-intervention’ in the internal affairs of Arab states comes in the PFLP’s ideological tract *The August Program and a Democratic Solution*, published in 1968. Within this text, the PFLP takes issue with the

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, 240.

¹⁹⁷ The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, *Palestine: Towards a Democratic Solution*, (Information Department PFLP: 1970), 20-21.

¹⁹⁸ The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, *The Military Strategy of the PFLP* (Beirut: Information Department PFLP, 1970) 6, http://www.freedomarchives.org/Documents/Finder/DOC12_scans/12.military_strategy.of.the.PFLP.1970.pdf (accessed March 2, 2013).

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

idea of non-interference “since what happened, and is happening, in the Arab land is dialectically connected with the Palestine question.”²⁰⁰ The PFLP concludes from this that to separate the Palestine question from the Arab regimes would be to implant “the beginning of a new political or military defeat.”²⁰¹ The PFLP also declared within this same text that “breaking Israel will come about by breaking American imperialism throughout the Arab land,” which is protected by “the regimes [that after 1948] retreated and started courting the United States by protecting all of its imperialist interests.”²⁰² Although Jordan is not named specifically by the PFLP within the text, these ideological conceptions clearly present an interventionist platform which is implicitly hostile to those regimes whose actions do not align with the needs or desires of the PFLP and the wider PRM.

The particular regimes constituting the ‘reactionary’ regimes supporting American imperialism remain unnamed in *The Political, Organizational and Military Report of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine* published in February 1969, although their nature is clarified. Within this report, the definition of the Palestinian resistance’s enemies is expanded to include “Arab capitalism” in the form of the capitalist and feudal classes, including the “ruling sheikhs, princes and kings who defend and protect the interests of imperialism.”²⁰³ The PFLP castigates these reactionary regimes for supporting “superficial national movements” in order to marginalize and neutralize true nationalist movements, such as the PFLP.²⁰⁴ Describing many of the characteristics, or at least perceived characteristics, of the Jordanian regime is as close as the PFLP comes to directly naming the Hashemite Monarchy as a member of the “camp of the enemy” within the PFLP’s *Political, Organizational and Military Report*.²⁰⁵

The potential regimes that are, within the PFLP’s ideological framework, in opposition to the PRM is further clarified in the PFLP’s 1970 text *Palestine: Towards a Democratic Solution*. In this text,

²⁰⁰ The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, *The Basic Political Report of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine* (Buffalo, NY: October Graphics, August 1968) 148.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Ibid, 158.

²⁰³ The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, *The Political, Organizational and Military Report of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine*, 187-188.

²⁰⁴ Ibid, 188.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

the PFLP postulates that “the liberation of Palestine is linked with the liberation of the masses of, at least, the Arab countries *adjoining* Palestine from the burdens of their *present* conditions [all emphasis added]” under “reactionary regimes.”²⁰⁶ Combined with the definition from the PFLP’s *Political, Organizational and Military Report*, it seems clear that the Jordanian regime falls well into the ‘enemy’ camp as conceived by PFLP ideologues.

Subsumed within the global formulation of the struggle is an ideological argument concerning tactics, namely the viability of PFLP aggression against Israel’s extended transit and supply infrastructure. The PFLP most notably manifested this ideological argument into a tactical reality through airline hijackings and strikes on airports. The PFLP’s previously-cited *The Military Strategy of the PFLP* most clearly sets forth the ideological justifications for these tactics. The PFLP believed that it was necessary to be “striking at the enemy everywhere possible, with the greatest degree of violence possible.”²⁰⁷ The PFLP viewed all Israeli citizens and external economic relations, such as maritime trade and air travel, as supporting the Israeli economy. Since the Israeli economy supported the IDF, all non-immediate targets which supported the Israeli economy also supported the Israeli military. Thus, to the PFLP, all of the previously mentioned economic and civilian targets were legitimate targets for PFLP aggression.²⁰⁸

A final crucial ideological factor driving PFLP tactics was their formulation of the ‘safe-haven’ from which the PFLP would conduct its guerilla war against Israel, often called the ‘Arab Hanoi.’ In *The Military Strategy of the PFLP*, the PFLP sets forth that it aims for its activity to “expand to compromise that territory surround[ing] Palestine, and that area which may become part of the ‘Arab Hanoi’ in the future.”²⁰⁹ Without this ‘Arab Hanoi’ from which an “Arab ‘Viet Cong’ [can] arise and engage in daily clashes with the enemy in the entire Arab area,” victory is not perceived as possible in the opinion of the

²⁰⁶ The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. *Palestine: Towards a Democratic Solution*, 24.

²⁰⁷ The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, *The Military Strategy of the PFLP*, 85.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 85-89.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid*, 54.

