UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO

# Revolution Until Victory?:
# Decolonizing Land, Nation and the People through Palestinian-Lebanese Transnational Resistance Praxis

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

Ethnic Studies

by

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2019

The dissertation of Jennifer Marie Mogannam is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

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Chair

University of California San Diego

2019

DEDICATION

*To my people – my blood and chosen family*

*To my son Waleed,*
*one of millions of Palestinian children of the next generation.*

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ITALICIZED TERMS

PLO: Palestine Liberation Organization

LNM: Lebanese National Movement

PNM: Palestine National Movement

ANM: Arab Nationalist Movement

PFLP: Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine

PFLP-GC: Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command

PDFLP: Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine

DFLP: Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine

OCA: Organization for Communist Action

LCP: Lebanese Communist Party

PSP: Progressive Socialist Party

SSNP: Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party

LF: Lebanese Front

*Kata'eb:* The Phalangist Party

*Quwat:* The Lebanese Forces

*Al-Quwat Al-Mushtaraka:* The Joint Forces

*Feda'i/Feda'iya:* Guerilla Fighter

*Feda'iyin:* Guerilla Fighters

LIST OF INTERLOCUTORS
(Those who have been directly quoted in this dissertation.)

**Asad Abdel Rahman** was born in 1945 in Jerusalem, Palestine. He was active in the Arab Nationalist Movement and former member of the PFLP. He became a member of the Palestine National Council in 1969 and soon after became an advisor to the PLO Refugee Council created to advices the Refugee Affairs Department. He is an independent PLO Executive Committee member formerly in charge of Refugees Affairs Department. He obtained PhD in Political Science from the University of Calgary. He has been a member of PLO Central Council since 1977. He currently resides in Jordan and is the Executive Director of the Palestine International Institute.

**Fawwaz Traboulsi** was a co-founder of the Organization for Communist Action in Lebanon in 1970 and played an active role in the Civil War and LNM. He studied at the American University of Beirut and the School of Oriental Studies in London and obtained his doctorate in history from the Université de Paris (VIII). He is also a long-time journalist and political commentator and has weekly publications in as-Safir. He was a former professor of the Lebanese American University in History and Politics. Among his many publications is *A Modern History of Lebanon*, a critical and comprehensive work of Lebanese history. He has also translated several important works including those of Edward Said. He currently resides in Beirut and lectures part-time at the American University of Beirut in Middle Eastern Studies.

**Hasna Mikdashi** is a shi'a woman from the south of Lebanon. Her family used to host a Palestinian family for several years following the Nakba in 1948. She was a student organizer in Beirut who organized and volunteered in the refugee camps, along with other students, through the realm of education. She joined Fateh during the revolutionary period and participated in military training. For a large portion of the time period, she was living in Cairo and working with Fateh organized Dar-el-Fata. She currently resides in Beirut.

**Leila Khaled** was born in Haifa in 1944. She became a refugee with her family in Lebanon after the Nakba in 1948. She is a member of the PFLP and was a trained guerilla militant and was also active in the General Union for Palestinian Women. In 1969 she became the first women ever to hijack an airplane. The event ended with the passengers freed without the use of weapons. She currently lives in Jordan and serves on the Political Bureau of the PFLP.

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**Omar** was born in Lebanon to a Shi'a father from the South of Lebanon and a Sunni lower-middle class mother from Beirut. He was a member of the PFLP and joined guerilla

military trainings and operations during the revolutionary period. He studied for his PhD in the UK in the mid 1980s and is now a professor in Lebanon. He continues to work as an activist around the issue of Palestine.

**Salah Salah** was born in 1936 in Ghawair Abu Shushi, Tiberia, Palestine. He was an early Arab Nationalist Movement activist in Damascus and a former leader of the PFLP. He served as an independent member of PLO Executive Committee from 1971 to 1973. He was a member of the PFLP's Political Bureau until 1993. He lives in Beirut and is the Chairmen of Palestine National Council's Returnees Committee holding place on PLO Central Committee. He is also a co-founder of the NGO Ajial in Beirut, Lebanon where he currently works.

**Samah Idriss** was born in Lebanon to Nasserite parents. He is a former member of the PFLP who also participated in guerilla military trainings and operations during the revolutionary period. He then studied a PhD in Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures at Columbia University. He has published nine children's books, four adult novels, and two books on literary criticism. He is working on an Arabic-to-Arabic lexicon and is the Editor-in-Chief of al-Adab magazine in Lebanon, where he currently resides.

**Samira Salah** is a former PFLP member. She was also a member of the General Secretariat of the General Union of Palestinian Women and director of Arab Relations as well as a member of the *Palestine* National Council. She headed the PLO's department for Palestinian refugee affairs and coordinated the campaign for the rights of refugees in Lebanon and the right of return, in accordance with UN resolution 194. She is currently living in Beirut.

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I first and foremost need to extend my deepest gratitude to my family who taught me the depth and power of love and fostered my inquisitive spirit from a very young age. I attribute the formation of my social justice compass to them, and specifically to Tata Mary who I vividly remember teaching me to consider others in addition to and even before myself. I am grateful to have known and learned from many generations of family and thank them for their unconditional support. To my family for their commitment to my crossing of this finish line and especially my dad who became the best caretaker Waleed could ever have. Thank you Carmen, Basim, Katelyn, and Christine Mogannam for supporting all of my decisions that culminated in this, even when it was hard. To Nayef Al Smadi, thank you for being my partner and comrade in life and struggle. Your sharp analysis, brilliant mind and humbleness never ceases to amaze me. To Waleed Al Smadi, you are the inspiration that was missing in my life and I will always love you.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Revolution Until Victory?:
Decolonizing Land, Nation and the People through Palestinian-Lebanese Transnational Resistance Praxis

by

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Doctor of Philosophy in Ethnic Studies

University of California San Diego, 2019

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This dissertation analyzes the frameworks and praxes of Palestinian resistance and revolution alongside the Lebanese civil war to offer a new lens through which to understand these two respective and seemingly disconnected markers of Arab history. Through examining the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Lebanese National Movement (LNM) as co-constitutive arbiters of revolutionary struggle, this dissertation offers a new analytical lens through which to examine and reframe

Palestinian resistance and the Lebanese civil war as common discursive framings of the 1970s in Lebanon. It demonstrates the possibilities of new and different readings and analyses of historical and contemporary moments and social movements by considering alliance, which offers a new narrative that shifts and subverts popular articulations and discourses.

This dissertation analyzes nation-building through a transnational, stateless subjectivity birthed as a result of Zionist settler colonialism while also framing the sets of relations imposed upon formerly colonized states visa vi national elites and western imperialist powers. I develop analyses around the tensions between internalized orientalist tropes and the growth of Arabness as oppositional cultural identities. Further, I analyze the different modes and tactics of resistance mobilized by the PLO and LNM to defeat Zionist settler colonialism and western imperialism and liberate land and people. It looks at three aspects of 'revolution' according to the PLO-LNM alliance: formation building and sustenance, armed struggle, and popular, sector-based labor. It also considers the relationship of revolution to time and place, postulating whether or not revolution can be temporally and spatially confined.

I dissect and analyze the tools and praxis of 'revolution' and highlight how formation and alliance building are enacted as part of this praxis. I highlight the contradictions that arise based on proximities to and dynamics of power, particularly where material and fiscal resources and decision-making are concerned. I look at the assumption of armed struggle as a tactic and gendered labor as a dynamic internally to offer critiques about the relationship between colonial power and hegemonic

understandings of violence and to debate different conversations around women and gender in the movement, their role and their labor.

In striving for broader applicability, I look at this moment to ask: how has the context of the Palestinian and Lebanese revolutions to overthrow the colonial, imperialist, economic elite government systems advanced our understanding of the question of revolution and revolutionary praxis? What ideological, material and other tools were mobilized in the name of revolution and what internal (and external) dynamics were at play that hindered the actualization of the revolutionary goals?

## Introduction

> Sometimes people try to destroy you, precisely because they recognize your power – not because they don't see it, but because they see it and they don't want it to exist.
>
> - bell hooks

This dissertation focuses on the moment when the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Lebanese National Movement (LNM) come together to form an alliance called the Joint Forces for what these movements deemed "the revolution" in the 1960s and 70s, for which I define through analyzing their ways of making meaning of this term revolution at the time. At this moment in the 1960s-70s, many global regional contexts were amidst what they deemed *anti-colonial liberation struggles* or had newly achieved independence through this type of struggle. Regionally in the Arab World, Zionism was seen as both a colonial project and an extension of Western/US imperialism because of its physical, settler presence as well as its repressive military and economic infrastructure in the region. Thus, Zionism was seen as a necessary target for undoing imperialism and achieving self-determination for Palestinians. As such, Palestinian aspirations for a free and liberated homeland went hand-in-hand with anti-imperialist agendas in the region and especially in Lebanon and other bordering nations.

The moment of PLO-LNM alliance is contextually situated at a time where the Palestinian parties, popular organizations and resistance movements were concretizing collectively under the umbrella of the PLO to resist and ultimately defeat Zionism in Palestine and the region institutionally and as a political ideology while a Lebanese opposition movement was growing among parties in Lebanon who represented

populations that were facing challenging material conditions at the expense of the capitalist and imperialist driven ruling parties in a postcolonial or post-independence context. Globally, anti-colonial liberation movements who had achieved independence were grappling with the repercussions of imperialism as the extension of their former colonial presence and as a result of the Cold War, Lebanon included. While there are many important and impactful dynamics regionally in this time period that also have played a role in Lebanon and the struggle for Palestine, this dissertation will analyze the frameworks, processes, and praxis of what "the revolution" entailed for the PLO-LNM alliance. I assume the term *revolution* as a main concept of exploration for this dissertation because it was the term used to characterize this moment by active participants in their narratives and self-produced materials and discourses. The term also challenges the language of civil war to complicate this moment for Lebanon. I seek to understand what was meant by *revolution* and how to understand revolution through the determination of those enacting it while and through building alliances.

Through utilizing oral history as the main methodology, this dissertation is grounded within the agency of the Palestinian and Lebanese people and aims to tell a story, to narrate, those active agents of resistance and revolution. It does not aim for a comprehensive history, but rather to institutionalize the certain lived experiences and historical memories of some participants in the revolutionary struggle of the Palestinians, Lebanese and other forces during the 1970s. This dissertation looks at three aspects of 'revolution' according to the PLO-LNM alliance: formation building and sustenance, armed struggle, and popular, sector-based labor. I dissect and analyze the tools and

praxis of 'revolution' – which include ideology and discourse, nation building and leadership, institution and infrastructure building, popular involvement through sector-based organizing and armed struggle – and seek to highlight how formation and alliance building are enacted as part of this praxis. Through examining these components of revolution through the alliance, I analyze what the larger social, political and economic implications are of this revolution, dissect the tension between ideology and pragmatism, and reflect on how both state-based and stateless national aspirations can both fit into this concept of anti-colonial liberation struggle as their shared frame for revolution.

In striving for broader applicability, I look at this moment to ask: how has the context of the Palestinian and Lebanese revolutions to overthrow the colonial, imperialist, economic elite government systems advanced our understanding of the question of revolution and revolutionary praxis? What ideological, material and other tools were mobilized in the name of revolution and what internal (and external) dynamics were at play that hindered the actualization of the revolutionary goals?

## Background and Literature Review

### *Composition and Aims of the PLO*

The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was established by the Arab League in May of 1964 and Ahmad Shuqairy, the representative of Palestine to the Arab League, was to head the formation of the PLO.[1] Prior to the official proclamation of the PLO, Shuqairy was to select members for the Palestinian National Council to be present for the foundation. This formation received criticism from some Palestinians, mainly the

[1] Hamid, Rashid. "What Is the PLO?". *Journal of Palestine Studies* 4, no. 4 (1975): 94.

revolutionary forces (including Fateh), for not being revolutionary enough, for not allowing members of the council to represent their organizations (they were to be present only as individuals), and in fear that this proposition from the Arab states was merely to create a mechanism for them to control the actions of the Palestinian national movement.[2] The National Council selected would have the main control over this new body and Shuqairy held the bulk of the power from within this body.[3] Though they were developing infrastructure for the PLO, it still remained criticized by other Palestinian organizations, mainly for the above-mentioned reasons. However, there was a general sentiment that the idea of such an organization for all Palestinian people was favorable, they did not agree with how it was being formed at that time.[4]

Over the next few years, the PLO developed itself diplomatically through its presence in regional and international meetings and conferences as well as continuing to have its own National Council meetings.[5] Time passed and Shuqairy continued to try to build the PLO, bodies within it, and overall infrastructure when, at the end of 1967, “Fateh submitted a memorandum to the Conference of Arab Foreign Ministers in Cairo expressing its concern” with Shuqairy and “demanding the closure of the Arab information media to him.[6]” The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP, which was created by members of the Arab Nationalist Movement) and the General Union of

[2] Hamid, “What Is”, 94-95.
[3] Hamid, “What Is”, 96.
[4] Hamid, “What Is”, 96.
[5] Hamid, “What Is”, 97-98.
[6] Hamid, “What Is”, 97-98.

Palestinian Students (GUPS) demanded his resignation at that time, which Shuqairy eventually did, but not before trying to attain enough support to remain in power.[7]

Yahya Hammouda then replaced Shuqairy as Chairman of the PLO and began to advocate for armed struggle, however this and other efforts were too little too late.[8] Fateh had already initiated a meeting with seven other Palestinian organizations and created what is called the Permanent Bureau. However, the PLO and the PFLP did not attend the meeting. Not long after, Fatah, the PLO, and the PFLP met and came to an agreement to reorganize the National Council.[9] There was still some tension between the factions, mostly revolving around actions of armed resistance, but these groups kept working together until the structure, which is still used today, was solidified in 1969 and expansion began.[10]

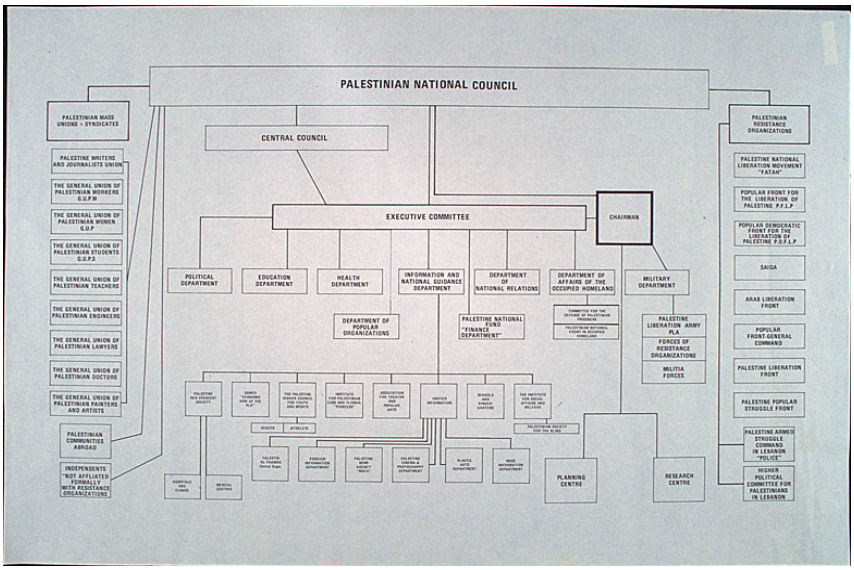

Figure 1: Palestinian National Council – Organizational Chart[11]

[7] Hamid, “What Is”, 98.
[8] Hamid, “What Is”, 98-99.
[9] Hamid, “What Is”, 99.
[10] Hamid, “What Is”, 100.
[11] "Palestinian National Council - Organizational Chart." Columbia University Center for Palestine Studies, 1985, accessed May 10, 2019, http://www.palestine.mei.columbia.edu/1994/2017/2/10/palestinian-national-council-organizational-chart.

This image, which lays out the agreed upon structure is digitized in the Center for Palestine Studies archive at Columbia University[12] and can be found in several different iterations online and in texts written about the PLO. I include this image because it shows the sophistication of the infrastructure built by a transnational movement without a land base. As is indicated here, the PLO was composed of many different blocks, departments, committees, etc. in order to create this popular and all-encompassing umbrella structure for the Palestinian people. The Palestinian National Council (PNC) was originally comprised of over 400 people but later reduced to somewhere between 100 to 200 people.[13] As is reflected here, the PNC formed several groups, committees and departments to facilitate different activities. The Executive Committee of fifteen (maximum) acts as the official representation of the PLO, supervises the institutions of the PLO, handles financial matters, and establishes and follows up with political and other programming for the PLO.[14] The Executive Committee members work full-time for the PLO.[15] The Palestine National Fund had specifically outlined regulations as did a number of other departments and committees, which helped facilitate the work of the PLO, support the masses, and controllably reap the benefits of popular participation. The different PLO institutions were also able to play a role in social services, which played a main factor in changing the lives of the Palestinians in Lebanon (at least during the PLO's presence there), among other palestinians, in a positive and more hopeful light.[16]

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[12] "Palestinian National Council - Organizational Chart." Columbia University Center for Palestine Studies, 1985.
[13] Hamid, "What Is", 102-3.
[14] Rubenberg, Cheryl A. "The Civilian Infrastructure of the Palestine Liberation Organization: An Analysis of the Plo in Lebanon until June 1982." *Journal of Palestine Studies* 12, no. 3 (1983): 54-78.
[15] Hamid, "What Is", 104.
[16] Hamid, "What Is", 102-7/Rubenberg, "The Civilian Infrastructure", 57-78.

Fatah was the largest party at that time in the PLO while PFLP and Sa'eqa (the Palestinian branch of the Syrian Ba'th Party) were strong seconds. Other smaller groups including PFLP-General Command (PFLP-GC), the Democratic Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DPFLP), the Arab Liberation Front (ALF – Palestinian branch of the Iraqi Ba'th Party), and other smaller groups who joined later.[17] Many independent, non-partisan individuals also joined the PLO and were able to hold positions within the structures. The PLO not only attempted (early on at least) to have representative numbers for the parties and independents, but they also aimed to have accurate geographical representation of Palestinians as well.[18] Though each faction and independent member differed politically, ideologically, and methodologically, the constituents of the PLO united under aspirations of assuming their inherent political and other rights, achieving the right of return of the refugees and the total liberation of Palestine.[19]

*Composition and Aims of the LNM*

The LNM was made up of several different organizations, including the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP), which was a leading progressive Druze party headed by Kamal Jumblatt (who also led the LNM until his assassination); the Organization for Communist Action (OCA), which was a Marxist-Leninist group, the Communist Party of Lebanon (CPL); the Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party (SSNP), which was the Lebanese

[17] Hamid, "What Is", 100.
[18] Rubenberg, "The Civilian Infrastructure", Pgs. 57-61.
[19] Though the history and structure of the PLO can be developed and dissected much further and with much more detail, this should give a fairly detailed description of the PLO, it's foundation, its institutions, and constituency in order to paint a picture of the different PLO actors and functions to offer context to this research.

wing of the Syrian Ba'th Party; the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party, which was of the Iraqi Ba'th orientation; the Murabitun, which was an independent Nasserist organization; the Nasserist Organization, which was connected to Jamal Abdel Nasser's party; the Socialist Arab Union; and other small parties including shi'a and Kurdish groups.[20]

The LNM has a variety of political orientations and ideologies, as did the PLO, but they were able to align due to the aspirations of complete national reorganization. Kamal Jumblatt, without question, assumed the role as President of the Central Bureau and the head of the Executive committee. Walid Jumblatt, who assumed his father Kamal's role as leader of the PSP and strong player in the LNM, stated about his father (following Kamal's assassination) in an interview:

> We face many problems without our leader. He was a great leader with much charisma,… Nevertheless, the coalition of nationalist parties has proved to be effective, so in the future we will continue to regroup and reorganize the left and strengthen the popular movement among the masses. We are under tremendous pressure, but we will maintain our position.[21]

The LNM was impacted by the assassination of Kamal Jumblatt, particularly because of his strength and charisma as a leader figure, however, following his death they attempted to reorganize the structure of the LNM and redistribute roles.[22] This new and collective leadership structure had eleven members on the Executive Committee who were to represent the major trends in the movement. Under this was the larger Central

[20] Farsoun, Samih. "Lebanon Explodes: Toward a Maronite Zion." *Merip Reports*, no. 44 (1976): 18.
[21] Jumblatt, Walid. "Interview with Walid Jumblatt: Progressive Socialist Party." *MERIP Reports*, no. 61 (1977): 7.
[22] Raad, Inam. "For More Than a Year Eighty Percent of Lebanon Was Run by the Lebanese National Movement." *MERIP Reports*, no. 73 (1978): 14.