PFLP.²¹⁰ A true Arab Hanoi “must necessarily and inevitably be a socialist” state.²¹¹ The PRM, as perceived by the PFLP, was only tasked with creating a “revolutionary climate” in which the Arab masses themselves would rise up and create an ‘Arab Hanoi’ in one of the states neighboring Israel, such as Jordan.²¹² While not directly claiming they would overthrow the Jordanian regime, the PFLP is clearly setting forth an ideological program supporting tension-raising actions in order to create the necessary conditions in which the Jordanian masses would rise up and topple the Hashemite monarchy themselves.

Analysis

Organizational structures and ideological formulations were important factors in influencing and constraining the major organizations within the Palestinian resistance prior to Black September. Specifically, the coalitional natures of the PLO and the PFLP restricted the efficiency of command bureaucracies, both vertically ‘down’ command structures and horizontally between component organizations. Fatah had a more efficient and centralized command structure, but this was detrimental when it marginalized local cadre leaders who had more experience in particular regions, specifically concerning Fatah operations within Jordan. None of the three organizations had a responsive, centralized-hierarchy that could have balanced the need for vertical authority with receptivity to the experiences and advice of local cadres operating on the ground.

Fatah and the PFLP were most seriously impacted, in terms of strategy and tactics, by their ideological formulations of the armed struggle. Both organizations placed a strong emphasis on the utility and the *necessity* of sedentary safe-havens in ‘frontline’ states, specifically Jordan. For Fatah, its formulations of ‘non-intervention’ and ‘non-violence,’ in terms of its relations with Arab states and fellow Palestinian resistance organizations respectively, meant that the most powerful organization within the PRM, in the period of analysis, did not establish itself in a position to control or eliminate fellow organizations, such as the PFLP, that conducted antagonistic actions to the detriment of the movement as a whole. The PFLP’s global formulation of the struggle, and the tactical choice to conduct acts of

²¹⁰ Ibid, 64.

²¹¹ Ibid, 65.

²¹² Ibid, 65-67.

international terrorism which stemmed from it, was one of the crucial factors in driving tensions prior to Black September.

The focus of this chapter has been primarily on bureaucratic and ideological influences on the PRM prior to Black September. The following chapter will examine resource-based influences on the actions of Fatah, the PLO, and the PFLP in the same period. Specifically, the following chapter will focus on the origins of manpower and material support to the PFLP, the PLO, and Fatah and how different sources of these resources influenced institutional behavior.

Chapter Four: Resource-based Influences

There is one other crucial factor of interest in studying institution-level constraints on the actions of the PRM prior to Black September. Specifically, the differences between how each of the major organizations within the PRM acquired their resources are important to understanding the behaviors of these organizations. This chapter will analyze resource origins in two parts: manpower and materials. The manpower section will include both an analysis of the actual membership of the PFLP, the PLO, and Fatah and an examination of auxiliary support when it is warranted. Auxiliary support will be defined to include popular support, those in the populace who are not officially members of each resistance organization, and foreign support, in the form of foreign military assistance. The materials section of this chapter will analyze both the nature of PLO, PFLP, and Fatah funding and the nature of these same organizations' armaments. The PLO and Fatah, the latter only after the change from a clandestine organization to a conspicuous guerilla group, relied heavily on Arab states for material support. This made both organizations highly susceptible to inter-Arab conflicts. The origins of the PFLP's materials granted it much more autonomy in its action. All three organizations drew manpower from similar sources and the need to provide active avenues of participation in the revolutionary struggle to new sources of manpower after the Battle of Karama, beyond mere membership in a resistance organization but rather tangible chances to participate in the armed struggle, meant that each organization attempted to display a more active degree of 'guerilla legitimacy' than its peers, to the detriment of the movement as a whole.

Manpower

Fatah

The manpower origins of all three PRM institutions of interest will now be examined. The first organization that will be explored, and the oldest, is Fatah. There are two distinct phases to Fatah's existence, which are crucial for distinguishing between its different sources of manpower. First, there is the early development phase of Fatah, during which it existed as a clandestine organization from 1958 to 1964. Many of Fatah's first members during this period were highly educated and members of the

Palestinian diaspora. Fatah drew its founding members heavily from Palestinians living in Gaza, Egypt or working abroad in the Gulf states. For example, Abu Iyad was a school teacher who worked in both Gaza and Kuwait at the turn of the 1960s.²¹³ Another prominent founder of Fatah, Yasir Arafat, was a road engineer for the Department of Public Works in Kuwait from the end of the 1950s to the early years of the 1960s.²¹⁴ According to Iyad, Fatah grew during this early clandestine phase through several means. The first of these was the absorption, en masse, of rival Palestinian groups that had been formed in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar.²¹⁵ Iyad also notes that the breakup of the United Arab Republic in September of 1961 allowed Fatah to acquire those “numerous Palestinians [who] left their respective parties” when it appeared that the Pan-Arab organizations were failing.²¹⁶ Fatah’s total strength in this time remained relatively small, probably under a thousand individuals. When Fatah’s first training camp opened in Syria in 1964, they were training only 100 volunteers.²¹⁷ According to Faruq al-Qaddumi (Abu al-Lutf), Al-Asifah had only twenty-six members in 1964.²¹⁸ In 1965, Al-Asifah’s strength increased to two hundred individuals and then five hundred the following year, where it stagnated until the Battle of Karama.²¹⁹

For a look at the motivations of Fatah members during this first stage of its evolution, the pre-Karama period, a look at a mid-level Fatah cadre will be instructive. Although clearly not reflective of the entirety of Fatah’s manpower at the time, this oral history account by a Fatah cadre from 1965 can still provide a look into at least one facet of the organization’s composition. Salah Ta’amari, born in 1943, grew up in the Jordanian West Bank near Bethlehem.²²⁰ Ta’amari states that when he joined Fatah in 1965, they were “underground” and that when him and fellow Fatah members ran in the General Union of Palestinian Students elections, they “could never say [that they] were Fatah at that time” because it was

²¹³ Iyad, 28.

²¹⁴ Rubin and Rubin, 24.

²¹⁵ Iyad, 37.

²¹⁶ The United Arab Republic was a failed union of Syria and Egypt. Ibid.

²¹⁷ Rubin and Rubin, 32.

²¹⁸ Al-Qaddumi came from a land-owning family from Nablus. He met many of Fatah’s other founders while studying at the American University in Cairo in the 1950s, including Iyad and Arafat. He worked throughout the Gulf Region, including in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, from the early to mid-1960s. Amos, 54-55, 57.

²¹⁹ Ibid, 57.

²²⁰ Salah Ta’amari in *Homeland: Oral Histories of Palestine and Palestinians*, ed. Staughton Lynd, Sam Bahour and Alice Lynd (New York: Olive Branch Press, 1994), 67-68.

still in its clandestine phase.²²¹ Earlier in this same account, Ta'amari recalls that during his childhood he saw Jordanian police beating two young men in front of their parents, for an unknown infraction, and that he felt "a mixture of fear, resentment and rage."²²² Later, Ta'amari states that "occupation is bad. I don't care who the occupier is."²²³ It seems that a sense of repulsion to injustice was one of the strong drivers in Ta'amari's own political actions and active involvement in Fatah. Ta'amari's case may not be indicative of the average Fatah cadre though, since he mentions that he remained behind in Jordan after the Civil War, even after his eleven peer Fatah field leaders left the country, until a higher-ranking Fatah cadre came and gave him the choice of "going to Europe or to the United States."²²⁴ Ta'amari chose to go to southern Lebanon.²²⁵

The formation of the PLO and the PLA in 1964 created a potential rival to Fatah for both manpower and resources. Alan Hart, through his close contact with many of Fatah's founding leadership, estimates that Fatah lost "eighty and perhaps as much as ninety per cent of its cadres" in its clandestine network to the newly formed PLA.²²⁶ Khalad Hassan explains the loss of manpower as occurring because "they [the defecting cadres] said they had taken an oath of loyalty to Palestine, not to an organization. So they left Fatah to join the P.L.A. in the mistaken belief that they would be allowed to make attacks on Israel."²²⁷ Hassan clearly felt that there existed a strong desire to actively participate in the armed struggle *immediately* amongst those joining Palestinian resistance groups and that there was not a desire to participate in any organization which attempted to enact a stage of consolidation and organization of Palestinian military power if it meant the delaying of militant action. Hassan laments this fact by stating:

You can say, because it is the truth, that we were pushed down a road we did not want to take by the coming into being of the P.L.O. Because of its existence, and the fact that it

²²¹ Ibid, 69.

²²² Ibid, 67.

²²³ Ibid, 68.

²²⁴ Ibid, 106-107.

²²⁵ Ibid, 107.

²²⁶ Hart conducted extensive interviews with Abu Jihad, Khalad Hassan, Abu Iyad, and Yasir Arafat. Alan Hart, *Arafat: Terrorist or Peacemaker?* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1984), 13, 168.

²²⁷ Khalad Hassan (Khalid al-Hasan) was, like Arafat, a Palestinian diaspora worker in the Kuwaiti Department of Public Works, who became a Fatah supporter in 1959. Khalad Hassan quoted in Hart, 167-168; Sayigh, 84.

was not the genuine article that so many Palestinians were assuming it to be, we decided that the only way to keep the idea of real struggle alive was to struggle.²²⁸

Hassan was not the only member of Fatah's leadership who believed in the practical efficacy of immediate armed struggle for the realization of Fatah's long-term aims. Abu Iyad, reflecting on the beginning of armed struggle in 1965, stated in an interview in the Egyptian monthly magazine *al-Tali'ah* that:

We realized that blowing up a bridge could not be a determining factor with regard to liberation. Yet we realized that blowing up a bridge would recruit 10 other people to join Al-Fateh. We were aware of the fact that blowing up a bridge will enlighten 10 other people and make them believe in the armed struggle. We did not understand the struggle in terms of profit and loss.²²⁹

This belief in the connection between manpower recruitment and active revolutionary action, held by Fatah's leadership, would only intensify following the Six-Day War.