Political Council, which was to elect the eleven members of the Executive Committee. Aside from these two leadership bodies, the LNM also had the Specialized Bureaus, which included Bureaus of: Welfare and Social Services, Information, Popular Security, Military, Arab and International Affairs, and Planning and Research.[23] The LNM continued its struggle through the course of the war and all its different turning points until the mid 1980s when the LNM dissolved itself. Basically it was Walid Jumbaltt who dissolved the LNM, but some of the groups had also retreated as Lebanon was witnessing a time of sectarianization among Muslim communities.[24]

The beginnings of the formation of the Lebanese National Movement (LNM) were when different parties, led by Kamal Jumblatt, united as a coalition in 1969.[25] The LNM entered Lebanese politics officially in June 1973 as a united front to protest a draft law that would restrict the freedoms of Lebanese political parties (at that time they launched the Rally of National and Democratic Parties and Personalities, which later became known as the LNM).[26] Though the different parties and factions that would make up the LNM were already collaborating, the June 1973 protest was their official debut. The LNM, like the PLO, was made up of several different Lebanese political organizations (some also having sect orientations). The LNM, headed by Kamal Jumblatt, Druze leader of the Progressive Socialist Party, was aligned to implement a program for political, economic, and social reforms. According to Samih Farsoun, this program and the uniting principles of the LNM were as follows:

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[23] Raad, “For More Than a Year,” 14.
[24] Traboulsi, Fawwaz. "A Modern History of Lebanon." *Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto Press* (2007) 229.
[25] Michele Salkind and Fawwaz Traboulsi, 1977, Pg. 4
[26] Traboulsi, *A Modern History*, 174.

1. “Abolition of sectarianism as a basis for political organization and appointments;
2. Electoral reform based on proportional representation;
3. Reform in the military structure;
4. Labor, social and welfare reforms, including an end to arbitrary firing and an increase in the minimum wage;
5. The “Arabism” of Lebanon – a euphemism for Lebanon’s obligation to support anti-Israeli and anti-imperialist struggles; and
6. Support for the right of a Palestinian armed presence in Lebanon.”[27]

These interests were established as a response to repressive control of economic and social practices by a small number of Lebanese elites who controlled most of the capital that Lebanon acquired. There is a detailed explanation of the economic repression and tension drawn from both class and sect lines in Fawwaz Traboulsi’s *A History of Modern Lebanon.* The book details different laws, trade agreements, and other relevant information that built up before the outbreak of the war to give a comprehensive understanding of the magnitude of problems that were reach by the time of the war’s outbreak.

Before the LNM had even officially formed or been able to implement any political programs, the coalition encouraged the signing of the Cairo Agreements for its giving of rights to the Palestinians to fight the Zionists from Lebanese terrain.[28] The LNM was considered the first of the Arab people to come to the defense of the Palestinian resistance and there were genuine feelings of national duty when it came to the defense of and support for the Palestinian resistance as well as participation in the liberation

[27] Farsoun, “Lebanon Explodes,” 16.
[28] Barbee, Lynne. "Interviews with the Lebanese National Movement: Introduction." *MERIP Reports*, no. 61 (1977): 3.

movement against the Zionists. (Salkind and Traboulsi, 1977, Pg. 5) In 1975 the LNM officially embarked on putting into action what they called their transitional program, which had a clearly defined strategy and agenda, which hoped to implement secularism, democracy, and a more equal economic structure for Lebanon. In essence it was a completely different alternative to the current Lebanese political and economic system.

*Discursive Review of Organizational Collaboration*

The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Lebanese National Movement (LNM) both served as progressive umbrella organizations for national liberation. The PLO essentially operated as a transnational popular representational body for a people and nation without its own territorial boundaries, due to the colonization of Palestine and forced exile of its Arab inhabitants in 1948. Though they were considered a popular representative body, they also operated as a national organizational infrastructure which would forerun a political program as they were intent on liberating Palestine from its colonization by Zionist forces and facilitating mass return of Palestinians to Palestine. The LNM served as a progressive front for reforms in Lebanon working for the complete dismantling and restructuring of the (sectarian) political and economic (capitalist) system. Though both formations shared similar characteristics, their creation and roles were distinct in that one articulated itself as a national liberation movement in the context of settler-colonial dispossession while the other sought for political, social and economic regime change of its own post-independence nation-state. Meanwhile each formation was fomenting relations with other geopolitical and global anti-capitalist and

anti-colonial actors undergoing similar projects in their own countries and for the struggle to shift regional dynamics of power.

As a dispossessed people attempting to liberate their homeland from outside of a sovereign land mass, the PLO built its national trajectory as simultaneously bound with interdependent regional and global actors, conditions and political currents. In this sense, we cannot look at the PLO's role and functions in Lebanon only within a discursive framing of the Palestinian condition and movement. Rather we must look at how it both influenced and was informed by the Lebanese political, social and economic context and the geopolitical and global actors that partook in shaping the conditions of possibility for Lebanon's civil war and its resultant effects. In this sense, rather than taking the PLO or the "Palestinian liberation struggle" as my subject of analysis, I am looking at the alliance as my subject for reflecting Arab aspirations and organizational efforts to liberate Palestine from Zionist colonization and the region from both Zionist and US colonial/imperialist hegemonies.

As such, this review offers a discursive mapping and analysis of existing literature that relates to each formation. In offering a broad analysis of the creation, functions and relation of both the PLO and LNM, I situate the literature within its geo-political and historical context which I argue is essential for situating the PLO and LNM within the Lebanese landscape more broadly, with attention to nuance and context-specific details within scholarly works on this topic. Though there is an abundance of scholarship on the PLO, their time in Lebanon and the crystallization of the infrastructures it built there, these works often center the Palestinian experience or nationalist aims without touching upon

the significance of Lebanon as a place particularly in relation to its bonds with the Lebanese left. Piecing together a map of existing literature allows me to provide a contextual landscape of Lebanon, the Lebanese civil war and the PLO's presence and operations within Lebanon in order to identify the shortcomings of lenses that do not account for the PLO and LNM as co-constitutive actors in this time. Upon conversation with many Lebanese and Palestinian-Lebanese scholars and movement organizers, a recurring criticism arises which is that the literature about the Lebanese civil war is apolitical, individualized and trauma-centered and reinforces the hegemonic narrative of sectarianism that came to be sustained through the civil war. As such, I turn to scholarly production that holds a more critical, left orientation than canonical texts on the Lebanese civil war in order to understand the ways in which more critical narratives of the period offer us the intellectual tools to redress dominant constructions of history from a grassroots perspective.

I am particularly interested in orienting my work on Arab liberation movements toward diasporic Palestinians, Lebanese, and Arabs generally of subsequent generations who are invested in continuing the legacies of liberation struggle in their respective geographies. I focus on English literature because it is a predominant diasporic language globally and I am mapping the existing literature to highlight and analyze the various focuses of the scholarly work and to identify where we may examine the various focuses through a relational lens that accounts for the junctures of PLO, LNM, the Palestinian revolution and the Lebanese civil war as these different formations and events coincide in time and space. Through compiling and analyzing existing resistance literature written

in English, I found that this existing literature barely touches the alliance between the LNM and PLO. As such, I argue that while there are important documentations in the scholarly literature that provide important context and interventions both empirically and analytically for the period at hand, I conclude that the existing English canon, while important, is limited in what it offers to its readers by missing this critical lens of alliance and co-constitutive revolution. I argue that a remapping of history that places the formations and struggles of the PLO and LNM in conversation with one another and that accounts for their joint infrastructures is necessary for deepened and encompassing reflection which can offer a broader and more contextually rooted, regional and global perspective that situates alliance-building as a key characteristic and dynamic of the respective umbrella organizations, their aims, and of the civil war. As such, I map the existing literature to pay homage to what exists and to move beyond it to set up the necessary landscape for a remapping of the literature with the PLO-LNM alliance enmeshed upon it through the subsequent chapters of this dissertation, primarily through the archive of active participation in which I extract using bilingual oral history methodologies.

*Growth of the Palestinian Resistance in Lebanon*

Following the 1967 Arab defeat, Palestinian resistance began to strengthen in Lebanon though the PLO still had not officially moved its base from Jordan to Lebanon yet. Many of the resistance groups were building and training in Lebanon, as well as other countries, and the resistance's strength was being seen from this point in Lebanon. This also brought up issues within Lebanese society about the Palestinian resistance and

whether or not its presence was welcome in Lebanon. (Rami Siklawi, 2010, Pg. 601) As a result, there were heavy tensions and clashes between the Palestinian *feda'iyin* (guerilla militants) and the Lebanese Army, which was controlled by rightwing forces, at the time. As a result of the regional rise and strengthening of the *feda'iyin* organizations, the Palestinian resistance gained a lot of popular Arab support at this time. When the *feda'iyin* began building and carrying out military actions in Lebanon the Lebanese Army tried to suppress it. However, the empowerment of the *feda'i* organizations came off the heals of the battle of Karameh in March 1968 in which the Palestinian resistance, led by Fatah, defeated the Israelis in their attempted invasion of *feda'i* training camps in the border town of Karameh In Jordan.[29] The feda'i organizations, and namely Fateh, gained monumental credibility by the Arab masses drew the attention of Egypt and Syria who were united under the United Arab Republic (UAR) at this time.[30] This, consequently, embarrassed the Arab regimes because though the resistance organizations were so small, they were agile and courageous enough to fight against the Israeli army.[31] This courage to fight in Karameh sent shockwaves across the region and the Palestinian guerillas in Lebanon were emboldened. This, coupled with the Arab governments' realization of the need to engage with the Palestinians as a more serious formation, resulted in support for the presence of the resistance in countries bordering Palestine. At this time, Syria and Egypt were applying pressure on the Lebanese to allow the resistance to operate from Lebanon, as was a large portion of Lebanese society, mainly from individuals and groups who were

[29] Quandt, William B., Fuad Jabber, and Ann Mosely Lesch. *The Politics of Palestinian Nationalism*. Univ of California Press, 1973, 122.
[30] Quandt, Jaber, and Lesch, *The Politics,* 57.
[31] Quandt, Jaber, and Lesch, *The Politics,* 179.

aligned at the time and later came to be known as the LNM. This ultimate strengthening and support for the Palestinian resistance led to the signing of the Cairo Agreement[32] on November 3, 1969.[33] The terms of the Cairo Agreement were that the PLO coordinate its activity with the Lebanese Army and "recognize the requirements of Lebanese 'sovereignty and security'" and the PLO would be granted official legitimization of its presence in Lebanon and was afforded spatial control of the refugee camps, the ability to establish its institutions from within the camps, and was granted freedom of movement in the south of Lebanon.[34] Siklawi expands on the terms of the Cairo Agreement saying it should also give Palestinians in Lebanon the right to employment, residence, development of the resistance in the camps, and the release of prisoners and confiscated arms as well as a mutual agreement to end vilifying the propaganda between the Lebanese and Palestinians.[35] Following the Cairo Agreement, Israeli raids and attacks intensified in the south as did tensions and clashes between Lebanese right-wing forces and the Palestinians.

[32] The official Cairo Agreement document is still classified, however the text of the Cairo Agreement has been republished in many different publications without discrepancies between those different publications. I used the text found in some of the secondary sources as well as the full text from the following report "The Cairo Agreement." In *Towards Lebanese National Reconciliation*, edited by R. Kaufmann et all. Switzerland: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), 2009.
[33] Brynen, Rex. "PLO Policy in Lebanon: Legacies and Lessons." *Journal of Palestine Studies* 18, no. 2 (1989): 50.
[34] Brynen, "PLO Policy," 50.
[35] Siklawi, Rami. "The Dynamics of Palestinian Political Endurance in Lebanon." *The Middle East Journal* (2010): 601-602.

*Economic Conditions*

Following the PLO's exodus from Jordan to Lebanon in September of 1970, following the defeat of the PLO in what is often referred to as the Black September massacre, the PLO continued to strengthen in Lebanon, as did the Lebanese opposition front and leftist parties and groups, which would later become the LNM. Many different events and battles between Palestinians and Lebanese took place leading up to the outbreak of the Civil War as did inter-Lebanese clashes between the right and the left. According to Fawwaz Traboulsi's *A Modern History of Lebanon,* inter-Lebanese tension was largely a result of various unjust economic policies that created a large class divide leaving many Lebanese poor and only a small ruling elite dominating the country's economy and government. The amount of laws being passed, which Traboulsi outlines in detail, that create further divides between the elite and the poor, unemployed and working classes was skyrocketing. These policies were being formed around major sectors, mainly agriculture and trade.[36] Policies around banking, control of capital, and non-existent social services coupled with inflation created a high amount of domestic tension in Lebanon. This tension was further exacerbated because of attempts to prohibit political freedoms on the student, labor union, and party levels, to silence challenges to the system.[37] This is the point when the LNM presented itself publicly for the first time in 1973 and much of the analysis around their political positions centered the devastating conditions of the social classes, along with their secular, anti-sectarian, and anti-Zionist stances. In this sense, I argue that the LNM viewed the economic consequences of

[36] Traboulsi, *A Modern History*, 158-169.
[37] Traboulsi, *A Modern History*, 169-174.

capitalism as deeply embedded in sectarian division and imperialist aggression. As Traboulsi details the different economic policies and their impacts on the Lebanese population, he makes the case that few families are actually in control of the overwhelming majority of Lebanese capital and the wealth was not in fact controlled by certain sects, but was controlled by certain families in different sects. Some of these families are also political elites like the Maronite Gemayel family[38], the Sunni Hariri[39] family, or the Shi'a Berri family[40] for example, which made the Lebanese cause for economic, political, and social change more urgent from a class analysis than from a sectarian analysis. Elitism transcended sectarian lines.[41] Traboulsi attributes the economic crisis as well as the Ain al-Roumaneh event to the outbreak of the Civil War.[42] The Ain al-Roumaneh event, in which a bus of Palestinians was raided by the Phalangists in front of a Maronite church leaving 21 Palestinians killed, provoked fighting between Lebanese and Palestinian groups in opposition to one another and ultimately was the defining point of the Civil War outbreak. This beginning of the Civil War took place on April 13, 1975 and was to last fifteen years. Traboulsi's *A Modern History of Lebanon* is one of the most important and

[38] One of the elders of this Maronite Christian family, Bachir Gemayel, was a leader of the Phalangist party or *kata'eb* (which his father Pierre founded prior to the civil war) and Bachir was also a founder of the Lebanese Forces or *quwat*, leading the right-wing militant efforts in the Civil War and the family continues to have both political and economic power in Lebanon today. Several members of this family have been elected to the presidency of Lebanon, a position which must be filled by a Maronite Christian as reflective of the Lebanese confessionalist system the LNM was attempting to do away with.
[39] Saad Hariri is the current prime minister of Lebanon and I one of the successors of his father Rafic Hariri. The sear of prime minister is required to be filled by a Sunni Muslim as reflective of the Lebanese confessionalist system the LNM was attempting to do away with.
[40] Nabih Berri, one of the members of the prominent shi'a family, is the leader of the Amal movement which is the responsible party for the War of the Camps – Lebanese led, Syrian coordinated attacks on the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon in the mid-1980s. He is also the longtime speaker of the parliament in Lebanon, a seat which must be filled by a Shi'a Muslim as reflective of the Lebanese confessionalist system the LNM was attempting to do away with.
[41] Traboulsi, *A Modern History*, 149-164.
[42] Traboulsi, *A Modern History*, 183.

groundbreaking texts on Lebanon and is perhaps the most important leftist narrative that exists. Very little literature discusses Lebanon and the Lebanese civil war and general political climate from a class perspective and Traboulsi's Marxist, materialist analysis is a refreshing, if isolating, read on Lebanon. Traboulsi comes from a long tradition of leftist organizing along with his scholarship as he was the founder and leader of the Organization for Communist Action (OCA). His book is one of few texts that say anything about the Lebanese National Movement (LNM) and even then, though his narrative is essential for situating the LNM and he has a breadth of first-hand knowledge and experience on the topic, because this is a text that covers many decades of Lebanese history, he is only able to scratch the surface regarding the LNM, what is was, how it functioned and ultimately the nature of its alliance with the PLO. Through a social class-based reading of Lebanon, in opposition to common reductive sectarian narratives, Traboulsi offers an essential framework for the Lebanese civil war and Lebanon in general that I take up as a framing lens of inquiry for the conditions of the time in Lebanon. As Traboulsi elucidates the economic conditions that ripened the possibilities for the outbreak of a sustained 15 year war, Samih Farsoun offers an overview of the war, marking three critical political shifts and phases.

*The War in Phases*

Samih Farsoun, an Arab leftist scholar activist born in Palestine in 1937, argues that the progression of the Civil War can be characterized in three phases, those being: Phalangists vs. Palestinians, the Lebanese Right vs. Left (the LNM), and the struggle for

the partition of Lebanon.[43] The first phase began with attacks by the Phalangist *Kataeb* party against the Palestinians, which the PLO was prepared for and was ready to react. The Phalangists claimed that they were not against the Palestinians, but merely saw them as a threat to the "sovereignty, security, and independence of Lebanon" and claimed they wanted to improve relations with the Palestinians.[44] He suggests that an element of religious discrimination motivated the attacks by the Phalangists. In the sectarian structure of Lebanese society, Palestinians posed as a demographic threat to the Christian character of Lebanon in that the Phalangists were Christian and the Palestinians were majority Muslim.[45] The contradiction in how the Maronite powers in Lebanon dealt with the Palestinians is elucidated by their granting of citizenship to many of the Palestinian Christian refugees while intentionally excluding Palestinian Muslims from citizenship rights precisely for the purposes of this demographic threat. However, at the same time and as was stated in my interviews which I highlight in the next chapter, in the context of the war, the Christian right-wing indiscriminately targeted Palestinians in the fighting, regardless of religion or citizenship rights.

Farsoun continues to outline phase two of the right-wing forces vs. the left forces; between the Lebanese Front (LF – the Right) and the LNM. He positions this phase as a class struggle and states the LNM support for the Palestinian resistance while also saying that at this point the Palestinians had retracted their attacks on the Lebanese right, only playing the role of training and arming the LNM, but not participating in the fighting.[46] It

[43] Farsoun, "Lebanon Explodes," 15.
[44] Farsoun, "Lebanon Explodes," 15.
[45] Farsoun, "Lebanon Explodes," 16.
[46] Farsoun, "Lebanon Explodes," 16.

was at this time that the LNM began to demand and struggle for the implementation of their transitional program (outlined above) for political, economic, and social reforms in Lebanon. The LNM, in alliance with the Palestinians, gained a lot of control at this time in the various regions accumulating a majority of Lebanese territory.[47] Part of the conflict at this time was the putting into question of the character of Lebanon: whether or not Lebanon was "Arab," also implying sectarian and religious schisms in the construction of a national imaginary for the country.[48]

The third phase sheds light on how sectarian proclivities were difficult to overcome, as this phase centers the partitioning of Lebanon into Christian and Muslim states, which was proposed by a part of the Lebanese Maronite right, which was opposed by the LNM and its allies. The *Kataeb*'s implementation of this partition was to attack Muslim and Palestinian areas and attempt to force residents to flee in order to acquire more terrain for the Christian right and to set up conditions for population exchanges.[49] In Farsoun's assessment of the Lebanese Civil War, he does not emphasize foreign participation. He mentions Syrian and French involvement, but only in passing as if not to highlight their role. I, however, think the analysis around Syrian and French involvement is worth more focus because of the Lebanese and Syrian inheritance of French infrastructures, which institutionalized neo-colonial or imperialist relations with France and also ensured power be in the hands of the Lebanese Christian right – in which Christianity was used to mobilize proximity to the empire. At the same time, while Syria was rejecting French

[47] Farsoun, "Lebanon Explodes," 16.
[48] Farsoun, "Lebanon Explodes," 16-17.
[49] Farsoun, "Lebanon Explodes," 17.

impositions, it was supporting the maintenance of Christian right-wing power in Lebanon to ensure a place for minorities and particular Arab Christian minorities as a way of balancing power regionally, which served as the framework for Syria's direct role in the Lebanese civil war and its military presence in Lebanon until 2005. He keeps the conversation around the Civil War focused on the Lebanese and partially, the Palestinian role, also with no mention of the Palestinian fighting of the Israelis after the Phalangist vs. Palestinians phase and the influences and consequences of this struggle from Lebanese soil. While this is a productive breakdown of the phases of civil war that reflects various and changing trajectories and tactics that mark it, the lack of attention to the dimensions of Israeli aggression in Lebanon and PLO resistance toward the Zionists, hinders our ability for understanding regional and global dimensions of power in Lebanon and in relation to Palestinian and Arab grapplings with both Zionism and imperialism as hegemonic regional forces, which is something I will address in my subsequent remapping of this context in the next chapter.

*The Left-Wing Approach*

In a series of interviews by the Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP) with leaders of different factions in the LNM (Progressive Socialist Party, Organization for Communist Action, and the Lebanese Communist Party) and a later interview of the Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party, MERIP attempts to tell of the early years of the war from the perspective of the LNM leadership. In an introduction, Lynne Barbee, a MERIP reporter, begins to describe the formation of the LNM and stresses the

importance of its alliance with the PLO as crucial way for the LNM's to acquire power for resistance against military action challenging its existence as well as giving the LNM more political leverage while also being molded by this alliance.[50] Barbee explains that the LNM's transitional program was the only proposal on the table as an alternative to the current system and in opposition to the right and their desire for "sectarian domination or partition of Lebanon."[51] She also presents the LNM's view regarding Syria in which she articulates that they saw Syria's intervention as in alignment with the right-wing, as their saviors though in theory they were supposed to be acting as peacekeeping forces (among other Arab troops).[52] As right wing approaches would track the agreement proposals offered by the right, Barbee discusses other agreements that were not implemented by the right, those which seemed to have addressed the concerns of the left and the right more so than those highlighted by the right. The Syrian presence seemed to have been supported by the US and Israel as well because its presence was seen as strengthening the Christian right, which was in alliance with the US and, by proxy, Israel's interests.[53] The US facilitated a cease-fire between Lebanon and Israel, which included Israel's withdrawal from the Lebanese south, but it is arguable that Israel would not have agreed had there been no Syrian presence. She also states that without the aid of Syria or Israel, the Christian right would not have been as effective.[54] In a context where the Syrian government, from an ideological standpoint, should have been in support of the Arab

[50] Barbee, "Interviews with the LNM: Introduction," 4.
[51] Barbee, "Interviews with the LNM: Introduction," 4.
[52] Barbee, "Interviews with the LNM: Introduction," 4.
[53] Barbee, "Interviews with the LNM: Introduction," 4-5.
[54] Barbee, "Interviews with the LNM: Introduction," 5.

nationalist and socialist organizations of the LNM and the anti-Zionist fronts of the Palestinians (for which the Lebanese and Palestinian Syrian Ba'ath parties were a part) against western and Zionist imperialisms and those local powers that uphold them, Syria instead envisioned itself as playing a role of balancing power by supporting the sustenance of the Lebanese Christian right (a minority group of the region) and as such consequently played into the hands of American and Zionist hegemonic policies.

The MERIP interviews showed particular interest in asking the leaders of parties in the LNM about their development, causes, the development of the LNM, the role of foreign intervention, and the trajectories of their parties. As the two communist leaders, Nadeem Abdel-Samad of the LCP and Fawwaz Traboulsi of the OCA, affirmed, the position of the beginnings of the Civil War and of the formation of the alliance were presented on class lines and for economic reform. These interviews offered personalized details of the LNM and particular parties, but only cover the first few years of the war. Abdel-Samad viewed the role of the US and Syria as a conspiracy to play a role in Lebanon and he concludes that this conspiracy is why these external powers were never able to mediate and bring an end to the war.[55] He also accounts that Syria was pushed into opposition with the LNM and PLO because of US, Israeli, and Saudi Arabian pressures to abandon mediation and begin confrontation with the Palestinian National Movement (PNM) and PLO. He saw, in this case, that the best solution was now for the Syrians to enter dialogue and relations with the LNM and the PLO to help them strengthen

[55] Salkind, Michele, and Nadeem Abdel-Samad. "Lebanese Communist Party: Interview with Nadeem Abdel-Samad." *MERIP Reports*, no. 61 (1977): 15.

a position against these pressures.[56] This analysis of foreign intervention does not account for Syrian interest and assumption of responsibility for their role in aiding in the position of the US, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the right wing. However, this interview was conducted in 1977 so it is difficult to say whether this position would have remained the same or would have looked through a more comprehensive lens had the interview been conducted later in the war or after the war ended. Though the Syrians continued to play a strong role in Lebanon and continued to grow its hegemonic power, as is shown through the War on the Camps in the mid-1980s and their continued military presence in Lebanon from their intervention in 1976 up until their final withdrawal in 2005, the shifts in political formations and alliances may have shifted the position of the Syrians in relation to LNM orgs. I believe this was ultimately fueled by the rise of Iran following the Iranian revolution as a regional power and as an agent for growing Shi'a strength regionally and for their alliance with Syria. In a sense, the opposition to the Lebanese status quo and to Zionism in Lebanon following the exodus of the PLO headquarters from Lebanon in 1982 and the subsequent weakening of leftist, Arab nationalist and other parties of the LNM, was in the hands of the shi'a movements and as such, the configuration of alignments shifted drastically after 1982 and after the civil war as well. In regard to the role in Syria, there is much left to explore and this is an area I hope to grow in future research, as its role in Lebanon is another dimension that, while more accounted for in the literature, is a dimension that challenges predominant understandings of both Lebanese sectarianism as well as resistance against Zionism.

[56] Salkind and Abdel-Samad, "Lebanese Communist Party," 15.

*Internal Debates: The PLO in Lebanon*

In Yezid Sayigh's two pieces "The Politics of Palestinian Exile" and "Armed Struggle and State Formation," Sayigh's framing lens is to analyze the PLO history, its use of armed struggle, and its general activities in relation to the PLO's desire to negotiate and build a state, which Sayigh argues was a goal from very early on in the formation, although the rhetoric shifted about the boundaries of that state over time.[57] According to Sayigh, Palestinian military actions had sustained three main aims: mobilizing the Palestinian people around a Palestinian identity; demonstrating their presence to the world; and actively wearing down the Israelis.[58] Sayigh also evaluates the actions of the PLO through these aims and with the perspective of armed struggle as a tool, implying that the Palestinians were trying to gain strength over the Israelis but were looking also for external attention in the international arena and support from the Arab masses as opposed to Arab regimes, for whom they instead delegitimized for their shortcomings in combatting Zionism for the end process of liberation and return. Possibly the most important role the PLO played in Lebanon and beyond was building all of its institutions.[59] The PLO institutions not only were able to take on certain parts of the work needed to be done to take on the Zionists while the leadership was still able to maintain control of that work, but the development of social institutions aided greatly the PLO's political position.[60]

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[57] Sayigh, Yezid. "Palestinian Armed Struggle: Means and Ends." *Journal of Palestine Studies* 16, no. 1 (1986): 95-112.
[58] Sayigh, Yezid. "The Politics of Palestinian Exile." *Third World Quarterly* 9, no. 1 (1987): 56.
[59] Rubenberg, "The Civilian Infrastructure", 54-78.
[60] Rubenberg, "The Civilian Infrastructure", 54-78.

The building of the institutions brought together a common Palestinian national identity among Palestinians globally, in order to avoid fragmentation even if there was disagreement on the party and PLO leadership levels, and it was also able to gain the peoples' trust through these institutions, acting as a Palestinian entity, though the territory of this state they were working to achieved was never accumulated.[61] While the Palestinian collective identity is founded on the experience of the Nakba as the commencement and an ongoing process of Zionist settler colonialism, those experiences were individualized or communalized within the family, village or refugee camp until movements for Palestinian liberation emerged and reframed the narrative. In fact, one of the most important achievements of the PLO in the years following the nakba is the collectivization of the individualized nakba experience. The collectivization of the settler colonial nakba and its ongoing processes strengthened the notion of nationalism and created a Palestinian bond transnationally. Through this narrative, symbols of Palestine emerged, most notably the Palestinian as *fellah* or peasant, which most were, as well as the *feda'i* or guerilla resistance fighter. The symbol of the fellah as characteristic of the Palestinian experience places high importance on the land and its cultivation as part of the Palestinian identity, and due to the loss of land, it inspired struggle to regain it and is an important characteristic of the use of indigeneity as a productive framework for Palestinianness in the context of ongoing Zionist settler colonialism. The symbolism of the resistance fighter as the way of being for Palestinians enabled the mass mobilization of Palestinian communities not only to identify with a collective identity, but also to assume

[61] Sayigh, "The Politics of Palestinian Exile," 58-59.

responsibility of the collective struggle. It was with this great power among Palestinian communities that the PLO was able to implement strategy and exercise their power.[62]

It is Sayigh who exposes other foreign power relations unraveling within the Palestinian resistance and mainly their support for the "rejectionists," the groups who rejected Fatah's slowly increasing moderate push and new strategy in 1974, which was viewed as a precursor for Palestinian recognition of Israel. The new strategy was the PLO's 10 point program which was adopted in 1974 at the Palestinian National Council (PNC) meeting in Cairo.[63] The main contention of this new strategy in which the rejectionists expressed their discontents was the strategy of achieving autonomy over all of historic Palestine in phases, which included the establishment of a Palestinian government on any part of Palestine as a land base and vehicle for liberating the rest of the Palestinian territories of historic Palestine. This strategy inadvertently implies diplomacy as part of its method for achieving a transitional program, a program in which Palestine would be acquired by the movement in phases. The rejectionists were headed by the PFLP and supported by Iraq and Libya at the time and Sa'eqa and Palestinian communists also opposed this new strategy believing that the PLO should only ally with progressive Arab states and the Soviets.[64] After the signing of US-brokered Camp David between Egypt and Israel, the opposing Palestinian parties (all but Fatah) formed a strong coalition with the support of Iraq, Libya, Syria and the USSR. This opposition was strong

[62] Sayigh, "The Politics of Palestinian Exile," 59.
[63] Palestinian National Council. "10 Point Program of the Plo." news release, 8 June 1974, 1974, https://web.archive.org/web/20110805192136/http://www.un.int/wcm/content/site/palestine/cache/offonce/pid/12354;jsessionid=ED2AC7E70A82F5C7CCB42BC6357FCDEC.
[64] Sayigh, "Palestinian Armed Struggle," 27.

enough to cause a divide within the PLO, but was unable to offer a strong alternative strategy against Israel leaving Fatah in power as a result.[65] Despite this divide, at the time, the PLO was at its peak with its secured position in Lebanon and military actions and was able to maintain and strengthen its claim as the Palestinian representative.[66] In both of Sayigh's works he pays special attention to the internal dynamics of the PLO and the role of foreign involvement with the PLO in its different phases, Lebanon being one of them. He also points to how the PLO was able to use leverage to at times manipulate the strengths of different Arab actors.[67] He refers to the PLO as a state in exile and traces the PLO's goals and aims through this idea of a state. Lebanon, for a period of time, served as a physical space for the PLO's operations and pursuance of their goals.[68] The different Arab players and inter-Arab politics merely served as setbacks for the PLO; the PLO's operation and goals were always the priority, specifically the liberation of Palestinian land and people through armed and popular resistance, especially during its time in Lebanon and it gained enough power to keep this priority at the forefront of its functionality.[69] As might be seen in this overview, Sayigh pays particular attention to this question of the state, and I find that this question, though important, confines the limits of analytical lenses because it already assumes the necessitation of nation-state formation as a goal, something that may not be so black and white in for example a pan-Arab regional vision. Sayigh's breadth of research and analysis of the PLO is of great importance for

[65] Sayigh, "Palestinian Armed Struggle," 27.
[66] Sayigh, "Palestinian Armed Struggle," 27.
[67] Sayigh, "The Politics of Palestinian Exile," 47.
[68] Sayigh, "The Politics of Palestinian Exile," 48.
[69] Sayigh, "The Politics of Palestinian Exile," 51.

documenting and understanding the PLO's history. However, it addresses other political and state formations only insofar as it pertains to the narrative of the PLO. This is, I argue one particular limit of Sayigh's expansive work on the PLO. I contend that it is important to look at the relationality of the PLO to other formations as mutually constituted or at least having a sort of dialectical relationship with multiple proximities that are important for broader applicability as opposed to just looking as the PLO's relationships through the receiving end. And lastly, while this may have been a widespread and important goal in various forms for a stateless transnational refugee/exilic population in particular, I argue that using the achievement of a state as a main framework for looking at the PLO's formation, relations, internal dynamics, and practice limits the imaginative possibilities of revolutionary aims, reinforcing the necessitation of present power structures, and limits the confines of the PLO's work to solely be serving a Palestinian state building project as opposed to also actively engaging and having stakes in larger regional struggles and configurations of power.

*The Palestinian Dynamic in Lebanese Affairs*

The PLO's military strength, in arms and resistance fighters, and local and regional support are factors for why the PLO was able to protect the refugee camps from being targeted in the beginning of the war. This ended when the Lebanese Front (LF – the Rightist front) began attacks on the Palestinians camps, which were already in dire conditions because of the LF and other government leaders' decision not to grant Palestinians' access to basic life needs and thus did not have the power or resources to

combat these attacks fairly. In essence the LF's use of excessive force to attack a population that was already highly concentrated within the enclosed walls of the camps and lacking access to resources made the Palestinians an easy target with minimal risk of retaliation, thus showing the immense power differential between the Lebanese right and the Palestinians in the camps. At this point, the PLO, alongside and in collaboration with the LNM, began fighting the LF, which partially neutralized LF's advances for some time.[70] The PLO also maintained its resistance of Syrian pressure. The Joint Forces – the leadership of the LNM-PLO alliance – continued meeting, strategizing and fighting Israel and Israeli-backed militias in the south of Lebanon as well.[71] In the political arena, the PLO was able to maintain its position as a main player on the ground in Lebanon and in taking up arms to fight the Israelis and supporting the LNM. In terms of the PLO's political role in Lebanon, these were the roles the PLO was able to play and their access to arms and training gave them significant leverage and power in Lebanon.[72] The PLO had access to resources including weapons and money coming into the PLO's Palestinian National Fund through Arab governments as well as countries of the anti-US block, including the Soviet Union and China. While resistance fighting crossed gendered lines, the majority of the fighters, or feda'iyin were men, and women were doing other types of labor necessary to sustain the armed struggle. Much of the functionality of the infrastructure at the time revolved around the maintenance and strengthening of the resistance as the main tactic for which its upholding was made possible through mass engagement in popular

[70] Brynen, "PLO Policy," 51.
[71] Brynen, "PLO Policy," 51.
[72] Brynen, "PLO Policy," 51.

resistance (ie: community medical support for the fighters, feeding them, hiding fighters and leaders, and caring for children whose parents were lost in the fighting). Aside from the PLO's political and military achievements during its stay in Lebanon, it also made strides in the social arena. During the PLO's stay in Lebanon from 1970-1982, the PLO institutions were able to blossom in all aspects. The institutions were able to offer social services, employment and military training to the Palestinians in Lebanon as well as offering everyday people grassroots spaces to assume a role in the resistance and revolution at the time.[73]

Brynen summarizes fears of the Lebanese elite regarding the Palestinian presence in Lebanon. In short, the presence of the Palestinian resistance resulted in more Israeli military action against Lebanon, and its presence, along with its popularity among the masses, actually posed as a threat to the entire Lebanese system, because it presented itself as a progressive, secular, non-sectarian popular movement with strong military force.[74] The PLO, and namely Fatah, attempted to reduce this with their policy of non-intervention in Arab politics and controlling different activities, but there was only so much control Fatah could have over the resistance activities and other parties, namely the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), which opposed this policy believing that Palestinians should have a stake in Lebanese and other Arab politics.[75]

On the other hand, relations in the Joint Forces were good and many Palestinian political parties had strong alliances with their Lebanese counterparts. The PLO's

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[73] Khalidi, Muhammad Ali. "Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon." *Middle East Report* 197, no. Vulnerabilities in the Gulf (November-December 1995): 28-29.
[74] Brynen, "PLO Policy," 53-54.
[75] Brynen, "PLO Policy," 54.

dominance over the Joint Forces of the alliance however exaggerated its power and the repercussions of its actions on the Lebanese population, eventually undercutting the LNM and bruising the reputation of the Palestinian resistance even among its supporters.[76] Fatah continued attempts to increase its influence in the local scene and as a result, its corrupt mechanisms utilized to rally support weakened the LNM and in turn required the PLO to assume Lebanese responsibilities as well. Over time the PLO's relationship with the Lebanese of the south was strained and clashes between Fatah and the Lebanese in the south further exacerbated tension. The PLO eventually disregarded its Lebanese partners in a sense and took strong leadership of the alliance and continued to operate strongly under the pretense of Palestinian security and defense from 1976 until its expulsion.[77] Though he does touch on the other external factors and the internal dynamics, Brynen's main lens for exploring the war is through the actions and positionality of the PLO. While he is one of few scholars who mentions the LNM within their study of the PLO, his ultimate intervention, and an important one, is to evaluate the work of the PLO and assess it during its time in Lebanon as a time of political formation and struggle. Brynen's work reflects the broad nature of the relationship between the PLO and LNM, particularly the relationship of alliance and how that helped to sustain left power and narrative for a long time in Lebanon, while mainly commenting on the PLO's socio-political power in Lebanon as it served the Palestinian people and struggle.

The literature on the time period at hand is abundant, particularly regarding the PLO, and there are many other works on the PLO that are not presented here. I tried

[76] Brynen, "PLO Policy," 66-67.
[77] Brynen, "PLO Policy," 57-58.

mainly to extract works on the PLO that discussed within it relations with the LNM as opposed to no mention of Lebanon or mention of the Lebanese right and Lebanese antagonisms toward the PLO and the Palestinians generally. The differing approaches on the PLO are reflective of different historical and politically debated lenses in which to view the Palestinian struggle. However, those who discuss directly the PLO, seem mainly concerned with the fate of the Palestinians, noting the Lebanese civil war, Lebanese formations or Lebanon, as backdrops or dimensions of PLO struggle as opposed to being constitutive of the PLO's operations and part of Palestinian revolutionary aims. In writings of the Civil War – the most compelling narratives that also tend to discuss the Palestinians as partners as opposed to scapegoats, even with critique of the PLO role in their affairs, focuses on the culmination of an escalating economic crisis and its relationship to social class. Both of these perspectives have at times included regional and geopolitical implications of the time period, how external forces influenced the war, and the stakes these external forces had in the war, as well as a focus on the Palestinian resistance and armed struggle in general. However, I found the history on the alliance between the PLO and LNM to be minimal in terms of function, dynamics, and joint experience, though most acknowledged that either some kind of relationship existed or that the PLO played a large role in the external and even internal affairs of Lebanon at the time. Those whose research focuses on the history of the PLO history may often brush over the Lebanese relationships and the strong role the PLO played in Lebanese politics, focusing more on the resistance against Israel, the institutions that were able to provide many more resources and services to the Palestinians in Lebanon than at any time before, and the

general shift in quality of life, hope, opportunity and success for Palestinians in Lebanon. While there are a variety of lenses that are examined of the Lebanese civil war, Palestinian resistance, and PLO operations in Lebanon, a consistent pattern arises in the more left, critical literature which is that whether the works focus on inter-Lebanese relations or on the Palestinian resistance's period of being based in Lebanon, both of these approaches gloss over LNM's partnership with the PLO minimally and in a matter of fact way, as if as part of creating a list of things that happened at the time, but any deeper prodding of the nature of the relationship is missing.