Although the Six-Day War did play a powerful role in growing the guerilla movement, the Battle of Karama in March of 1968 is the true watershed moment for the *fedayeen*. Abu Iyad characterized the 'victory' at Karama as giving "rise to an immense pride and hope" within the Palestinian population of Jordan.²³⁰ As thousands of secondary school and college students sought to join the PRM in the aftermath of Karama, Iyad notes that "out of the 5,000 candidates who tried to enlist in the forty-eight hours following the Battle of Karameh, for instance, we recruited only 900 [of them]" because Fatah's absorption capacity at the time was limited by the size of its commando infrastructure.²³¹ By the summer of 1970, estimates place Fatah's guerilla strength at anywhere from 5,000 to 10,000 individuals, ranging from full-time fighters to inactive but trained militia members.²³²

In terms of direct foreign military assistance, there was only one nation that Fatah was directly relying upon for support in the event of a conflict with the Hashemite regime: Iraq. Arafat expected direct Iraqi assistance in any conflict with the Jordanian regime because of a meeting held between Arafat, Abu

²²⁸ Khalad Hassan quoted in Hart, 171.

²²⁹ al-Khouli, 88.

²³⁰ Iyad, 60.

²³¹ As the largest commando group operating the time, it can be concluded that peer organizations of a smaller scale, such as the PFLP, would be able to absorb even fewer individuals. Ibid.

²³² O'Neill, 253; Quandt, 66.

Iyad, and two high-level Iraqi officials, Abd al-Khaliq Samirra'i and General Salih Mahdi Ammash, in Zarqa, Jordan where the two Iraqi officials pledged to the *fedayeen* the support of Iraq's 15,000 man contingent, stationed in Jordan, should any conflict arise.²³³ Unfortunately for the *fedayeen* during Black September, the Iraqi regime had already made a countervailing pledge to not intervene in any conflict between the Jordanian regime and the Palestinian resistance in Jordan.²³⁴ This latter pledge was the one which the Iraqi government *did* follow.

Fatah's early manpower origins can be traced to personal clandestine networks and the absorption of smaller resistance groups throughout the Gulf region. Following the beginning of armed struggle in 1965, and rapidly escalating following the Battle of Karama, Fatah's efforts to become a guerilla organization saw its manpower intake directly correlate with increased armed struggle, as individuals actively seeking a means of political efficacy and an avenue to *immediately* participate in the armed struggle joined the Palestinian resistance movement.²³⁵

The PLO

There are two military wings of the PLO which are important to examine when looking at manpower sourcing for that organization: the PLA and the PLA-PLF. As previously mentioned, part of the PLA's original manpower pool came from individuals leaving such organizations as Fatah to join the newly created Palestinian entity and its national army. Other components of the PLA's manpower came from the en masse transfer of Palestinian units from Arab militaries, such as the Egyptian and Syrian militaries, into the PLA units stationed within each respective country's borders. The Syrian and Egyptian PLA units formed from 1964 to 1965 were manned by a mix of volunteers and conscripts.²³⁶ Iraq's sole PLA unit,

²³³ The contingent was leftover from the Six-Day War and had never, purposively, redeployed to Iraq. Cooley, 114; Patrick Seale, *Abu Nidal: A Gun for Hire*, (New York: Random House, 1992), 77-78.

²³⁴ After being captured during Black September, Abu Iyad and Faruq al-Qaddumi were reportedly played a tape of a phone conversation between King Hussein and Iraqi army commander General Hardan al-Takriti on which the two discussed the previously agreed upon Iraqi neutrality in any internal Jordanian conflict, Seale, 78.

²³⁵ For a survey analysis of Palestinian guerilla activity at the time that concluded a strong correlation between guerilla membership and political activity and a desire to achieve an outlet for political efficacy, see Yasumasa Kuroda, "Young Palestinian Commandos in Political Socialization Perspective," (Prepared for delivery at the 28th International Congress of Orientalists, 1971).