In fact, I have frequently been asked by my movement comrades for references on the Lebanese National Movement because they will stumble upon them as a formation in deeper study of Palestinian history or through their investment in Lebanese civil war literature, but are unable to find any in depth resources. And this is because there aren't any. The best resources I have found are very brief interviews with leaders of the parties in the LNM by the Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP) from that time (which I use in the introduction to outline what the LNM is). There is little other scholarly production that reflects on the organization as a whole and very little to discuss its innerworkings. This is part of what motivates this project, which is not a project that has reached its end, but one that is being launched through this dissertation, one that aims to open up as many new questions as it answers. So while my inquiry into the LNM and its relationship with the PLO and the significance of each formation and namely the alliance between the two is a focus of this project, I am aware of the many more holes that need filling. By choosing to focus on the Joint Forces alliance and a formation for the PLO and

LNM to come together under, I examine this alliance in depth at the expense of other contextual realities. However, it is the direction in which I chose to go as a result of my oral history interviews that did not aim to capture the alliance at first approach, but for which these interviews led me. As I critique these other works for missing the significance of this alliance, I critique my own work for not expanding to other dimensions of the Lebanese civil war or Palestinian revolution. As such, this is not so much a criticism of the existing literature as it is a mapping of how I found my entry point into a new, minimally discussed dimension of this question, for which I focus on at the expense of other potential focuses like those already written and others that, I'm sure, have yet to be written.

These interventions are important for the narration of and critical inquiry into Lebanese civil war and Palestinian resistance histories. However, as one MERIP article documents, the LNM was on the brink of victory in the early years of the war, though based on the existing literature one would not understand this umbrella front as being so significant. Contrarily, while there is a plethora of PLO scholarship, and substantial narrative of the PLO as a structure of resistance in Lebanon, there is very little mention of its interplay with the Lebanese left. The majority of discussion about interplay between the Palestinians and Lebanese during the civil war (which I do not discuss because I don't include these as narratives of the left) is through the battling between the Lebanese army and the PLO, furthering the scapegoating of Palestinians as the root of Lebanese problems and perpetuating the commonly disseminated discourse that Palestinian-Lebanese relations are solely antagonistic. There is little mention of PLO collaboration with Lebanese; only relations of opposition. This misses a significant dimension of the

landscape which is indeed collaboration. Collaboration, as I will demonstrate in the next chapter, is an important part of this landscape that I intend to incorporate in a remapping, because both the PLO and the LNM fulfilled certain needs in one another that enabled them to each play significant roles in the Lebanese civil war and in the anti-Zionist resistance in their respective formations and, more importantly, jointly. Mention of the LNM is very infrequent in the scholarly work on Lebanon in its entirety and the PLO is, perhaps, overstated. As such, I argue that there is a limit to this current mapping that domesticates the issues at hand, separating the Lebanese question from the Palestinian one as revolutionary goals, and thus eclipsing the relationality of both struggles and reducing the symbolic and pragmatic importance that their respective triumphs would mark: the defeat of colonialism and imperialism in the region. By nationalizing these struggles into individual nation-state narratives, we miss the complex intertwined relations that constitute resistance against the powers that be in Lebanon. As such, I conclude that the existing critical and left literature is as important for our understanding of the pragmatic implementation of revolution in the period as it is incomplete and I move for a remapping that aims to move toward the completion of the notion of revolutionary praxis in this moment and that accounts for regional and global sets of relations that are being combatted.

## Methodology and Theoretical Framework

This dissertation applies an interdisciplinary methodology by applying oral history, archival and cultural studies methods. The bulk of this dissertation is based on a set of

lengthy oral history interviews with active participants of the PLO and/or LNM during the years of their alliance. These interviews vary in position of the individuals, some holding leadership positions, others playing a role on the level of the popular bases, some engaged in armed struggle and others engaged in activities for community sustenance, such as child care or medical care. These interviews are the centerpiece of this dissertation and guide the frames and concepts used to situate and contextualize this research. I aim to situate the active participants of this struggle, and particularly those I had the opportunity to interview, as knowledge producers and, as such, am using their words to guide the knowledge. In addition to using a minimally structured interview format for oral history research, I am also engaging documents produced by the movements and the parties they house both in the written word and through cultural production. Particularly, these archival pieces are important for being able to situate the words of my interlocutors within the larger frameworks and discourses of the revolutionary movements during the LNM-PLO alliance years. My archival material comes not only from documents I was able to collect in Lebanon, but is also a result of ongoing research in the Freedom Archives housed in San Francisco as well as the Palestine Poster Project, a digitization project that is publicly accessible online.

*Methodological Frameworks*

When I was a student at the American University of Beirut (AUB), I took a course in Oral History with acclaimed scholar Rosemary Sayigh. The first lesson she taught us was that the Palestinian refugee camp population is one of the most overly researched

populations in Lebanon and pushed us to engage with other people in Lebanon. Sayigh, one of the key scholars on Palestinian refugees in Lebanon offered us a critical lens for understanding both the damage and complexities of researching this population and particularly their suffering. It was from her that I gained a more critical lens of violences that can be enacted on oppressed populations through research and knowledge production.

Eve Tuck's work, "Suspending Damage: A Letter to Communities," enabled me to apply Sayigh's critiques of the research that have for so long plagued Palestinian refugee communities that I have worked with, interviewed and am so deeply invested in, to a framework Tuck calls "damage-centered research."[78] This concept of damage-centered research offers conceptual tools for understanding trends in research about marginalized communities whereby a community becomes so overly researched that it becomes invisible because of the redundancy and singularity of narrative that ultimately only focuses on suffering as opposed to the pluralistic dimensions of the lives of those most oppressed.[79] Regardless of intent, the approach of damage-centered research not only reproduces the struggles and violences enacted on particular communities, but it also ensures that those other than the given community continue to benefit from this approach.[80] As Tuck states, "the danger in damage-centered research is that it is a pathologizing approach in which the oppression singularly defines a community."[81] It is

[78] Tuck, Eve. "Suspending Damage: A Letter to Communities." *Harvard Educational Review* 79, no. 3 (2009): 409-28.
[79] Tuck, "Suspending Damage," 409-28.
[80] Tuck, "Suspending Damage," 409-28.
[81] Tuck, "Suspending Damage," 409-28.

precisely this approach that not only has brought about high levels of discomfort to my communities, but it also renders impossible the possibility of adequately portraying the complexities of life or personhood.

As Linda Tuhiwai Smith states in *Decolonizing Methodologies,* "[i]ndigenous attempts to reclaim land, language, knowledge and sovereignty have usually involved contested accounts of the past by colonizers and colonized."[82] I am certain that this statement regarding contested accounts of history by colonizer and colonized reigns true for Arab history. One example of this is the predominant narrative of Leila Khalid. Leila Khalid is well known for hijacking planes for the Palestinian resistance and is deemed a "terrorist" by the West. However, when I was able to interview her about her own feelings and pride toward the time period in which these events took place, she was much more nostalgic and proud of her role in the Palestinian Women's Union (which included Lebanese women at the time) and for her work with Palestinian and Lebanese women in the revolutionary days than with any military operation she carried out or led. Rosemary Sayigh writes on Palestinians and other oppressed peoples in the preface to *The Palestinians: From Peasants to Revolutionaries* that:

> their story has been suppressed, ignored or distorted through the lifespan of several generations, and only with the rise of the Resistance Movement after 1967 have a few solitary Palestinian voices – Mahmoud Darweesh, Fawaz Turki, Fawzi al-Asmar – begun to penetrate the wall of silence. Now it is time that the anonymous voices of the Palestinian masses should be added to these names.[83]

[82] Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. Zed Books Ltd., 2013, 35.
[83] Sayigh, Rosemary. *The Palestinians: From Peasants to Revolutionaries*. Zed Books Ltd., 2013, 5.

Though Palestinians have resisted colonialism long before the establishment of the Zionist state on their land, it is the collective experience of the ongoing Nakba that created a distinct community and nation, which resisted consistently, but which was also crystallized with the building of national institutions – namely the resistance organizations and the PLO as it gave a role to all segments of Palestinian transnational society. It is through the collective experience of the ongoing Nakba that Palestinians emerge as a distinct indigenous nation within the Arab regional configuration. While the rise of structures (two decades after Nakba) gave the Palestinians international palatability, Palestinian agency and resistance to colonial formations have long predated the establishment of the colonial, settler state or Palestinian institutions. I believe this partially speaks to larger inequities within academia, which privilege US/British (English), French and German academic institutions and languages in the production of "universal" knowledge. These examples also point to the privileging of prominent figures as well as the privileging of text, particularly text articulated by dominant forces and is something I aim to counteract in my approach to this research.

As is evidenced, not only do the Arab (and indigenous) written canons get dislocated from knowledge production itself, but so do oral canons, which are very much an active part of institutionalized Arab historical memory, as is the case with other indigenous and oppressed populations. On the one hand, dislocating the canons of the native language further reproduces the subordination of colonized peoples, and on the other hand, requiring "native" scholars, scholars that come from the given community, to articulate themselves in a dominant European language further dislocates local,

indigenous knowledges. While I find this to be true, I also agree with Smith that while reading and writing practices can often be dangerous practices within the academy and beyond, it is also important for us to consider, critique, and inevitably engage.[84] I believe, though, that we have to be conscious of what is written. Is oral tradition meant to be documented through text? This is a decision that needs to be taken with caution, but I believe, if done with the frameworks offered by Sayigh and Tuck and with an investment in community-based decolonization, this mode of documentation and knowledge production can be greatly beneficial to the oppressed. If we don't write our own histories, someone else will write them for us.[85] Sayigh argues that her use of Oral History as a method for production aims to reconstruct pieces of the Palestinian experience (not a comprehensive experience) that attends to the more popular and daily trials and encounters of the masses.[86] I argue that this is not only constructive for providing a pluralistic vision of different oppressed populations, but I believe these day-to-day narratives from the masses play an important role in understanding how the dominant narrative came to be, in addition to highlighting what gets left out.

Thus, I find it productive to attempt a methodology of decolonization by first and foremost centering the indigenous and/or marginalized population.[87] By this I mean not only centering community needs, but also their knowledges. I am invested in bringing to the fore the knowledges and theories of my peoples and other indigenous and oppressed peoples as they have for centuries been living and articulating what is now beginning to

[84] Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*.
[85] Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*.
[86] R. Sayigh, *From Peasants to Revolutionaries.*
[87] R. Sayigh, *From Peasants to Revolutionaries.*

be articulated and critiqued in academia. By centering the knowledge of my people, I aim to reflect community agency and narrative, calling into question the assumed knowledges about them and the world more broadly as well as calling into question the understanding of knowledge production as a whole. I believe that developing praxis and documenting organic knowledge in a way that is not reactionary or necessarily claims to be representative is an act of resistance and offers prospects for decolonization. It may be a component of decolonial resistance.

An important process for developing the tools for decolonization in this manner is working to develop a new language that speaks to the colonized and that moves beyond colonial terminology. Dian Million's "Felt Theory: An Indigenous Approach to Affect and History" offers some insights on how to reconceptualize history and knowledge production in a way that accounts for a more people-oriented history and acknowledges lived experience, and not solely institutionally legitimated "fact."[88] While she notes the individual and communal difficulty and pain of reflecting on lived experience, particularly for First Nations and American Indian people, she productively proposes a debate for what social history could look like and shows how this collective and individual pain can also serve as a powerful process of communally building a story.[89] Million also writes that, "[t]o 'decolonize' means to understand as fully as possible the forms colonialism takes in our own times."[90] I think here that the process of building community narrative as a recognized history (popularly, not necessarily institutionally) can be part of a process of achieving her

[88] Million, Dian. "Felt Theory: An Indigenous Feminist Approach to Affect and History." *Wicazo Sa Review* 24, no. 2 (2009): 53-76.
[89] Million, "Felt Theory," 53-76.
[90] Million, "Felt Theory," 53-76.

notion of decolonization. By this, I mean that developing mechanisms for collectively understanding our histories through our own lenses, in all its pluralities, is an important component of decolonization. By thinking through intellectual and community work simultaneously, and what is needed to continue to build community narrative as Million suggests, there is a need to bridge gaps in language, both linguistically and discursively, to produce an overall understanding of the colonial condition in terms that speak to all. Taking up indigenous agendas is both relevant and necessary for understanding the Arab context(s) and its complexities in the contemporary period within an indigenous framework. Indigenous frameworks are particularly fruitful for examining the region because they attend to the settler colonial context of Zionism while also attending to how empire reproduces manifestations of colonialism that are ultimately still connected to the question of settler colonialism. Additionally, the resistance that Palestinians undergo everyday in opposition to settler colonialism in all of its forms is an ontology of indigeneity that is shared across indigenous struggles. In particular, I find taking up the concept of survivance by Smith as an important lens for shifting and expanding scholarly work on the region.[91] We can apply this not only to the Palestinian question, but also to the past, current and continuous reality of war and repression in the region, and particularly in the contemporary period of the nation-state.

Guiding Theoretical Frameworks:

*Refuge, Militarism, Resistance and Decolonization Praxis*

[91] Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*.

According to my interviews, the figure of the *fida'i* (guerrilla fighter) played a critical role in constructing a Palestinian national narrative and notions of inclusion or even citizenship to the Palestinian nation. As I explain above, particularly in the context of survivance and indigenous struggle, Ilana Feldman extends the notion of stateless Palestinian citizenship, explaining that "[i]n the absence of a state, to be a Palestinian citizen has meant to be a member in the national community—a community defined as existing in struggle."[92] Through this prime example of Palestinian national symbolism, a nation was forged and this symbol of the fighter can be seen as serving a dual role. On the one hand, this figure and the assumption of this role served to foster active agents of resistance by stateless peoples and popular aggression directed at the source of their oppression: the state of Israel and Zionism. On the other hand, this construction of the fighter as the national symbol formed a sort of ideal citizen figure of the Palestinian nation, a symbol that became part of the popular aspiration either to become or to support as their contribution to the nation, even though this nation was void of a territorial state of its own. As Owens remarks, "[t]hose most in need of so-called 'inalienable' rights – stateless persons and refugees, those without a right to citizenship – are in no position to claim them."[93] However, by centralizing leadership and institution building, I argue that the PLO infrastructure, which accounted for all facets of life and its fostering of a Palestinian nation, challenges the notion that refugees and stateless peoples are unable to claim their rights. While the Palestinian national movement did/does not fit into the nation-state system, its

[92] Feldman, Ilana. "Difficult Distinctions: Refugee Law, Humanitarian Practice, and Political Identification in Gaza." *Cultural Anthropology* 22, no. 1 (2007): 150.
[93] Owens, Patricia. "Reclaiming 'Bare Life'?: Against Agamben on Refugees." *International relations* 23, no. 4 (2009): 576-77.

ability to form a nation and engage in relations of power directly with its oppressor, particularly through armed resistance, empowered Palestinian refugees to assume certain levels of agency and forced outsiders to pay attention to their demands.

Incorporating a brief history of armed resistance in particular offers an example of a refugee population that, in the absence of any sort of vision to end the status of refugeehood or diffuse ongoing colonial violences, took it upon themselves to militarize, not only to protect themselves from Israeli attacks on Palestinian populations and camps, but also to proactively resist the continuation of the colonial process. Israeli militarism not only created the conditions of the Palestinian refugee, but continually threatened Palestinian refugees in their host countries (and their local counterparts in the crossfire as well) through military force, Palestinian refugees took it upon themselves to militarize as a mode of survival, resistance and agency and attained the necessary resources and arms through other Arab and non-Arab anti-US and non-aligned states as my interviews have indicated.

Maria Lugones describes praxis as the enactment of a critique of racialized, colonial and capitalist heteropatriarchal oppression as a way of living social transformation.[94] In other words, praxis can be understood as an embodiment of intentional resistance to regimes of oppressive power. By aiming for an understanding and articulation of grassroots theory and centering those producers and enactors of grassroots theory, it is possible to strive for a community-based praxis whereby resistance to oppression is facilitated in various strategic ways. While Nelson Maldonado-Torres

[94] Lugones, María. "Toward a Decolonial Feminism." *Hypatia* 25, no. 4 (2010): 742-59.

makes the case that practices of resistance and decolonization have taken place as long as colonialism has been implemented, he marks the decolonial turn as the post-World War II era of decolonial practices.[95] This decolonial turn marks an important shift in politics where global work across struggles became more accessible and apparent, while local organizing efforts, particularly in US metropoles, took on an approach that moved beyond class struggle to a more internationalist struggle, encompassing impacts of colonialism and empire on various nationalist and class struggles. I would argue that resistance and decolonial movements in the Arab world, also took on a manifestation of internationalist struggle, as is evidenced by Arab participation in the Bandung conference and nonaligned movement as well as by relations between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Black Panther Party, the American Indian Movement, and other third world fronts.[96] These movements exchanged resistance tactics and, according to my conversations in Lebanon, the PLO or individual Palestinian parties offered guerrilla training to these movements who made their way to Lebanon during the Lebanese Civil War to join the anti-Zionist armed struggle. It marks a concrete shift toward engagement across struggles and the taking up of global processes of racialization. Maldonado-Torres defines decolonization as not only referring to:

> … the critique of and effort to dismantle neo-colonial relations that continued and renewed in different ways dependency and vertical relations of power between northern and southern countries, but also to radical transformation of the modern/colonial matrix of power which continues to define modern

[95] Maldonado-Torres, Nelson. "Césaire's Gift and the Decolonial Turn." *Radical Philosophy Review* 9, no. 2 (2006): 111-38.
[96] Lubin, Alex. *Geographies of Liberation: The Making of an Afro-Arab Political Imaginary*. UNC Press Books, 2014.

> identities as well as the relations of power and epistemic forms that go along with them.[97]

As Maldonado-Torres works to mark the decolonial turn and its agents, he offers insight on what decolonization could and should look like, an understanding that I also wish to assume. He explains the praxis of decolonization as working to dismantle the colonizer, while specifically working to create a new society – as opposed to reverting back to a pre-modern notion of society.[98] This goal of dismantling the colonial system and creating a new society is central to working toward decolonization and has been explored by various scholars and movement workers. For me, the proposition of dismantling the colonial system assumes a colonial system in all avenues of life and as such, should be confronted in all arenas.

Palestinians remain today a transnational stateless population of refugeehood and exile with millions still residing in refugee camps. With this historical context of Nakba (catastrophe) and its ongoing repercussions in mind, and in the spirit of attempting to develop debates within both scholarship on Palestinian refugees and the emergence of critical refugee studies as a field, I hope to attend to the specificity of the Palestinian case through critical refugee studies, indigenous studies, and materialist frameworks to expand upon understandings of both the complexities of refugeehood that the Palestinian case presents and questions of life, lived experience, agency and power within the study of Palestinian refugees. I hope to explore the concept of militarized refuge(es) in order to contextualize structural underpinnings of Palestinian being.

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[97] Maldonado-Torres, "Césaire's Gift," 115.
[98] Maldonado-Torres, "Césaire's Gift," 111-138.

While "the term 'refugee' triggers associations to highly charged images of Third World poverty, foreignness, and statelessness," the refugee embodies a much more complex and contradictory way of living that "simultaneously trouble(s) *and* affirm(s) regimes of power."[99] As Espiritu explains, refugee life confronts a set of contradictions that serve to reproduce and disrupt statehood and nationhood.[100] In the face of power, and particularly state and imperial power, because of the relationship of refugeehood to these institutions, it can be deduced that practices of refugee resistance partake in the set of relations that produce power. States, for example, construct their national narratives and develop security apparatuses partially in relation to the status of refugees in that state.[101] If it reigns true that the functions of state nationalism and protocols are developed in direct relation to refugees, than the construction and use of fear and heightened security by the Israeli state can be seen as being produced in direct relation to their concerns regarding Palestinian refugees. Similarly, the relationship between Palestinian refugees and their host country governments can also be seen as co-constituting sets of power relations in very different ways.

I am particularly interested in fleshing out the ontology of Palestinian refugeehood as a state of refuge that has been made permanent as a central demarcation of the specificities of the Palestinian case. Furthermore, while militarism plays a central role in the construction of refuge, refugeehood and consequent resettlement, as Yen Espiritu

[99] Le Espiritu, Yen. *Body Counts: The Vietnam War and Militarized Refugees*. Univ of California Press, 2014, 3.
[100] Le Espiritu, *Body Counts.*
[101] Le Espiritu, *Body Counts.*

describes as part of her new framework of "militarized refuge(es)" in *Body Counts*,[102] I am interested in understanding alternative relations of militarism and the disregard for resettlement in the Palestinian refugee case. I find that this specific context works to both recontextualize violence and militarism as a process of refugeehood while simultaneously disrupting notions of an end point or final destination and (re)settlement for refugees, which also disrupts the notion of colonialism as also having an endpoint. Rather the Palestinian refugee question illuminates the ongoing nature of settler colonialism and the insufficiencies of solutions to the question of refugees and resettlement.

While processes of colonialism and empire are perceived as having an end, for example when the troops leave and the "war is over," Espiritu pushes to consider the process of colonialism and empire as being co-constitutive of the subsequent context of refuge, marking a continuation of reproducing power from the site of war to generations after.[103] Additionally, while in other refugee cases the empire's savior narrative is part of the institutional, ongoing reproduction of power, Israel and Zionism cannot so easily construct the same narrative because of their intent to continually disregard the refugee. Thus, the Palestinian case of refugee permanence disrupts the narrative of "finished business" and I find that the concept of militarized refuge(es) as outlined by Espiritu can be subverted (as she notes in chapter seven) to encompass not only the dialectical process of the development of the refugee position in relation to material, militarized violence and the subsequent routes and social and political ways of being in refuge by

[102] Le Espiritu, *Body Counts.*
[103] Le Espiritu, *Body Counts.*

imperial and military forces,[104] but by examining the permanence of the status of the Palestinian refugee, I propose that a potential extension of the definition and framework to also encompass the refugee self-appointed taking up of arms as a means for struggle against these violences and power structures for self-sustaining protection of the refugee camp and community and for resistance.

My central point in incorporating PLO history, and the history of armed resistance in particular, is to offer an example of a refugee population that, in the absence of any sort of vision to end the status of refugeehood or diffuse ongoing colonial violences, took it upon themselves to militarize, not only to protect themselves from Israeli attacks on Palestinian populations and camps, but also to proactively resist the continuation of the colonial process. As Israeli militarism not only created the conditions of the Palestinian refugee, but continually threatened Palestinian refugees in their host countries (and their local counterparts in the crossfire as well) through military force, Palestinian refugees took it upon themselves to militarize as a mode of survival, resistance and agency.

*Violence*

Fanon's strategy of production in *Wretched of the Earth* was to first diagnose colonialism through the lens of the colonized and for those colonized peoples. In doing so, Fanon provided an encompassing understanding of the functions of colonialism and, by selecting a specific audience, was able to engage in strategies for fighting colonialism. By engaging these strategies for fighting colonialism within the context of the PLO-LNM

[104] Le Espiritu, *Body Counts.*

alliance's work, I am moving toward my own working theory of resistance – the functioning tools of revolution and leading toward the path to liberation – which this section on violence works to define. In Fanon's work, he argues that colonialism is violent and must be met with violence.[105] It is important to note here that Fanon's notion of violence extends far beyond brute force, addressing social/cultural, psychological, internalized and embodied forms of violence.[106] If we are to seek a more complex understanding of the way violence is defined by Fanon, Lewis Gordon suggests that it is an error to equate violence and force.[107] The requirement for violence to be present is the linkage between violence and violation or, in other words, violence comes into play when force has been used to break a certain system of expectations, rules, rights, etc. and it is only then that force becomes illegitimate, or violent.[108] This notion is further complicated by conflicting or opposing systems of (il)legitimacy and partially is a result of differing notions of ethics.[109] Gordon discusses the ethical in the context of the self-other relationship, whereby one's own being is ethical and therefore by entering into an oppositional context, the other is thus unethical.[110] For example, in the colonial context, both the settlers and the colonized believe their land claims to be legitimate and thus, in these moments of conflict, one of these "ethical" and "legitimate" belief systems must lose.[111] It is with this conflict in gain and loss that a set of ethics is violated.[112] Within this understanding, ethics

[105] Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth.* Grove/Atlantic, Inc., 2007.
[106] Fanon, *Wretched*.
[107] Gordon, Lewis. "Fanon and Violence." historiesofviolence.com, 2013. Lecture.
[108] Gordon, "Fanon and Violence."
[109] Gordon, "Fanon and Violence."
[110] Gordon, "Fanon and Violence."
[111] Gordon, "Fanon and Violence."
[112] Gordon, "Fanon and Violence."

are not a solidified set of value systems, but rather are in flux, changing based on context and relations to others. It seems here that, so long as there is the negation of self/other relations, there will exist for the opposing parties a perceived breeching of ethics and thus violence by imposing one's own ethical value systems upon the other.

In turn, Fanon believed that the colonized will only be able to achieve the status of man (or personhood) through undergoing a process of decolonization, which is a taking up of violence.[113] Fanon's suggestion that the colonial regime is violent and must be met with violence is not specific to physical violence or armed struggle, but rather suggests an entire process and system of directly opposing colonialism. Our opposition to colonialism, our discourse, our organizing, our actions, our intellectual production must all violently attack colonialism. Because of an expanded understanding of violence, the dichotomy of violence versus non-violence does not exist. There is no form of resistance that is non-violent. In fact, Gordon argues, building on Fanon, that if violence is understood by different scales of ethics, and within the colonial context those ethics are competing, then those various forces are violent solely because of their presence.[114] In turn, Gordon reads into Fanon the notion that because mere presence is violent, that a process of non-violent decolonization is actually non-decolonization.[115] Decolonization thus cannot be undertaken without the presence and negotiation of violence.

In the case of Palestine, Mbembe describes this "contemporary colonial occupation" as "the most accomplished form of necropower."[116] Similar to the colonization

[113] Fanon, *Wretched*.
[114] Gordon, "Fanon and Violence."
[115] Gordon, "Fanon and Violence."
[116] (Mbembe, 2003, Pg. 17)

of the US, the claims to the colonization of Palestine were that of the divine. In short, God has given both lands as the right of both colonizers. As Palestine is the epitome of late modern colonization, as Mbembe would classify it, the colonial contexts of Palestine and the US are vastly different and span over very different periods of time. The colonization of Palestine was also built in a different and perhaps more calculated way. There was first a romanticization of the "return" of the Jews to Palestine as "a land without people for a people without a land," a land in which the Jews had the duty to cultivate to "make the desert bloom."[117] The Zionist movement is a specific type of colonization in which the formation of an ideological national identity was intrinsic to its success and the culture built around a religious, socialist vision[118] of Jewish nationalist Zionism was used to convince people that settling in Palestine was the right thing to do, the necessary thing to do. The "make the dessert bloom" slogan alongside the kibutz model, which built communities on different pieces of land where they would share in the responsibilities necessary to sustain the community (ie: farming, cooking, etc.), were used to mobilized Jewish socialist trends to settle in Palestine. However, this socialist kibutz imaginary was actualized on stolen and depopulated, demolished, and massacred Palestinian land. As a result, much like other colonized native populations, the Palestinian population became an expendable one.

The Palestinian population was and is an exterminable population, however, unlike the Native American context, the majority of Palestinians were not murdered. This may

[117] These are infamously known, popular Zionist quotes that motivated the immigration of settlers to Palestine.

pose somewhat of a threat as the Palestinian population has become a majority refugee and exiled population, which, in the current nation-state context, is labeled as stateless. Whether or not the goal is to achieve a state, the fact that we still exist and still remember what has happened and is happening to us is possibly the largest threat to the colonial project. This note fits into Lewis Gordon's argument that our mere presence as colonized peoples is violent as far as the colonizer is concerned and that our continued presence alone will continue to threaten the Zionist colonial regime.[119] With the unconditional support and funding to Israel by the US dating back to the establishment of the state, one would argue that US Zionism is an extension of a US imperial project that is to offer a base in the region.

*Cold War and Regionalism*

While the theoretical frameworks above are productive for addressing conditions of colonialism and prove fruitful particularly in relation to the Palestine question, the specificity of the Arab world as a region with particular proximities to global racial, economic, and imperialist politics requires attention to its temporal and spatial specificities. Kuan-Hsing Chen's *Asia as Method: Toward Deimperialization* is an insightful contextualization and analysis of the historical processes of colonialism and post-war, cold war presences for situating the contemporary period of globalization as continual and co-constitutive processes that set the backdrop for questions of contemporary social and political life and subjectivity. Chen sets up this context not only to make an intervention regarding the importance of thinking through these histories

[119] Gordon, "Fanon and Violence."

together and presenting the different kinds of work and outcomes a project like this does, but he also sets up this context to more deeply understand and engage in processes of decolonization, de-imperialization and de-cold war.[120]

One argument Chen makes is that globalization, when thought of as a continuation of colonization, actually enables a type of decolonization that was not enabled prior to this new phase of neoliberal globalization.[121] He also notes deimperialization as a project that the imperialists must undertake.[122] The third process he argues for is de-cold war, which he argues is a mechanism for combatting the legacies and tensions that still construct contemporary life, a process that must be undertaken by all fronts.[123] Chen argues that these three processes must happen in conjunction with one another in order for a new world to really be made possible.[124] These three processes also reflect the various, overlapping contexts for which the Arab region is subjected. While dealing with Palestine requires a particular type of decolonization, taking up the undoing of both imperialism and the cold war, very vibrant realities regionally and particularly in Lebanon and Palestine, directly combats the various interventions into regional realities, past and present. Specifically, if we look at both material support and material impact of colonial, imperial, and cold war relations in the region, while the region's specificity reorganizes particular colonial timelines, all of these things function in harmony against organic local, popular self-determination. By taking up Chen's arguments that undergoing decolonization, de-

[120] Chen, Kuan-Hsing. *Asia as Method: Toward Deimperialization*. Duke University Press, 2010.
[121] Chen, *Asia as Method.*
[122] Chen, *Asia as Method.*
[123] Chen, *Asia as Method.*
[124] Chen, *Asia as Method.*

imperialization and de-cold war must happen in conjunction in order to work toward liberation, there is a productive process for resistance that works to expand and account for various positionalities and relationships to intellectual production as part of these processes.

One of the things I find most insightful is the way Chen mobilizes particular sites and locations in order to construct understandings and arguments about larger regional contexts and configurations. While I would argue that the Arab regional context is somewhat different from Asia as "ethnic background," his work enables moves toward more regional understandings in general and particularly in the colonized/imperialized/globalized third world. His term geocolonial historical materialism[125] also offers an interesting framing, imagining decolonization within regional political configurations and its messiness but also possibilities of mobilizing space differently in the third world as it relates to the project of decolonization. For Chen, the term geocolonial historical materialism refers to a mode of analysis that adds spatial and colonial dimensions to the historical materialist critique.[126] As such, he proposes a tracing of colonial linkages and languages and their transformations from colonial to neocolonial systems. He proposes that global capitalism is the unifying factor between nation-states that often serves to place colonialism in the past. He is proposing in geocolonial historical materialism that situating colonial history in the present and in conversation with capitalist neocolonial manifestations offers a framework for tracing the continuation of colonialism across geographies. By addressing spatiality in the way Chen puts forth, decolonization

[125] Chen, *Asia as Method.*
[126] Chen, *Asia as Method.*

can no longer be a nationalist/national independence movement, but rather something larger that attends to the spatiality and temporality of geocolonialism.

We can also deduce that Chen's notion of geocolonial historical materialism attempts to mark a framework for bridging seemingly disconnected or ruptured historical trajectories of decolonization. Through the historical materialist analytic, he is able to trace how the transformation of culture and subjectivity in the contemporary is actually linked to the geocolonial in the living present. He is thus tracing epistemological underpinnings of contemporary society through an analytic that tends to the various processes that have taken form since colonization on a global power scale. As such, understanding colonialism, imperialism, the Cold War and globalization offers a lens for understanding processes of power. This notion is intriguing because it proposes something really different in terms of pragmatic steps toward revolution from the colonized. It's not quite a pan- model, nor is it a nationalist model. I find this to be very productive for thinking through the Arab world as a spatial formation that includes within it Palestine and its specificities, but which also enables a linking of Palestine to a larger regional context whereby Arab life is shaped across differing national formations and different colonial processes that relate to and feed off one another.

In thinking through the applicability of the geocolonial in the Arab/Middle East region, I look to *The Myth of Continents* by Martin Lewis and Karen Wigen to think about regional configurations as false constructs of convenience and hold this argument in productive tension with Chen's argument that his three-tier liberatory model only works if implemented on a regional level. Whereas Chen argues for a required regionalism, Lewis

and Wigen argue that the false construction of regionalism actually impairs the ways in which we understand the world and flattens to plurality from within the region or various nations, thus ultimately serving those in power by falsely constructing an even playing field between colonizer/imperialist and those subjected to them.[127]

This tension carries a particular weight when examining the Arab world or the "Middle East/North Africa" categorization as the region is not quite Asian, nor is it quite African, because there is a particular cultural difference that both Arabness and Islam implicate that actually produces exclusion from the continents of Africa and Asia as opposed to being subsumed and flattened by them. In this scenario, while I believe that the limits of "continents, nation-states and supracontinental blocks"[128] are important to account for in a more nuanced study of geography, I also turn to Edward Said and Laura Nader to think about the Orient/Occident relationship as always already informing one another and dialectically constructing one another through an oppositional imagination because of the geographic particularity in which contact was enabled and ongoing long before other colonial geographies. While Lewis and Wigen note the geographic territories connoting the Orient as fungible, always changing,[129] they note here that until as recently as the early 20th century, the Orient specifically connoted the Levant region and its surrounding areas and historical languages known today as the Middle East and North Africa, linking this landscape as oppositional to Europeanness or Occidental identity and

[127] Lewis, Martin W, Kären E Wigen, and Kären Wigen. *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography*. Univ of California Press, 1997, 9-10.
[128] Lewis and Wigen, *Myth of Continents,* 10.
[129] Lewis and Wigen, *Myth of Continents,* 54.

markedly defined by the expansion of Islam.[130] They explain that it wasn't until the 19th century and later that India and further east Asia became locations of inquiry for Orientalists.

Through the constitution of the Occident/Orient geography as an oppositional one that became synonymous with East and West, while the West or Occident maintained a fairly stable definition, the Orient or East shifted and changed based on the West's construction of self at the time – in essence allowing part of Europe, ie.: the Soviet Union during the Cold War, to become a part of the Eastern and therefore Oriental imaginary.[131] Yet as the connotation of the Orient moved further into Eastern Asia, the *Middle East* was coined by colonists and given "quasi-continental status as an interstitial area linking Europe, Asia, and Africa",[132] and thus not quite fitting into any of those three geographies in which it links. This categorization, convenient for colonization and homogenizing a culturally, religiously, ethnically and politically diverse region through certain characteristics, namely Islam, illuminates the arbitrary nature of such geographic identities while simultaneously creating a singular platform for the ways in which imperial powers relate to the region.[133]

By situating the fabrication of geographies as a way to reduce the world into categories that ultimately serve the world's dominant hegemonies, while thinking through Chen's notion of geocolonialism (or *geocolonial historical materialism*), we can then delineate the ways in which geographies serve colonial, imperial and cold war aspirations

[130] Lewis and Wigen, *Myth of Continents,* 53-54.
[131] Lewis and Wigen, *Myth of Continents,* 58.
[132] Lewis and Wigen, *Myth of Continents,* 63.
[133] Lewis and Wigen, *Myth of Continents,* 63.

as a way to then both assume and push back against the geographical homogenizations in order to move toward a decolonial practice. In the context of Palestine and Lebanon for example, while there is vast diversity across these two small nations, the taking up of a regionalism, that may be understood as a construct of the west in and of itself, was also assumed to combat the west within this region. Therefore, while the construction of particular geographies might be colonial fabrications – even the Arab World, a term I use because I have yet to find a term encompassingly adequate for defining the region and it is how I wish to make my intervention at this point in time – the actualization of these regional geographic categories, as assumed for example through an Arab nationalist ideology, can be seen as a taking up of these fungible categories in order to fight against western regional involvement. It is assumed as a strategy to combat the west, to do as Chen advises, to decolonize, de-imperialize, and in some ways de-cold war, as opposed to being assumed in service of western desire in the region.

*Intersectionality and Transnational Third World Feminisms:*

In "The Palestinian Women's Autonomous Movement: Emergence, Dynamics, and Challenges," Rabab Abdulhadi defines the three images of Palestinian women as constructed by the Palestinian national movement. "The first image, the 'superwoman,' glorified martyrdom and nurturance."[134] The second image, the "fertile mother" or reproducer of the nation, drew on cultural heritage and encouraged having a large number

[134] Abdulhadi, Rabab. "The Palestinian Women's Autonomous Movement: Emergence, Dynamics, and Challenges." *Gender & Society* 12, no. 6 (1998): 655.

of children, preferably boys."[135] And the third image "conceived of Palestinian womanhood as a signifier of national honor. The nation, Palestine, was imagined (see Anderson 1991) as a vulnerable beloved woman, whose victimization by Zionist settlers was to be vindicated by Shabab Al-Tha'r, or young men of revenge, the name of a resistance group that emerged in the 1950s."[136] She constructs these images through a critical reading of Palestinian (and Arab) women's resistance history predating the Zionist colonization of Palestine through the 1990s. I will use these three feminized images, and particularly the first and third, to construct an analytical lens for attending to the role of women in the revolutionary struggle and how they were molded into sectors that performed particular types of gendered labor.

Abdulhadi offers feminist and intersectional lenses for situating the struggles of Palestinian and Arab women through two frameworks she defines as her modes for argumentation, which are "the feminist 'paradigm of difference' that recognizes diversity in women's experiences and acknowledges that these experiences are shaped by the intersection of multiple systems of oppression"[137] and accounting for "changes in the sociopolitical context as influencing and shaping the emergence, dynamics, and the future course of the movement."[138] Both of these lenses serve as important tools for exploring the question of Palestinian and Lebanese women within the framework of revolution and liberation praxis, and help attend to the nuances of gendered labor and gendered affect, or feelings of pride and accomplishment.

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[135] Abdulhadi, "Palestinian Women's Autonomous Movement," 655.
[136] Abdulhadi, "Palestinian Women's Autonomous Movement," 655.
[137] Abdulhadi, "Palestinian Women's Autonomous Movement," 650.
[138] Abdulhadi, "Palestinian Women's Autonomous Movement," 651.

Abdulhadi's work creates a narrative of how a pluralism or modes of resistance have been created as a result of a rich history of different conditions and sets of struggle and as such enabled different structures of organization to emerge.[139] Through this rich history in which she traces the consistent participation of women in struggle as early as 1921, she also notes the maintenance of Palestinian women in the movement to the lowest levels of power within the national movement and notes this as a reflection of the pervasiveness of gender in organizing political relations and opportunities.[140] She also note that "the multiplicity of discursive and action-oriented expressions of Palestinian women's movement were directly linked to the gendered sociopolitical context in which they acted and with which they interacted."[141] The way in which Abdulhadi discusses the role and participation of women, as well as their ways of reenacting gendered relationships, serves as a model for discussing the inequities of women (among a slew of other struggles) while also undermining the liberal and Orientalist notion of Arabs and Palestinians as uncivilized and backward, maintaining a cultural practice of a past time. This works to support efforts to bring in sociopolitical and geopolitical contexts in which material conditions are always organized in relation to context. Here she explains that "Palestinian women's collective actions were influenced by (1) a preexisting cultural context of gender hierarchy, (2) local conditions, and (3) international and regional developments."[142] Further, I would argue that Abdulhadi juxtaposes the progressive and revolutionary ideological rhetoric of participation in resistance as liberating for women by

[139] Abdulhadi, "Palestinian Women's Autonomous Movement," 649-73.
[140] Abdulhadi, "Palestinian Women's Autonomous Movement," 649-73.
[141] Abdulhadi, "Palestinian Women's Autonomous Movement," pg. 651.
[142] Abdulhadi, "Palestinian Women's Autonomous Movement," pg. 653.

showing the disparity between the rhetorical and practice-based inequities of gender and practices.[143] She notes that while Palestinian women were always active agents of political life and sacrifice for their people, that their participation "was not sufficient to alter the status quo in gender relations."[144] This notion informs the idea of women in struggle as particular sectors or tokens, as bodies and as performing gendered labor, as an insufficient organization of true liberation, which is a central aim I explore in this dissertation. By taking into account the ways in which "national liberation was [the] first and only priority,"[145] I aim to demonstrate the pitfalls in this type of prioritization as it relates to a more comprehensive understanding of both political *and* social liberation. As such, my exploration of women's participation and gendered labor aims to be a lens in which liberation can be reimagined. By calling into question the incongruences between rhetorical or theoretical and practice-oriented forms of revolution, I will attend to the ways in which a gendered discursive practice molds and reinforces colonialism itself, as opposed to fighting it.