²³⁶ In Egypt, these units were the 107 and 108 Palestine Borders Guard Brigades and the 329 Commando Battalion. All of these units were undermanned and this situation persisted for many years as Egypt routinely missed its

the 421 Commando Battalion, was intended to be comprised of conscripts but instead filled its ranks with volunteers from abroad.²³⁷ By the June War, and its aftermath, the PLA had greatly expanded its manpower in relation to its original composition. After the June War, Gaza PLA units repositioned to the Canal Zone, Iraqi PLA units were attached to the Iraqi expeditionary force encamped in Jordan, and Syrian PLA units were positioned around Daraa in southern Syrian.²³⁸ This was the nature of PLA forces on the outbreak of war in September of 1970.

The other important armed wing of the PLO to examine is the PLA-PLF. Although a commando organization intended to absorb the growing surplus of interested recruits following the Battle of Karama, the majority of the PLA-PLF's membership still came from the "pre-June 1967 PLA units stationed in Gaza."²³⁹ Although the PLA-PLF's cadres were among the most highly paid of any *fedayeen* organization, the PLA-PLF still failed to compete with Fatah and the PFLP for manpower in the period from 1967 to 1970, peaking at a membership of 2,000 from 1969 to 1970.²⁴⁰ This can potentially be viewed as supporting the argument that financial and personal reasons were not the primary motivators of those joining the *fedayeen* organizations from 1968 to 1970.

The PLO's armed wings drew their manpower primarily from volunteers interested in serving in a conventional Palestinian national army and conscripts drawn from Palestinian populations living in each PLA unit's host nation. As such, the PLO's armed wings were less affected, in comparison to Fatah and the PFLP, by the need to provide recruits with an organization through which they could *immediately* join in the armed struggle. This may explain, to some degree, the nature of the armed struggle undertaken by the PLA and the PLA-PLF prior to Black September.

PFLP

conscription targets for Palestinian PLA units. Syria hosted the 411, 412, and 413 Commando Battalions comprised of around 750 men. Sayigh, 118.

²³⁷ The 421 Commando Battalion comprised 600 men and was manned by Palestinians from Kuwait, Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq. Ibid.

²³⁸ PLA manpower allocations in 1967 were approximately as follows: 4,000 men in the Canal Zone, 6,000 men in Syria, and 2,000 with the Iraqi expeditionary force. Amos, 186.

²³⁹ Ibid, 181.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

The obvious first source of the PFLP's manpower was the member organizations which formed the Popular Front in December of 1967, which have already been discussed. The battle of Karama occurred only three months after the formation of the PFLP and, although the PFLP's leadership in Karama decided to pull its men out of the town before the battle, the PFLP did gain a manpower boost following the battle as interest in joining guerilla organizations swelled.²⁴¹ The PFLP's "main training camp could accommodate only 150-200 [recruits]" at a time and it is here where Fatah's larger infrastructure worked to its advantage, as it could absorb more of the interested recruits following Karama than the PFLP could.²⁴² Cooley estimates that the PFLP trained between one to three thousand recruits by the spring of 1968.²⁴³ Several scholars think that the PFLP's growth from 1967 to 1970 was most sustained by the spectacle of its international terrorist attacks, such as the hijackings conducted by PFLP members.²⁴⁴ By the summer of 1970, estimates place the PFLP's total fighting force, from fulltime fighters to part-time militia members, at one thousand to three thousand individuals.²⁴⁵

An account of a PFLP unit in Jordan will be instructive in understanding the makeup, at least of one small part, of the PFLP's manpower and the potential motivations of these individuals. The PFLP unit of interest consisted of twenty-five individuals operating in a refugee camp with a population of six or seven-thousand persons located outside Irbid in northwestern Jordan.²⁴⁶ Among the PFLP fighters, "apart from three intellectuals, all the fighters [were] refugees."²⁴⁷ The fighters lived within the camp and, operating on a severely tight budget, attempted to improve life in the camp for the refugees and win over recruits among the youth.²⁴⁸ In this instance, the PFLP's fighting force in this camp can be characterized

²⁴¹ PFLP military commander Za'rur and field commander Jibril, both traditional military men, felt that pulling out of Karama was the correct military decision when faced with the IDF's clear qualitative and quantitative advantages. The PFLP had 30 men posted in Karama at the time. Sayigh, 178.

²⁴² Ibid, 181.

²⁴³ Cooley, 139.

²⁴⁴ For supporting analyses, see Emile A. Nakhleh, "The Anatomy of Violence: Theoretical Reflections on Palestinian Resistance," (Prepared for the Fourth Annual Meeting of the Middle East Studies Association of America, 1970), 24-25; Sharabi, 27-28.

²⁴⁵ O'Neill, 253; Quandt, 66.

²⁴⁶ Chaliand, 26.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ This was achieved through a variety of civil development projects and educational endeavors. Ibid.

as being drawn from a mix of Palestinian ideologues, potentially from across the Palestinian diaspora, and from the local refugee population, the latter being the primary contributor to the PFLP's manpower pool.