The other point in which I wish to juxtapose this question with is the question of affective labor and affect as a mode for exploring organization around sectors, gendered labor and women's feelings toward their own role in the revolution, which my reading of Abdulhadi has already gestured to. As such, Dian Million's "Felt Theory: An Indigenous Feminist Approach to Affect and History" is once again a central point of inquiry for exploring the concept of affect in relation to colonialism. Million offers a strategy for

[143] Abdulhadi, "Palestinian Women's Autonomous Movement," 649-73.
[144] Abdulhadi, "Palestinian Women's Autonomous Movement," pg. 656.
[145] Abdulhadi, "Palestinian Women's Autonomous Movement," pg. 656.

accounting for affect, or feeling, as part of history[146] and I wish to engage this with the question of memory in the context of my interviews. This is another tool for engaging in the narrative of active participants as an opposing force for the ways in which that theory gets erased through white (male) academic scholarship of native populations and women specifically. By allowing affect to claim a stake in the narration of history, this complicates our understanding of the process of documenting history and allows for multiple histories to coexist. Additionally, critique of the "white man's narrative" of indigenous and colonial histories offers a framework for challenging our own knowledges and how we have attained them as well as offering a more critical lens for engaging in scholarly initiatives.

Chapter breakdowns

In 1970 the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was exiled from Jordan and established new headquarters in Lebanon, where they already had some presence and were negotiating through diplomatic channels around defining the terms of their presence in Lebanon (the Cairo Agreement of 1969). The PLO served as an exiled national representational body for the Palestinian people working toward the liberation of Palestine and the defeat of Zionism. At this time, Lebanese sectarianism was cemented and increasingly affecting Lebanese lives as a result of elitist, imperialism-supported control that was intentionally growing class divides. In the early 1970s various parties were coming together in an effort to defeat religious, social and political sectarianism that was structured and maintained with the support of US empire and Zionism. At this time, an

[146] Million, "Felt Theory," 53-76.

opposition umbrella organization called the Lebanese National Movement (LNM) was formed to challenge the power relations sustaining Lebanon through a secular, anti-sectarian, and economically just political platform. These two contexts converged in Lebanon and, as a result of shared political principles and interests, the PLO and LNM came together for a period of time before and during the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990) to work jointly toward the defeat of sectarianism, empire, capitalist rule and Zionism. It is the alliance built between the PLO and LNM, situated in struggles against Zionism, empire and civil war, that I aim to research and analyze.

This dissertation sets out to examine questions of revolution, resistance and liberation by situating these concepts and discourses within the struggles for Palestine and Lebanon. By exploring the joint-struggles between the PLO and the LNM, I aim to both document the ways in which joint infrastructure and decision-making was built as well as offer analysis of debates around the dialectic relationship of discourse and movement. During these struggles, particular discourses were used to galvanize popular bases and describe the movement aims. One of the primary descriptors of this period based on my interviews and observations is revolution(ary). As such, I aim to explore the concept of revolution as it relates to both on-the-ground work and envisioned revolutionary pragmatism during that time period as well as in conjunction with theorizations about revolution as praxis. I am particularly interested in looking at revolution through the lens of what Quijano names the “socialization of power”[147] and draw

[147] Quijano, Anibal. "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America” Nepantla: Views from South." Paper presented at the Ramose, MB,“Tranforming Education in South Africa: Paradigm Shift or Change?”, South African Journal of Higher Education, 2000, 573.

on his example of nationalist, anti-imperialist, anti-colonial revolutionary success as a notion of revolution, but while also attending to the distinctions socially, economically, and politically that the Arab world present.[148] Additionally, in the Palestinian and Arab context, questions of revolution are frequently tied to the concepts and practices of resistance and liberation – and specifically armed and popular resistance, as named in this context. As such, part of my discursive exploration will include the praxes attached to resistance as well as the aims created around the concept of liberation.

Chapter 1 – Remapping Revolution: Arab Ideological Currents and Anti-Colonial Alliance Building

This chapter focuses on alliance building as a concrete tool for revolutionary aims on two different fronts, exploring the concept of Arab unity and the discourses and actions that prevailed in this light. In order to understand the formation and dynamics of the PLO-LNM alliance, I draw on interviews with active participants in this alliance to document the formation of infrastructure between the two umbrella organizations. I illuminate and analyze the ideological alignments that were foundational to this coming together; those being Arab Nationalism, anti-imperialism and anti-Zionism. This chapter analyzes the meanings and subsequent actions taken under the guise of these ideological principles. It seeks to understand the discourses, political infrastructures and power dynamics of Arab Nationalism and anti-Zionism in particular to more deeply situate the work of the PLO-LNM alliance under the guidance of these frameworks and how those holding political power, like the leaders of Arab governments and movements, were using them

[148] Quijano, "Coloniality," 572-3.

rhetorically to garner support versus to engage them in practice. Through relations of post-independence empire I argue that the Lebanese ruling elites mobilized an internalized orientalism that positioned themselves as the status quo against their opposition, which allowed them to use Christianity and proximity to empire to deploy an anti-Arab racism that I argue the ideological formations of the alliance opposed through those ideologies, and particularly the assumption of Arab nationalism. I also argue that the assumption of ideologies in the alliance were flexible in order to bind these organizations together against common enemies. This chapter also aims to explore the framings and discourses of anti-colonial liberation struggle as a central framework for both the Lebanese and Palestinians and its differential application based on differing contexts: settler colonialism and nation of exile versus post-colonial, independent nation backed by empire. The question of anti-colonial liberation struggle is an important one because this language was used to bring together third world movements across the world who were fighting for liberation from colonial rule and imperialism that followed independence during the mid-20$^{th}$ century. I take up the concept of anti-colonial liberation struggle within the context of the various global, third world struggles for independence and nationhood, while I probe at the relationship within this framework between nation and state – particularly because, based on my interviews, this concept of anti-colonial liberation struggle was claimed to define both the struggles of Palestinian and Lebanese liberation though one context is settler and the other is postcolonial. Part of the assumption of this terminology is on the one hand to define the time period with the terms

that those of that time used, and on the other hand is assumed in order to create a working definition of it that encompasses these two structurally different contexts of struggle.

Chapter 2 – Popular Support to Patronage: Internal Power Struggle in Revolution

This chapter will also explore internal power struggles inside of the PLO-LNM alliance. It also sets out to explore power struggles internally within the PLO and LNM respectively, namely between the most influential parties and political leadership figures, in light of the Lebanese civil war. The Lebanese civil war was a battle between two coalitional fronts – one which aimed to maintain sectarianism and was aligned by a majority Christian, pro-western imperialist, elite right wing and the other, an opposition bloc made up of socialist, nationalist, and communist parties striving to end sectarian, imperialist and capitalist rule by elites. It is important to note here that the discussion of the Christian community in the Arab region is of a native Christianity and not one of colonial conversion (Christianity having originated and persisted in the region), and that it became a minority religion over time. Thus, the Christian minority (in part, and particularly in Lebanon) was targeted and utilized by western colonial and imperial forces to maintain its grasp in Lebanon through its religious relatedness, demonization of Islam as inferior and through its conviction of a native national bourgeoisie that the Judeo-Christian imaginary, that would include the Zionist project as well as Euro-American aims, was more connected to them than their Muslim counterparts of the same nation and thus more fit for power – in order to produce a sort of divide and conquer strategy for the maintenance of proxy power through the creation of a Christian political elite. This chapter begins an analysis on the question of revolution and movement work, but it also is aimed

at specifically examining power dynamics within the front that is fighting against power structures themselves. As such, this chapter is largely based on interviews and aims to link financial acquisition to decision making power and cronyism by those most powerful figures within the oppositional alliance – the PLO and specifically Fatah and Yasser Arafat, as well as Kamal Jumblatt and the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP). This chapter theorizes the question of dependency on political power and decision-making in relation to fiscal ties in the internal dynamics of the revolution, particularly through the lens of its active participants. I argue that while the PLO and LNM were supposed to play specific and equal roles in the alliance, both needed one another for legitimacy and capital which shifted the autonomy of each front to work on their respective struggles: the PLO working to fight Zionists across the Lebanese border and secure safety and livelihood for Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon while the LNM would work to confront right-wing Lebanese forces and fight to dismantle the sectarian, empire-backed Lebanese political system in order to rebuild a secular, democratic one. As such, this chapter explores the concept of dependency and its relationship to fiscal ties. This chapter argues that while the PLO needed Lebanese legitimacy to be a presence in Lebanon, the Lebanese needed Palestinian material resources, both monetary and military. As such, the main aim is to trace and theorize the shifts in internal alliance dynamics as a result of one person or group holding more power over money and other resources than anyone else. This development of fiscal power and cronyism is unraveled and highlighted as playing a major role in the transformations of sets of relations, offering a concrete example for exploring

some internal dynamics of revolutionary movements and highlighting the contradictions between discourse and practice.

Chapter 3 – Guerilla Matters: Colonial Violence and Decolonization

The chapter will look at the method of armed struggle as one component of the revolution both physically and discursively. This chapter will be based partially on interviews about military training and action, and it will also look at posters and pamphlets put out by the different fronts that center the importance of armed resistance as one of the frameworks of revolutionary practice that were present during the LNM-PLO alliance. This chapter looks specifically to how the PLO and LNM built popular consciousness around ideas of revolutionary practice and how they portrayed the importance of guerilla warfare as integral to achieving liberation. This chapter explores the concept of violence in relation to colonial subjectivity and the question of revolution. The interviews and archival resources will enable a theoretical conversation around the question of violence not within the dichotomy of violence/non-violence but rather by examining colonial and imperial violence and the use of arms as a proposed mode of defeating this violence. Because there are many academic research materials that empirically discuss the question of Palestinian armed struggle as a practice, my aim here is to do the work of more rigorous theorizing of Palestinian armed resistance, but also to offer a new reflection of armed struggle within scholarly works on Palestinian armed resistance by adding the differing context of the Lebanese revolution and civil war as a way to expand frameworks around the use of armed resistance as a mode of anti-colonial struggle.

Chapter 4 – Unsung Sheroes: The Backbone of Revolution

This chapter will focus on women and gender in the revolution by specifically examining two questions. The first aims to highlight is the question of gendered labor. As such, this chapter aims to comment on the gendering of revolutionary labor to situate gendered sentiments of this labor (affective labor) as a way to explore gendered roles and thought in liberation movements. This question of gendered labor continues the exploration of the question of sector-based organizing by highlighting the pitfalls of centering national or land-based liberation at the expense of social liberation. This chapter offers a critique of revolution theory and discourse through examining the role of women and the analysis of feminized and masculinized labor practices. Additionally, this chapter also seeks to present a more nuanced approach to women's labor by not only looking to labor as gendered, but also looking at revolutionary labor through the lens of pride that the interviewed women carry with them. As such, the question of affect as well as collective versus individual labor are important for offering a more nuanced analysis of women's and gendered labor practices.

The second question is to approach women as part of sector-based movement organizing, (for example as part of the union system within the PLO) and to situate their work as a sector and its contributions within the larger revolutionary movements of the PLO-LNM alliance. Many sections of society had been mobilized around a particular sector. My aim here is to call into question the practice of liberation, looking beyond discursive currents around women's rights, a framework that was perpetually used in my interviews to discuss the idea of women as being part of the revolutionary struggle. As such, this portion of the chapter will look at rights-based frameworks and sector-based

work in order to analyze the revolutionary aspirations and contradictions of movement that centers nationalism as the primary goal.

Conclusion/Contributions

The aim of this dissertation is to contribute to both the fields of Middle Eastern Studies and Ethnic Studies by offering new empirical data as well as theoretical re-readings of popular concepts and debates in both fields. By looking at the Palestinian and Lebanese movements within a Lebanese landscape, this work contributes to the documented history of Middle Eastern Studies. The alliance I aim to trace between the PLO and LNM is minimally documented within scholarly research (in English) and is an important moment for conceptualizing the different elements and perceptions of both the struggle for Palestine as well as the Lebanese civil war. While both have been written about extensively in their own respective contexts, discussing them in conjunction with one another provides a platform for new material to document and theorize, especially as a result of examining the joint structure of the alliance. The alliance between the PLO and LNM adds a dimension to the context of movement during the period when the PLO was present during the Lebanese civil war. This is particularly important because Lebanon became a spatial and temporal site where the convergence of various regional and international power forces came together and were confronted. By looking from both a Palestinian and Lebanese revolutionary lens, we gain insight about revolution and liberation conceptually because of the two different contexts of the Palestinians and the Lebanese as well as how they negotiated joint development and impacted one another.

As such, I aim to make interventions in both fields particularly around offering new and rich empirical data while also looking at this context to add to the theorizing in both fields of the practices of revolution, resistance and liberation. While for the Palestinians the formation of a state in multiple forms has become either a tactic or a goal of total liberation, I proposed that in reimagining our revolutionary narrative, we move our aims of liberation beyond the confines of the nation-state and toward a vision of decolonization that encompasses national liberation within regional aims to shift and diffuse relations of power that perpetuate and reproduce dominance over the masses. By focusing on questions of autonomy and sustainability in our resistance to settler colonialism and imperialism, and with the aim of becoming human in the Fanonian sense, we can rather integrate our nation and land into the larger regional aims of liberation from a context of perpetual colonial and imperial bombardment.

## Chapter 1

## Remapping Revolution:
## Arab Ideological Currents and Anti-Colonial Alliance Building

*The true focus of revolutionary change is never merely*
*the oppressive situations that we seek to escape, but*
*that piece of the oppressor which is planted deep*
*within each of us.*
*- Audre Lorde*

To build a (re)mapping of internal power dynamics within the socio-political landscape of Lebanon and on the question of alliance building for revolutionary practice, I engage the active participants of the Lebanese National Movement (LNM) and Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). In order to compile this narrative, I interviewed 14 individuals who were active participants of parties and unions in either the LNM or PLO in a variety of positions from leadership roles to members of the popular bases. These interviews were conducted in Arabic and English and transcribed for this project. I use these interviews as a means of constructing a narrative of alliance building, investigating the pragmatic tools and mechanisms used for building revolution and the limitations of the praxis of this experience. By engaging the active participants in their narrative and by approaching the political moment through the alliance per that narrative, I am using oral history as a method in order capture narrations of the past and narrations that my interlocutors were interested in divulging. Because I am not discussing the impact of the alliance on my interlocutors' lives today, but am rather inquiring about a time in history, I distinguish oral history from ethnography based on the time period of inquiry though they share methological similarities. I am using oral history not only as a method, but also as

a framework for remapping the account of this historical moment and creating a lens through which to examine this political moment. This framework of oral history is a means of implementing into English scholarly literature a narrative of revolutionary struggle and Palestinian and Lebanese history that does not exist in detail as a means of collectivizing the struggle and the narrative. I am using oral history as a framework for subsequent generations of the English-speaking diaspora to support their taking up of the movement in the subsequent generations while assisting in providing continuity of the struggle and with attention to some of the overarching and day-to-day questions that the Palestinian and Arab people have faced in former generations. I am particularly concerned with using the lens of alliance in this particular political moment in Lebanon to add a new dimension of Palestinian and Arab history that is understudied. I do so to offer a resistance narrative that challenges the more popular and depoliticized tropes that individualize and sectarianize the experience of civil war in Lebanon (including scholars like Farid El Khazen, for example, but also just in day to day conversations and reflections with people) in an aim to bridge both generational and diasporic gaps in existing literature and to politicize it. I find this particularly important and productive in a time where solidarity and joint-struggle are being redefined for the generation. By looking at the history that precedes us without the lens of alliance-building, we miss the political depth and texture of the history of the Palestinian struggle and other Arab struggles for liberation.

In my initial approach to these interviews I was perhaps looking for other ideas, like the perceptions and sentiments of Lebanese-Palestinian relations in Lebanon, because they are often discussed in Lebanon as antagonistic and I felt that to be a

reductive reading of Lebanese-Palestinian social relations. But upon commencing my project, what I found through my interviews was actually much more important: I found the narrative of alliance, named the Joint Forces, and was given a lens into this alliance through leaders, fighters, creators, etc. of different parties in the two movements that created the Joint Forces. I found this concept of alliance to undo this common myth of antagonism in readings of Lebanon and also found a moment of significant importance and pragmatism for the Palestinian liberation movement and for the liberation of the region more broadly. This story which I hope to highlight is much more in line with my interests of deepening our understandings of Palestinian and Arab histories, particularly resistance histories as opposed to victim-based or reactionary histories, re-reading and re-writing more nuanced and people-centered narratives, and to give insights to new generations of the legacy that we build from, learning from its triumphs and shortcomings. In creating the narrative of the alliance as part of this project, I use the sentiments deemed most important by all of the interviewees, thus defining my terms and topics/concepts of interest based on them. I argue that concepts or Arab nationalism/unity, class consciousness/socialism, anti-imperialism and anti-Zionism are co-constitutive principles from within the Joint Forces and that these principles crossed ideological lines to mobilize toward revolution and anti-colonial liberation.

As such, I will begin by tracing the basis of the alliance as organized around political ideology and the sharing of principles that shaped the basis of the alliance. This political foundation will be explored through the factors of Arab Nationalism, class, anti-Zionism and the Lebanese struggle in the country. These aspects are the most formative

political factors of the alliance, as emphasized by my interlocutors, and for which I will analyze in this chapter. These shared sentiments between the LNM and the PLO gave a strong ideological foundation for their partnership and the confrontations of the right-wing against both the LNM and the PLO further solidified this relationship on the ground. Though the different factions making up the alliance were based on several different political and economic ideologies and approaches, Arab Nationalism, class consciousness, and anti-Zionism, however conceived as important to the different players, was a binding factor in the alliance. Adding these political principles to common enemies, the alliance was formed intentionally. Consequently, I argue the aspirations to western proximity of the Lebanese Christian right and their imperialist alliances created a dynamic of internalized orientalism. As such, I argue that this internalized orientalism served to racialize the formations in opposition to the right and as such the assumption of these ideologies, and particularly of Arab identity and unity, in turn garnered a struggle against anti-Arab racism locally, regionally, and globally.

## Arab Nationalism and Class

During the 1960s and 70s, many Lebanese and Palestinians had very progressive and Leftist tendencies. The divide between rich and poor was growing rapidly in Lebanon, as Fawwaz Traboulsi accounts in *A Modern History of Lebanon.* Many Palestinians, as refugees, displaced, and occupied people with reduced rights also felt the consequences of class divide, especially those in Lebanon's refugee camps. With communism having

become a global trend at the time, with its different adaptations in different places, and because of the rise of Capitalism in many parts of the Arab world, feelings of oppression on lines of class were increasing for Palestinians, Lebanese, and other Arabs at the time. As such, whether on the ideological level or the level of experiencing daily life, there was a conscious feeling of these class issues and in turn Marxist sentiments. Though many of those whom I interviewed were affiliated with Marxist or Socialist organizations, sentiments of Arab unity were very strong at the time, so in many instances, though you find class analysis present, it was overwhelmingly contextualized within Arab Nationalist thought as opposed to staunchly Marxist thought. This in turn shows that the nation-state national identities were underplayed in many cases and conceptions of Arab Nationalism were prevalent in the alliance. While this is true, I also argue that both leftist and Arab nationalist tendencies present certain discursive and pragmatic contradictions that lead to conflicts in practice. This is illuminated more concretely in the next chapter, particularly in relation to the accumulation of material resources creating relations of dependency and patronage, thus reinforcing capitalism as opposed to diffusing power through more equal and unconditional distributions of material resources.