One unique case of unexpected manpower sourcing warrants mention here. During the failed TWA hijacking over the English Channel on September 6, 1970, Patrick Arguello, an American citizen, died trying to hijack the plane with Leila Khaled.²⁴⁹ Arguello was a member of Nicaragua's Sandinistas and had received training with the PDFLP earlier in 1970 in one of their camps outside Amman.²⁵⁰ Dissatisfied with their PDFLP training, Arguello and his fellow Sandinistas came in contact with George Habash, who offered to provide training to the Central American dissidents in exchange for aid in carrying out the PFLP's multi-hijacking operation planned for September.²⁵¹ Arguello also received 5,000 British pounds as an advance payment for his part in the PFLP's hijacking operation.²⁵² It is unclear whether Habash wanted Arguello's participation in the operation out of necessity, possibly due to a lack of qualified manpower, out of tactical expediency, or out of a belief held by Habash that Arguello's participation would further increase the international attention drawn to the September 1970 hijacking operation. Except for tactical concerns, which can reasonably be ruled out since all three of the other hijackings conducted on September 6, 1970 were carried out by all Palestinian units, Habash's reasoning must have stemmed from the resource-constraints pressing in on the PFLP and the need to maintain high-publicity attacks. These media-grabbing attacks were carried out by the PFLP to not only ensure the PFLP's global formulation of the struggle was enacted, but also to maintain the PFLP as a viable and active organization within the PRM. Maintaining the PFLP's viability as an organization actively pursuing the armed struggle was especially crucial following the manpower boom that occurred after the Battle of Karama.

Material (Funding and Armaments)

²⁴⁹ Khaled was already a notorious hijacker at the time, having successfully pulled off a similar operation prior to Black September. Raab, 21-22.

²⁵⁰ PBS, "The American Hijacker," *American Experience*, http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/hijacked/sfeature/sf_american_03.html (accessed March 27, 2013).

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Raab, 22.

Fatah

The two distinct phases of Fatah's development, from a clandestine network to a guerilla organization, are equally important in discussing the origins of the resources utilized by Fatah before Black September. From 1959 to 1964, Fatah was almost entirely funded by its members and Palestinian's living abroad. Abu Iyad characterizes Fatah funding at the time as coming from Fatah members, who sometimes had to give up at least half of their salary or wages to the organization, and "generous donations from Palestinians of the diaspora, who either belonged to Fatah or sympathized with our [Fatah's] cause."²⁵³ Until 1965, Fatah bought all of its armaments on the open market.²⁵⁴

Fatah received its first government sponsored arms shipment in 1965, as it was becoming a more active guerilla organization, when President Houari Boumedienne of Algeria shipped arms to Fatah through Syria, with the approval and aid of General Hafez al-Asad of Syria.²⁵⁵ Following the defeat of the Arab armies in June of 1967, Fatah quickly capitalized on collecting weapons left behind by the retreating Arab armies.²⁵⁶ Abu Iyad, reflecting on that time, stated that "Al-Fateh took amounts of arms from the occupied Arab territories after the defeat which superceded [sic], qualitatively and quantitatively, the arms it [Fatah] possessed throughout the earlier period...this was our main source of armaments [at that time]."²⁵⁷ After 1967, Fatah became increasingly open to foreign aid and began to receive weapons shipments from the Chinese government through Syria and Iraq.²⁵⁸

In terms of financing, Fatah received funds from a number of new sources following the Six-Day War. Abu Iyad and Faruq al-Qaddumi went on a fundraising trip to Libya following the war and returned with 30,000 dinars, from public and private sources, which Iyad characterized as "a considerable sum in relation to our finances at the time."²⁵⁹ Fatah's growth into a large guerilla organization from 1965 to

²⁵³ Iyad, 37.

²⁵⁴ Iyad, 42.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Ibid, 52.

²⁵⁷²⁵⁷ al-Khouli, 60.

²⁵⁸ One such shipment included 3,000 assault rifles in 1969 through Basra, Iraq. Cooley, 177; Sayigh, 236.

²⁵⁹ Iyad is unclear which national dinar the donations were given in. One Jordanian or Iraqi dinar traded for about \$2.80 at the time. Iyad, 54.

1970 meant that it could no longer be entirely self-funded and self-armed by Fatah members and Palestinians living within the diaspora. The reliance on governmental sources of arms and funding meant that Fatah risked becoming a pawn of inter-Arab rivalries and power politics. Physically, even aid from powers outside the Middle East to Fatah was mediated and controlled by the need to bring armaments through ports in Syria or Iraq, as Fatah had no air capacity and personal smuggling routes were too inefficient and small for the growing logistical needs of Fatah.