I base my arguments on the interviews I conducted with (former) members from the Fateh movement (Fateh), the largest and most powerful Palestinian party and a nationalist, mass movement organization; the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), a leftist, Arab nationalist Palestinian party (and the second most powerful at the time) that was created alongside others at the time as national manifestations of the Arab Nationalist Movement (ANM), which the PFLP leader and founder George Habash was

also a founder and leader of; the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), a Marxist party which was created from members of the PFLP who split off in favor of a more Marxist platform in 1969; and the Organization for Communist Action (OCA), a Marxist organization whose leader helped facilitate the DFLP split.[149] Though several of my interlocutors are of Lebanese nationality, many of them actually joined or were closely affiliated with Palestinian parties or their resistance organization wings at the time. This was a normal practice and though parties identified with particular nationalities and peoples from those nations made up the majority of the parties' constituents, it is not uncommon to find Arabs of non-Palestinian nationality in the Palestinian parties. This is true for a couple reasons. First, because nation-state formation was somewhat arbitrary and colonially imposed, and second, because Zionism was seen as an impediment to self-determination and anti-imperialist aims for all in the region, not just Palestinians, and literally occupied non-Palestinian lands as well as having a stake in economic and diplomatic relations with the ruling elites of various newly independent Arab nation-states.

As I interview Samira Salah, who was a member of the PFLP and an active leader of the General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW), she speaks about the outbreak of the Lebanese civil war and discusses the development and rise of the Left, how class difference and poverty were main reasons for the start of the war, and how the

[149] I would like to note here that these descriptions and histories of the parties were true in the time period in which I write about, and while they are still true descriptions or characteristics, for various reasons in the history following the time at hand, these parties do not exist or carry the same significance ideologically that they once did in the moment of the 1960s to early 1980s.

propaganda and discourse around the civil war later shifted to being drawn on religious lines. She recalls:

> You can say that in the time of the civil war there was a strong rising left-wing which played a prominent role. Actually, the civil war started because 95% of Lebanese were under the poverty line, whereas the remaining 5% led a life of luxury, which was the main reason behind the war. So, the reason was not Lebanese-Palestinian conflict. The war was of class conflict nature, but it took other dimensions; Muslim-Christian. I can tell you that in the eastern area Palestinian Christians were slaughtered. So, it became clear that it was not a Christian-Muslim conflict. It was clear that they did not want any Palestinian within the eastern area. So, matters changed as it turned to become a Muslim-Christian matter. (Samira Salah)

Here, Samira Salah argues that the foundations of the war were clearly drawn on class lines and shows that, at least in the beginning, there was no prioritization in the fighting of religion or a clash between two national entities: Lebanon and the Palestinians. The political and economic circumstances were the basis for disagreement within Lebanon. This analysis is corroborated in Fawwaz Traboulsi's *A Modern History of Lebanon*, in which he argues that inter-Lebanese tension was largely a result of various unjust economic policies that created a large class divide, leaving many Lebanese poor and only a small ruling elite dominating the country's economy and government.

In an interview with Fawwaz Traboulsi, an active leader and cofounder of the Organization for Communist Action (OCA) at the time and Arab scholar and intellectual, he attempts to deconstruct the notions of Lebanese nationalism and juxtaposes it against Arab Nationalist sentiments and implications of class, stating:

> Well first, globally, the Lebanese were split among the Lebanese Front (LF), which emphasized Lebanese identity and considered the Palestinian presence an infringement on that sovereignty and then, vaguely, the Muslim

> LNM public considered themselves Arabs and considered it a national obligation to support their Palestinian brethren. The Lebanese were split on how to deal with the PLO. This is as much as you can say, one supported, the others believed that they supported them, not because they consider themselves Palestinian, but because they thought they share a common Arab national identity, common interests, common national obligations, what have you. The Lebanese nationalism, as represented by the LF, considered the Palestinians to be traitors, considered the Palestinians to be aliens and called for the expulsion of the PLO, but those are not the Lebanese and the others are not the Palestinians. The Palestinians are, as any people are, of different classes, different groups. The armed and civilians are not the same, the rich Palestinians outside Beirut and outside the country are not the same as the Palestinian refugees, what have you. The leadership is not the same as the ordinary fighters. All those are called Palestinians so I don't think you can join them in 1 characteristic, at least in the sense that we're talking. (Fawwaz Traboulsi)

Traboulsi is making the case here that Lebanese/Palestinian nationalisms and sectarian and religious dimensions were not as relevant as class or other identities that grouped people together in regard to where people chose to participate. He makes the case that Lebanese nationalism was presented by the Lebanese Front (LF), which he notes as representing an elite class, and that, in the alliance, Arab nationalism had the most prominence. His account also warns of the mistake in essentializing or categorizing people based solely on a nation-state identity, suggesting that it is not the sole or most prominent attribute in shaping peoples' political orientations. Additionally, distinguishing the LF from the LNM and PLO in this way, along class lines as opposed to national lines, enables a reading of Arabness or Arab Nationalism as an identity also tied to class struggle. This is important because, while the LF constituency had among it families and villages of non-elite backgrounds economically, the reinforcement of the Lebanese nationalist identity created a perceived elitism that was absorbed by the constituency precisely by distancing itself from the Arab identity.

Fawwaz Traboulsi also explains in *A Modern History of Lebanon* that, contrary to common framings of Lebanon that center sectarianism and religious division as the root cause of all tensions, elitism in the country transcended sectarian lines. This is important to note as an extension of his narrative of not being able to qualify peoples' allegiances based on nationality. He goes on to claim that few families are actually in control of the overwhelming majority of Lebanese capital and the wealth was not in fact controlled by certain sects, but was controlled by certain families in different sects. This made the cause of the LNM for economic, political, and social change relevant from this class analysis more than from a sectarian analysis. However, the Phalangist *kataeb* party – a right wing, pro-western, Maronite Christian party – and the Lebanese Front (LF) were able to mobilize their constituencies, through the purview of Lebanese nationalism and protecting Lebanese sovereignty as well as Lebanese Christianity and the threat of Palestinians as increasing the Muslim demographic, to support the Lebanese nationalist approach that would elevate feelings of sectarianism and reject Arabness as an identity and as a nationalism and consequently also antagonize the Palestinians.[150] However, as Samira Salah notes in her interview, religion was just an undercurrent for class division – as to be a Palestinian Christian in a Lebanese neighborhood did not ensure freedom. As she states, speaking of the Christian side of Beirut, "… in the eastern area, Palestinian Christians were slaughtered."[151] This is important because, while the LF constituency had among it families and villages of non-elite backgrounds economically, the reinforcement of the Lebanese nationalist identity created a perceived elitism that was absorbed by the

[150] Farsoun, "Lebanon Explodes," 16.
[151] Samira Salah, oral history interview, 2011.

constituency precisely by distancing itself from the Arab identity. Regardless of religion, the Palestinian symbolized an Arab, Muslim, non-Lebanese and non-western figure, that could be enmeshed with the Lebanese Muslim domestic enemies, thus marking the Lebanese Christian the social class to aspire to in Lebanon and reading Palestinians, Arabness and Islam through an internalized orientalist perception.

This notion of internalized orientalism was highlighted in my discussion with Omar who discusses Arab Nationalism as being felt by the people within the larger context of imperialism and rejection of it. Omar was a young Lebanese man at the time of the war with paternal roots of a Shi'a family from the south of Lebanon and a lower-middle class Sunni family from Beirut from his maternal side. He was active in military action at the time and closely affiliated with the PFLP, a pan-Arab Marxist Palestinian organization. Despite the fact that he comes from a multi-sect context, or perhaps because of it, Omar moves beyond the sectarian analysis for understanding social tensions, evaluating:

> Subjectively, people in Lebanon who wanted a better deal for the region, who wanted its integration into the region, had dreams of [Arab] nationalism. But why did dreams of nationalism come? They came because cultural imperialism was being strongly felt. Cultural colonialism, cultural imperialism was blooming and you would feel that you were not worth very much if you don't adjust or adapt and the history of colonialism was something that had stifled Arab identity, so Arabism was an identity that was coming forth. I'm talking about the LNM and then the issues of justice, not with everybody in the movement, but those who didn't have it split. For example, SSNP split because it did not have a justice-based ideology. … Kamal Jumblatt truly believed in socialism, a kind of socialism as a pathway toward some kind of belief in justice, but at the same time also played the leader of the Druze, so he played on both sides. (Omar)

Omar brings in many intersecting political dimensions into the discussion under what he calls a justice-based ideology. He links the Arab Nationalist tendency to feelings of

colonialism and imperialism, which had taken form culturally, politically, and economically in Lebanon, Palestine, and other parts of the Arab world. The form this has taken speaks to the concept of internalized orientalism, which I use here to delineate the internalization of belief systems about Arabs and Muslims of the region that have been entrenched in European thought for centuries and for which the native begins to reproduce as racism against groups in their country's own population by rejecting that population's collective ethnic identity. Omar argues here that Arab Nationalism and/or Arab unity were forged to combat this imperialist influence and socialism or economic Marxism then played a role in economic justice across the Arab world. He bridges together these different components of negative impact on Lebanon and the Arab world under the umbrella of justice and makes the case that the splits that occurred within the different parties were resulting from a lack of a justice-based ideology.

Instead of lumping everything into one category, Omar offers a more comprehensive perspective on guiding principles that resulted in strong feelings of Arab Nationalism and that were used as catalysts to mobilize people. Among these root causes of tension are imperialism and class. These analyses are characteristic of the LNM and the PLO, the Joint Forces, those opposing dominant Lebanese elite modes of governance and social organization. This in turn demonstrates that, because the Joint Forces were aligning against tropes of colonialism, imperialism, and western cultural influence, those ruling elites in power in Lebanon, whom they were combatting domestically, actually endorsed imperial, western cultural influence as well as the privileging of the colonially drawn nation-state territories as national identity, as opposed to a pan-regional, ethnic

identity or Arabism. Furthermore, a connection can be drawn as one of Western imperialism's most practical applications is capitalism, so being an anti-imperialist can automatically connect this belief to a more socialist or Marxist leaning as the basis for economic reforms and as a main way of combatting imperialism. This connection between the ruling elite, western imperialism and capitalism reigns true as many policies were being implemented around major sectors, mainly agriculture and trade.[152] Policies regarding the control of capital and rising inflation coupled with a lack of social services and prohibitions of political freedoms and criticisms of the system increased social divide and domestic tension in Lebanon.[153] Because the deterioration of material conditions felt were being perpetuated by orientalist nation-state nationalist ruling elites, it seemed natural to the people subjected to these conditions that the response must be a justice-centered ideology that united disenfranchised Lebanese and Palestinians (and beyond) under an Arab banner while challenging imperialist policies that created an unjust capitalist society resulted in the inclination toward a socialist order. This is thus how Arab Nationalist sentiment and socialism or Marxism came to relate to one another and to be implied within one another in the regional context, though this did not always manifest in practice.

As explained by Yezid Sayigh and As'ad Abu Khalil, though the Arab Nationalist Movement (ANM) did not have a Marxist or socialist frame, by the time of the mid- to late-1960s and onward the ANM, and in effect the different parties that broke out from the ANM, adopted socialist and Marxist principles.[154] As Arab Nationalism or pan-Arabism

[152] Traboulsi, *A Modern History*, 158-169.
[153] Traboulsi, *A Modern History*, 169-174.
[154] Abu Khalil, As'ad. "George Habash and the Movement of Arab Nationalists: Neither Unity nor Liberation." *Journal of Palestine Studies* 28, no. 4 (1999): 96./ Sayigh, Yezid. "Reconstructing the

was adopted by all of the parties involved to some capacity, whether the parties were of Marxist, Socialist, Palestinian Nationalist, Greater Syrian Nationalist, Nasserist or other orientations, the binding factor to a large extent was Arab Nationalism and, by extension, socialism. This understanding of Arab Nationalism should help give context to the reason why these accounts about Arab Nationalism and Arab unity have largely been linked to class analysis and a left-leaning socialist or Marxist economic perspective within the Arab National frame. Similarly, Michael Hudson explains that the poor and middle classes had been drawn toward the resistance movement due to their Arab identity, stating:

> The [Palestinian] resistance movement had widespread popular support among Lebanese in the coastal cities, especially among the poor and middle classes conscious of their Arab identity. This support was probably strongest among Sunnis but also evident among shi'a and Greek orthodox. It was very popular among students and intelligentsia.[155]

Here we see very simply that an Arab identity and class consciousness were not seen as separate from one another, and that this consciousness gives support for the resistance against Israel. While this consciousness existed and became a catalyst for popular engagement in liberation struggles, it had the potential for shifting and taking on multiple forms.

While I believe the congruency in Arab nationalism and class consciousness to be true in this moment, I also find importance in arguing that Arab Nationalism does not inherently translate to socialism or Marxism. Within the context of Arab Nationalism or

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Paradox: The Arab Nationalist Movement, Armed Struggle, and Palestine, 1951-1966." *Middle East Journal* 45, no. 4 (1991): 619.

[155] Hudson, Michael C. "The Palestinian Factor in the Lebanese Civil War." *The Middle East Journal* (1978): 264.

Arab unity, while there was an agreement on the rejection of western imperialist capitalism organizing society, the mechanism of economic organization – as in confining the economy within Arab borders – does not necessarily negate a notion of capitalism or the building of an elite class. Rather, because Arab Nationalism never officially adopted socialism or Marxism (though many within Arab nationalist parties would consider themselves Marxist) this framework has the potential to enable the growth of an Arab bourgeoisie elite from within the confines of pan-Arabism. Arab Nationalism also has the potential for creating a kind of regional capitalism, in which a class of rich, Arab elites can exist within Arab Nationalist ideologies. Though this is a point I do not see fit to expand upon now, I note this as both an important lesson to reflect on and as an analytical tool through which to explore Arab ideologies and Arab left formations even and especially in today's context of revolt. However, in this moment in the alliance and through reflecting upon my interviews, I argue that Arab nationalism/unity and class consciousness/Marxism/socialism became necessarily co-constituted as main guiding principles for the creation of the Joint Forces alliance, and within these principles an anti-colonial, anti-imperialist stance was also foregrounded.

## Formulating Anti-Zionism within Arab Unity & Resistance

As is demonstrated above, Arab Nationalism and class-consciousness went hand-in-hand with strong Anti-Zionist sentiments and this connection, in theory, had a direct influence on the practical actions taking place against Israel. Although there were different

analyses as to why Israel and Zionism needed to be challenged and dismantled, everyone in the alliance was against Zionism and the existence of Israel.[156] Some believed in an Israeli plan for expansion of their territory to parts of the Arab world that extended beyond Palestinian terrain, others believed that stability in the Arab world would not be complete if the Zionist entity remained intact, and others simply believed in returning to Palestine and ridding the land of Zionism in order to do so.

During my conversation with Salah Salah, he presents different logics behind the Lebanese anti-Zionist trend and why the Lebanese chose to join the Palestinian resistance. As a founder and former leader of the PFLP, he held positions on the PLO Executive Committee and Political Bureau, and remains until today an independent member of the Central Council. When discussing Lebanese support for and involvement in Palestinian liberation, he notes different interests in the anti-Zionist stances within the alliance, saying:

> I think there were political and theoretical common points between the PLO and the LNM. The first is that both believed that Israel, or let's say the Zionist movement, from the beginning, was planning to occupy Palestine as a part of general strategic aims to create a part of Israel with borders from the Nile to the Euphrates. The Zionist movement strategy wants to create this state including Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and a part of Iraq, even a part of Saudi Arabia. This is the main concept of the Zionist movement strategy. So in this case, it means that Israel, when it was founded in Palestine, it was the first step to occupy more lands starting with Lebanon, or including Lebanon. … We fought together against Israel for the Palestinians to liberate Palestine and for the Lebanese to defend themselves from the Israeli strategy to occupy their land, this is the main common point of understanding.

[156] Salkind, Michele, and Fawwaz Trabulsi. "Organization for Communist Action." *MERIP Reports*, no. 61 (1977): 5.

> I think the second main point is that the Lebanese army from the beginning made a very big mistake. From the beginning they tried to face the resistance and took a position against the Palestinian and the Lebanese resistance. Also, in this case, the Palestinians needed to be supported by the Lebanese to defend themselves from the Lebanese army.
>
> And the third, in Lebanon, as it is now, there is a contradiction between two main forces, which is the LNM, which is leftist, socialist, progressive forces, and which is what is called the rightist forces; *kataeb* and *quwat*. The LNM were behaving, to change the regime. … At that time the LNM thought it was time now, there was a possibility with this cooperation between them and the Palestinian resistance. They believed that it was an opportunity now to change the regime to make a new regime, to be the lead of a democratic, socialist regime. This is, I think, the common point that helped to make this good relationship with the Palestinians. (Salah Salah)

Salah Salah is suggesting here that Lebanese participation in the Palestinian resistance and in the LNM was due to Lebanese interests on two fronts, for fear of colonial expansionist occupation of Lebanon by the Zionists as well as because the resistance was able and willing to provide the LNM military power in their internal struggle. He also suggests that the LNM was at the time where it was ready to embark on its own revolution and for the overthrow and rebuilding of a Lebanese system of governance that was revolutionary, socialist and democratic in nature, which also became a common point in terms of ideological alignment for Lebanese and with the Palestinian resistance. All three of these things contributed to the anti-Zionist nature of the LNM if we consider the role of Israel within the imperialist project. By default, the Western-backed Lebanese right, the implementation of capitalist expansion resulting in increased class divide and poverty, and Zionist aspirations to acquire more Arab land can all be connected to dominating power in the region which favored Israeli interests. As Barbee, a MERIP reporter, explains, the US and Israel supported any presence in Lebanon that was seen as strengthening the Christian right, which was in alliance with the US and, by proxy, Israel's

interests.[157] Thus drawing a clear connection between local right wing forces and regional and global imperialist powers, and validating the Joint Forces' orientation that any political, economic or revolutionary program that attempts to combat capitalism and imperialism in the Arab region must take into account the role of Israel in sustaining the structures they attempted to dismantle. As the LNM and PLO were both Arab Nationalist and socialist leaning, this was in their popular conception of the struggle and though reasoning may vary, anti-Zionist orientation seemed necessary for any revolutionary program during the time at hand (and I would argue that any revolutionary movement should continue to necessitate anti-Zionism as a principle, regardless of proximity).

Leila Khaled, a current member of the PFLP's Political Bureau and an active guerilla fighter during that time, discusses anti-Zionism through the practice of armed struggle for the liberation of Palestine. While there are many texts written about her legacy, in my interview with her, I aimed to understand how armed struggle, and the role women played, formed critical frameworks through which Lebanese-Palestinian alliances were forged. She offers here specifically Palestinian goals and discusses Lebanese participation as only through the channels of Palestinian political parties, describing:

> The Palestinian resistance with all its factions attracted large numbers, both Arab and foreign, to join their rows so it was normal for Lebanese people to join these factions in large numbers, whether as fighters or as a part of the organization. While the identity accompanying the Palestinian case was prominent as the Palestinian identity, this didn't exclude any fighter from joining the rows of the revolution, and many Lebanese did and were martyred under the name of a Palestinian faction not in their Lebanese organizations, therefore there wasn't a problem in this issue for the factions of the Palestinian resistance, meaning Lebanese or Syrians or whoever

[157] Barbee, "Interviews with the LNM: Introduction," 4-5.