The PLO

Since its formation, the PLO and its armed wings were dependent on the aid of foreign governments. In 1964 and 1965, thirteen Arab governments pledged around 2 million pounds sterling to the PLO for its operating budget.²⁶⁰ These pledges were rarely ever fully paid, if at all, and it is estimated that by the summer of 1970 the combined Arab governments were in arrears on 12.8 million pounds sterling of pledged funding, 4.1 million to the PLO and 8.7 million to the PLA.²⁶¹ Saudi Arabia and Kuwait paid into the Palestine National Fund, the body which controlled the PLO's funds, through 'Liberation Taxes' on Palestinian populations living within their state.²⁶² The PLO's operating expenses from July 1, 1969 to March 31, 1970 totaled around 1.39 million Jordanian dinars.²⁶³ The PLA took up a little more than 1 million Jordanian dinars of the PLO's budget and the PLA-PLF cost 498,760 Jordanian dinars of the PLA's budget.²⁶⁴

In terms of armaments, the PLO also relied on governmental sources of supply. The PLA was contingent upon host governments to arm its units, and this was normally poorly done with PLA units "being mostly supplied with light weapons, mortars and AK-47s, grenade launchers, with small quantities of armor (aging T-34s) and artillery."²⁶⁵ In effect, the PLA was little better equipped than the guerilla

²⁶⁰ The pound sterling traded for about \$2.50 at the time. Amos, 304.

²⁶¹ From 1966 to 1967, only Libya and Lebanon met their commitment. Libya was the only country to meet its commitment in 1968. Not one country met its full pledge from 1968 to 1970. Ibid.

²⁶² Baruch Kimmerling and Joel S. Migdal, *The Palestinian People*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2003), 519.

²⁶³ As mentioned, the Jordanian dinar was worth \$2.80 at the time. Amos, 303-304.

²⁶⁴ Ibid, 303.

²⁶⁵ Ibid, 185.

units operating in Jordan and nowhere near armed sufficiently to operate as an effective conventional force. The PLA also received arms shipments from China but, like Fatah, faced the similar challenge of being dependent upon host governments, specifically Syria and Iraq, to ensure that weapons reached PLA bases in those countries, PLA bases in other countries, or PLA-PLF bases in the Jordan valley.²⁶⁶

The PLO, and its military wings, relied heavily on Arab governmental sources of material resources. Funding, although often promised, was rarely adequate for the PLO's needs and even when the sources of funding were 'Palestinian' in origin, such as the Liberation Tax, the PLO was still reliant on host governments to collect and distribute these taxes to the PLO. There was no guarantee that the collection and distribution of Palestinian tax funds would occur in a timely fashion, if at all. In terms of armaments, the PLO and its military wings were also highly dependent on governmental aid. The PLO faced the same problems as Fatah in supplying its guerilla in the Jordan Valley, the PLA-PLF, with adequate armaments to conduct the guerilla struggle.

The PFLP

The PFLP, as the most 'radical' of the three organizations of interest, had a greater difficulty acquiring material resources for conducting the armed struggle. As previously mentioned, much of its ideology opposed the conservative Arab regimes, especially the monarchical states, which necessarily eliminated aid from the Arab monarchies such as Saudi Arabia. Instead, most of the PFLP's aid came from states using the PFLP, or at least attempting to use the PFLP, to further their own inter-Arab rivalries. Until 1968, the PFLP received limited material and financial aid from Egypt, as well as a location within which it could train fighters.²⁶⁷ After the split with Egypt, Iraq filled the void and provided arms, financial aid, and training to the PFLP.²⁶⁸ As previously mentioned, the case has been made by some scholars that the PFLP used the spectacles of its terror attacks abroad to satisfy institutional interests in resource acquisition. After the PFLP's first hijacking in 1968, "two international airlines paid [Wadi] Haddad \$1

²⁶⁶ Cooley, 177.

²⁶⁷ The PFLP's relationship with Egypt deteriorated following the Six-Day War as the PFLP increasingly criticized Nasser for any efforts undertaken by him towards a peaceful settlement with Israel. Sayigh, 235.

²⁶⁸ Ibid, 235-236.

million a month each, monies that he turned over to his organization and that allowed the PFLP to acquire a measure of independence from its Arab sponsors.”²⁶⁹ Although it is unclear which specific airlines were paying the PFLP ‘protection’ money at the time, it does appear that at least from 1968 to the early 1970s, at any one moment at least one international airline was paying ‘protection’ money to the PFLP or members of the PFLP.²⁷⁰ These funds provided the PFLP with a high degree of autonomy. As noted previously, the PLA’s entire operating budget was around 1 million Jordanian dinars, which would have converted to roughly \$2.8 million dollars. As a sizably smaller organization, the PFLP could almost certainly have operated solely on the protection money paid by airlines, or at least to a large degree solely through this protection money. Although the PFLP’s leadership could not have predicted this outcome when it decided initially to conduct terrorist operations abroad, it certainly must have factored into future PFLP leadership decision-making about the continuation of such actions.

Analysis

The need to provide active avenues of guerilla participation to new recruits, who could easily shift organizational affiliation, highly influenced Fatah and the PFLP in the conduct of their guerilla operations from the Jordan valley in the period from 1967 to 1970. The PLO, and its armed wings the PLA and the PLA-PLF, was more insulated from the demands of the growing *fedayeen* movement due to the nature of its manpower sourcing. In terms of material resources, both Fatah and the PLO were highly dependent upon Arab governments for acquisition of and access to armaments and financial aid, the former only after it completed its transformation from a clandestine network to a guerilla organization. The PFLP also received aid from governmental sources both within the Middle East and abroad. Perhaps more important in examining the PFLP’s financial sourcing from the Six-Day War to Black September was the financial aid given to the PFLP and to its members, in the form of protection money, from international airlines to prevent future aerial hijacking operations. These funds were sufficient enough to allow the PFLP to

²⁶⁹ Seale, *Abu Nidal*, 75.

²⁷⁰ David Friedman, “4 Airlines Paid ‘Protection Money’ to Palestinian Terrorists in 1970s,” Jewish News Archive, February 10, 1989, <http://archive.jta.org/article/1989/02/10/2869296/4-airlines-paid-protection-money-to-palestinian-terrorists-in-1970s> (accessed March 28, 2013).

operate with relative autonomy, although some of the armament constraints faced by Fatah and the PLO still applied to the PFLP in the Jordan Valley at the time, particularly relating to the movement of arms through Syrian and Iraqi ports.

Chapter Five: A Final Analysis

When war finally came to the Palestinian resistance groups operating in Jordan in September 1970, they were ill-prepared for it. Fierce competition between Fatah, the PFLP, and smaller resistance groups, such as the PLA-PLF, drove each organization to attempt to achieve constant guerilla action in order to display activity in the armed struggle to potential recruits, even at the cost of drawing increasingly hostile Israeli reprisal raids on *fedayeen* safe havens in Jordan. Although the PFLP was somewhat insulated from financial pressures due to funding from airline protection money, all three organizations examined above relied heavily on governmental sources of armaments, which left them vulnerable to pressures from donor nations to become part of inter-Arab rivalries. Egyptian and Syrian interests in pinning down Israeli forces along the eastern front of the Jordan River, after the Six-Day War, meant that the more active organizations would receive funding and armaments from them, to the detriment of the Hashemite Kingdom that bore the costs of Israeli attacks. Even when armaments were acquired from abroad, *fedayeen* operating in Jordan required access to Syrian or Iraqi ports to transport the weapons overland to camps in the Hashemite Kingdom.

Organizationally, all three groups of interest lacked a reactive centralized hierarchy that could have combined receptive leadership with efficient command and control. Both the PLO and the PFLP were too coalitional in their make-up to effect successful command and control both horizontally between parallel-hierarchies of authority *and* vertically down single hierarchies. Although Fatah displayed a well-centralized command structure, its Central Committee's reluctance to use the skill and expertise of Fatah's local leadership in Jordan cost Fatah dearly when it was expelled from Jordan in 1971 and lost a major safe haven.

Although resource acquisition and a desire to enact *immediate* military action against Israel, to appeal to potential recruits, may have driven much of the tension raising behavior by the *fedayeen* prior to Black September, ideology provided the lens through which the PFLP, the PLO, and Fatah developed the strategies and tactics of revolutionary struggle that they enacted. Fatah's formulation of non-violence, towards fellow Palestinian groups, and non-interference, towards Arab regimes, meant that it could

neither effectively control the more antagonist groups within the PRM nor develop itself, in terms of troop disposition and tactics, for a coming conflict with Jordan. Fatah's leaders acted as if safe havens in Jordan were a guaranteed asset. The PFLP's global formulation of the struggle led it to conduct global acts of terrorism ranging from airline hijackings to embassy bombings. These PFLP attacks abroad only persisted after resource-interests began to further incentivize the PFLP's tactical choices. These attacks drew both prestige to the organization, in terms of increased membership interest, and international condemnation. It was the quadruple hijacking operation of September 1970 which provided the proximate cause to King Hussein's decision to enact military action against the *fedayeen*, as the international community condemned the hijackings by the PFLP and the lack of action concerning the several hundred hostages taken and held in northern Jordan.

Although if viewed through other analytical lenses, the Jordanian Civil War's causes may appear to be other than those set forth here, this thesis hopes it has added to the body of work studying the influences on non-state armed organizations operating within 'safe haven' states. Ideological formulations, organizational structures, and resource-origins all constrained and drove, to some degree, the behaviors of the PLO, the PFLP, and Fatah prior to Black September. The combined actions of these groups led to the Jordanian Civil War, which in its aftermath ranked among the lowest points for the Palestinian resistance movement, alongside the 1948 and 1967 defeats.

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