> were able to join the factions of the revolution, and to this day, there isn't any deterrent for any Arab to join the ranks of the revolution. (Leila Khaled)

The way that Leila Khaled addresses the issue is through the resistance. Because the Lebanese and other Arabs and people of the world joined the Palestinian resistance, there was no differentiation in peoples because they were all fighting for the same cause. While in the US and elsewhere today there exist trends of identity politics as foregrounding movement organization, there have also been various Arab movements, such as this one, that have positioned different national subjects under the same banner for liberation. However, she goes as far as to say that any Arab can join the revolution ***to this day***, which proposes somewhat of a peculiar claim if we are to think more deeply about what revolution is today. I would argue that there isn't an organized, institutionalized place of Palestinian revolution today, though there might be different circuits of organized and unorganized, planned and spontaneous, armed and quotidien forms of resistance, and that those that are more organized and institutionalized among these forms are not of a leftist revolutionary trend (though at times some would conflate these actions as such). And additionally, if we are to examine questions of revolution within today's Arab context, there is much divide across all political orientations including, and perhaps most tensely among today's Arab left of what, for example, has been revolutionary movement or the subject of overthrow in light of the Arab uprising. While Khaled's comments here may dilute different dynamics at play and present an oversimplification of why the Lebanese or the alliance would want to resist, it does introduce a new dynamic of crossover between nationalities and parties, further strengthening the notion of communion between Arab Nationalist and anti-Zionist currents.

Omar situates for me why he and many put Palestine and anti-Zionism ahead of an internal Lebanese battle at the beginning and compares it to the struggle within Lebanon to prove it a priority, at least from his perspective. He brings in elements of identity based on politics, gesturing more toward what Angela Davis has discussed as "basing the identity on politics rather than the politics on the identity" (Lowe, Lloyd, et al., pg. 18)[158], which shed light on the reasoning behind Lebanese nationalism not being of main importance for the LNM. He explains:

> There was tremendous [support], in the first couple of years of war, we … put Palestine before Lebanon. A lot of people started like this, a lot of people changed later, because they could not disassociate the actions of some factions or some individuals, or sometimes all in the PLO and the LNM with the cause itself. I think, by and large, if you think you can disassociate Lebanese politics from the Zionist project, you got it wrong somewhere. And if you feel that you can address the Zionist project from Lebanese politics, then you're wrong too. The Zionist project has to be addressed through the Palestine issue. Now, how you address it, what does it take in terms of changes in the country's realm, that's extremely important. But we need to resolve the Palestine issue and the Palestine issue is our bridge to removing the Zionist project. What needs to be removed in this region is the Zionist project. … It's an Arab issue, it's a regional issue, and it's going to continue as a colonial entity to poison all the region around it and also because it serves as the bully of the Americans here and also as an aircraft carrier in the region here to scare and to bully; the enforcer. So, that's why it needs to be that way.
>
> During the civil war, I don't like to call it a civil war, because also we fought by proxy with the Israeli project, we did not fight only to get control. … Every time we directed a weapon, it was against the Israelis or against their proxies here. That's very important. (Omar)

Omar brings in some new trajectories. Though his response at times reflects personal analyses, he tracks when and how broader sentiments were shared with him. He had and

[158] Lowe, Lisa, David Lloyd, Stanley Fish, and Fredric Jameson. *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital.* Duke University Press, 1997.

still has an unwavering priority of freeing the region of the Zionist project and this is what shaped his participation in the war. The war, as he participated in it, was not a Lebanese war, it was a war against Zionism and that was the armed resistance he was engaged in and he also suggests that this was how most of the armed resistance was channeled, not against the Lebanese Front, but against the Zionist entity and its local proxies. This account reframes the narrative of civil war in Lebanon to something much larger than that, a war against colonial, imperialist and Zionist hegemonies in the region in all its forms. This is a significant intervention that Omar is making because, where there are many various religious sects in the region that often also take on the foundations of political formation, tensions and clashes thus get classified in these categories as sectarian. This categorization is often implied in internal tensions and is why certain contexts regionally get deemed as civil war and sectarianism (as we also see, for example, in Iraq post-2003 invasion or in Syria today). Omar is arguing that we must see the war rather as a war against colonialism and regional and global imperialist powers as opposed to seeing it as a Christian vs. Muslim, or right vs. left, domestic Lebanese "civil" war. He argues that the notion of war was aimed not at a certain Lebanese sect, but rather at Israeli/US proxies in Lebanon, thus expanding the resistance in Lebanon to that of a global struggle manifesting locally. Thus, the permissibility of the Palestinian resistance organizations to fight the Israelis from Lebanon through the Cairo Agreement enabled the prioritization of the battle against colonial, Zionist powers.[159] This does not mean that Lebanese were not caught in the crossfire or that there were not armed confrontations between Lebanese

[159] Hudson, "The Palestinian Factor," 264-266.

and Palestinians actors, but the reason for the resistance was to fight Zionism, and this is something that, at least in the beginning, many Lebanese found of great importance.

Another very important factor that Omar highlights is the idea that Lebanon is not a cause, but a condition, that Arab politics cannot be disconnected from Zionism, and that Zionism must be challenged through the Palestine cause. The important thing to understand here is Omar's connection of solving Arab problems with ending Zionism and that any single Arab issue (Lebanon in this case) cannot be solved without focusing first on the Palestinian cause and removing Zionism from the region. Michael Hudson similarly analyzed that "it has become almost a cliché to say that a solution to the Lebanese problem requires a solution to the Palestinian problem; yet it is true, and one of the few things that all parties to the conflict in Lebanon agreed upon."[160] So, I underscore the Lebanese opposition/LNM struggles as indivisible to fighting alongside the Palestinian resistance, and one of the main contexts for why the LNM and PLO ideologically aligned and joined in struggle, forming one Joint Forces infrastructure and shared resources to fight one common battle across multiple terrains. Furthermore, I move for a reframing of this time from one of civil war to a war of liberation – a war with the aim of combatting hegemonic forces to pervade political, social and cultural practices in and around Lebanon and Palestine.

The conclusions drawn here are particularly indicative in terms of the multiplicity of understandings for why anti-Zionism and, in turn, resistance was so important,

[160] Hudson, "The Palestinian Factor," 277.

particularly for the Lebanese. The different elements include interests in gaining Palestinian support (which will be discussed later), defense and fear of occupation of Lebanon, the automatic assumption of anti-Zionist sentiment because of the Arab identity, and regional political implications. They offer a diversity of perspectives regarding why anti-Zionism was such an important principle during the war.

Lebanese Internal Politics

The above principles of anti-Zionism, Arab nationalism, and class consciousness and socialism framed the LNM's support for the PLO's armed resistance operations against Israel from Lebanese terrain. The Lebanese right-wing's opposition to these sentiments and alliance with Israel played a role in shaping internal Lebanese politics directly or indirectly, and as such, these opposing sentiments played a role in facilitating alliance between the LNM and the PLO.[161] Aside from these common ideological groundings that were opposed by the right-wing in Lebanon, the LNM also saw in the PLO strong military resources that would allow for the LNM to change the balance of power with the ability to confront the right-wing militants who were, without the support of the PLO, stronger than them. This would allow for the LNM to gain the leverage inside Lebanon that it needed to implement their strategy for overthrow, which hoped to completely restructure the Lebanese political and economic system.[162]

[161] Brynen, "PLO Policy," Pg. 51/ Shiblak, Abbas. "Palestinians in Lebanon and the PLO." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 10, no. 3 (1997): 266.
[162] Traboulsi, *A Modern History*, 202.

In my interview with Traboulsi, he gets a bit deeper into the Lebanese political dynamics and the PLO's role in it, stating:

> Fatah's main ideology was non-intervention in the internal affairs of the Arab countries but what became common among them was the fact that those who were against Lebanese political and social reforms were the same group or the same parties that raised the question about Palestinian armed resistance in Lebanon, mainly the coalition of right-wing parties which were majority Christian, the Phalangists, at that time called the Lebanese Front (LF), an alliance of mainly Christian right-wing parties. So that was the defense of the right of the Palestinians to exist in Lebanon, the right of the PLO to operate from Lebanese territory became a common concern. (Traboulsi)

Traboulsi addresses how Fatah, though not interested in intervening in the affairs of Arab countries, could be and was accepted into the LNM for its opposition to the Lebanese Forces, though the motivations behind this opposition differed between the LNM and the PLO. Though Fatah had the strongest hand in the PLO and in military affairs, the "rejectionists," a coalition of leftist and Arab Nationalist Palestinian factions and militias headed by the PFLP actually had a different position on Lebanese affairs.[163] According to Hudson, by fall of 1975 "the rejectionist groups became involved on the side of the Lebanese National Movement."[164] In my interview with Salah Salah, he did discuss the rejectionists, explaining that *jebhat al-rafed*, the Rejectionist Front, headed by the PFLP, formed following a PLO 1974 decision for a new political program, *al-bernamej al-marhali*, which shifted its approach to liberation to a program of different phases. Salah mentions that the Rejectionists formed "to put pressure, not to clash against Fateh; to put pressure on Fateh to change this program, and it happened."[165] The formulation of this

[163] Hudson, "The Palestinian Factor," 271.
[164] Hudson, "The Palestinian Factor," 271.
[165] Salah Salah, oral history interview, 2011.

explanation, while not touching on the above mentioned, is an important lens for examining the prioritization of organization through difference. While the PFLP, DFLP, and other Palestinian leftist and Arab nationalist parties had disagreement with the most powerful party, Fateh, in practice they mobilized to produce internal debates that would shift how the umbrella structure, programming and discourse would function as opposed to deviating from the Palestinian national narrative and structure of the PLO. This is an important pragmatic lesson because it reflects the investment in one cohesive, national political project and struggle, and the discipline and commitment to each other and that project necessary for its sustenance in the face of it being a target or different practices of surveillance and infiltration (which all movements challenging the powers that be are at risk across place and time). That political difference be something of intense internal debate with the aim of working through it with all of the constituents in mind, as opposed to public debate and criticisms that divide and can be mobilized to weaken the movement is an important liberation praxis that takes seriously the aim of victory.

One of the first interviews I conducted was from a woman, Hasna Mikdashi, who had a very interesting story. She is a Lebanese shi'a woman from the south of Lebanon whose family hosted a Palestinian family in 1948 after the nakba and who later became a member of Fateh. She shares her perspective on the importance of the alliance in the Lebanese scene, saying:

> The LNM saw the PLO as a main support against the protagonists, which is the Phalange *Kataeb* party, which was calling for almost partition of Lebanon or taking over the leadership of Lebanon. And the national movement more or less … believed in Arab unity, even the Marxists believed in Arab unity. And they saw that the PLO will be a main …

> framework or channel to do that and they believed that the liberation from Israeli hegemony and occupation will be more accessible if you get the support of militants, of those who are willing to fight, or those who have access to weapons, and I think the PLO was the only answer then." (Hasna Mikdashi)

Here Mikdashi introduces the idea that the PLO provided a framework or channel for strengthening the belief in Arab unity and for liberation from Zionist influence and presence in Lebanon. Furthermore, the idea that the LNM rejected the partition of Lebanon, being called for by the Phalangists, partially due to the belief in Arab unity can be extracted from this passage, thus offering another reason why the PLO could play an important role in the Lebanese political scene. She gestures toward the idea that the type of material power that the PLO could provide in the form of weapons and militancy was necessary for the LNM to have a chance at combatting the push by the *kataeb* to partition Lebanon along sectarian lines and vie for leadership. This notion of the need for the type of support the PLO could offer, even through the shared political principles and values, demarcates the potential for an inequality in the internal power relations of the Joint Forces.

As I interview Samah Idriss, my youngest interlocutor who was a teenage member of the PFLP who also participated in military training and action at the time, presents the alliance as being used to transform internal Lebanese politics, saying:

> The thing is that there was a Lebanese problem. A class problem, a sectarian problem inside Lebanon, and those impoverished Lebanese, be they in the left movement or the Sunni and Shi'a population, found in the Palestinians an army for them. So the Palestinian cause was more or less a Lebanese issue rather than the Lebanese helping the Palestinians go back to their land. (Samah Idriss)

Idriss addresses here the idea that the LNM and the broader Muslim populations from multiple sects weren't actually interested in the Palestinian cause but used this position to fight internal class and sectarian issues in Lebanon. This notion that the Lebanese were using the Palestinians purely for their own gains is an important notion because, as is my experience in Lebanon, support for the Palestinians is rhetorically widespread and those that engage this rhetoric will often position their support through their sectarian background. For example, Sunni's may express their support as fellow Sunni Muslim brothers and sisters or Shi'a's may express their support as part of the resistance in the south of Lebanon where they have a stronghold. However, the rhetoric around Palestinian support is not always met with action and can be received as lip service more than anything. At the same time, Idriss makes it seem as though the LNM-PLO relationship was purely transactional from the Lebanese perspective and that the relationship did not extend politically beyond the need for an arm. This is one sentiment assumed in the reflections on PLO-LNM relations and perhaps as a former member of a Palestinian organization, this is the sentiment that he holds in terms of the partnership, but from the other accounts, it seems that, though the Lebanese had their own interests in forming the alliance and they did need the PLO for political leverage against the right-wing in internal Lebanese politics, there was a genuine sentiment and belief in the Palestinian struggle, Arab unity, and anti-Zionism – and these things being intrinsically tied to a free and democratic[166] Lebanon.

[166] I cannot delve into the details of the meaning of democracy in the Arab world, but in order to situate the concept of democracy regionally and understand it on the region's terms, we must not look to the US to understand democracy (as it is a certain type, if you want to call it democracy at all) but rather consider

Omar narrates to me the nature of the alliance in regard to internal Lebanese politics. He delves into the details of class and sect dynamics internally, offering a more nuanced approach to the sectarian or religious climate that is so often used to brand the Civil War. He also historicizes the different actors in Lebanese politics, explaining:

> The conservative, reactionary forces in Lebanon represented by the Phalangists and those more extreme than the Phalangists, also had an agenda. The agenda was to gain control over the country and they represented 1 sect, you know, plus its affiliates. The rich Muslims were very close to the *Kata'eb*. But generally, for historical reasons I can't get into, sectarian segregation took place at that time and also fit with the nationalist idea. It is also true that the Maronites were very important in the Arab renaissance, but the Maronites post-mandate were not the same as the Maronites pre-mandate. And there is no such thing as THE Maronites. There is the political Maronitism, which wanted to retain control and it rather be affiliated with the Christian West, which would protect it. Their affiliation with the West was mainly for protection reasons as opposed to being connected with the Arabs where they would feel as a minority. There was also a mention of racism toward the Arabs, etc. (Omar)

Here Omar discusses Lebanese politics from the lens of a historical Arab approach and differentiates between politics and sects. Omar adds a dimension of racism toward Arabs by the Maronites and parties affiliated with the Christian West and this racism proved to be a bonding factor that made natural and strengthened the alliance on Arab Nationalist pretenses. It is telling that he mentions that in the history of the Arab renaissance, Arab being the key word here, the Maronites played a strong role in the history. However, at this time they were shown not only distancing themselves from an Arab identity but also extending racism to those they identified as Arabs. The Maronites tried to construct a

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democracy within the regional landscape of post-independence regimes that were either imperialist backed or proclaiming an Arab nationalism, but all while being infrastructurally build through militarism and intelligence as state mechanisms for social control for those in power to remain there.

Lebanese national identity and culture, with support from the West, that would be controlled by them, or a partition of Lebanon so that they would have at least partial control as Christians – whom were once a majority in Lebanese territory, but who are a religious minority in the region. This bout of anti-Arab racism and distancing of Arabness from the Maronite Christians who once played an intrinsic role in what Omar calls the Arab renaissance, symbolizes how deeply entrenched the roots of colonialism that serve to divide societies are. Particularly by using religious similarity and difference, the Maronites have positioned themselves closer to empire and have perpetuated orientalist beliefs about a people that are from their same regions by internalizing colonial racism toward Arabs – or internalized orientalism. The last notion here that he implies is a relationality between class, sect and power. The recurring implication that rich Lebanese Muslims had close relations with the ruling Maronite Phalangist party and its allies further reinforces the idea that class lines were stronger factors in how people aligned than were sectarian lines.

There were clear ideological differences present on the ground: Lebanese nationalism and the retention of the confessional system[167] versus secular, democratic political and economic reforms that held ideals of Arab unity and anti-imperialist sentiment. It was very natural, as Omar stated, for the Palestinians to ally with the LNM

[167] A government system that was set up post independence and with the use of outdated social surveys that maintain that Christians are still a majority in Lebanon. This confessionalist system defines exact numbers of seats and exact positions that each sect is allowed to hold control over. For example, the president must be Maronite Christian, the Prime Minister must be Sunni Muslim and the Parliament Chairperson must be Shi'a Muslim – and the Maronites and Sunnis have the highest number of seats of all the sects. This is part of the full picture of the Lebanese confessionalist government system that the LNM was trying to dismantle.

even within internal politics based on ideological lines. What this section highlights is the perception of the Lebanese right by the alliance and why the alliance, and not just the LNM, proved important in the internal politics of Lebanon. Additionally, this section serves to bring nuance to the idea of civil war on sectarian lines and begins to narrate perceptions of internal dynamics of dependency and opportunism. As Salah Salah compared to me, the LNM's aims were "to change the regime like what is going on now in Tunisia and Egypt, a mass movement, a people's movement to change the regime."[168] This comment reflects the purpose I hope to enmesh into this project, which is that the lessons of this moment in Lebanon, and the necessitation of alliance building contextually, are relevant for our current Arab regional reality and the nuanced reading of ideology and critique actually serve an important role today. Some of the ideological contradictions I highlight, particularly around the concept of Arab nationalism and socialism as being co-constitutive, but not necessarily so, is indicative not only of the mobilization of ideology in the 1970s, but also reigns true in today's context and that of the Arab uprising – in particular the possibility of the two concepts contradicting one another as being a current reality. In this sense, an in depth reading of Arab ideologies is necessary for fully understanding and participating in regional politics and Palestinian politics, especially at a time and place where attempts to mobilize the struggle for Palestine is often in direct relationality to US centrism and it is actually moving further and further away from the context in which Palestine is actually situated and the political formations that continue to

[168] Salah Salah, oral history interview, 2011.

have material impacts on the lives of Palestinians in Palestine, in the refugee camp, and in exile.

By creating this narrative through oral history interviews, I have begun to do the work of (re)mapping the historical account of this time to include within it a more in depth and internal account of the formation of the Joint Forces, the building of alliance between Palestinian and Lebanese self-proclaimed revolutionary formations. Through the use of oral history as both method and framework, I have introduces into English scholarly production a new narrative of the period of Palestinian revolution or Lebanese civil war, by discussing them in tandem and through the frameworks of the Joint Forces, thus looking more in depth to the sets of relations that become apparent only when discussing the PLO or the LNM as an alliance. By identifying the Joint Forces as a major force in Lebanon and the engine of the opposition movement in Lebanon, I enable the exploration of the role of ideological proclivities in the pragmatic implementation of alliance-building as well as show the ways in which these ideological principles apply beyond the territorial landscape of Lebanon. Through examination of the Joint Forces as opposed to the movements in isolation, it is evident that anti-colonial and anti-sectarian liberation movements in this context required Arab unity, anti-Zionism, and class consciousness as characteristics that are also applicable to the broader region and its position globally. These characteristics as oppositional to the status quo also gesture to an internalized orientalism by those upholding imperialist and Zionist policies, and thus these ideologies inadvertently forming a struggle against anti-Arab racism regionally. By gaining an understanding of each organization through alliance, this conjoined lens complicates the

concept of outright civil war as well as Palestinian revolution in isolation from the bordering country in which it is functioning.

## Chapter 2

## Popular Support to Patronage:
## Internal Power Struggle in Revolution

*Revolution is a serious thing, the most serious thing about a revolutionary's life. When once commits oneself to the struggle, it must be for a lifetime.*
*- Angela Davis*

While the ideological foundations of the alliance indicated the type of ideological fluidity necessary to bring together different party formations, the alliance also had a certain set of internal power relations in the common leadership between the PLO and LNM, which created dynamics of dependency. The dynamics of dependency are arguably the most important factor in the development, dynamics, and transformations of this alliance's practice. I define dependency here as the symbiotic relationship between the two umbrella organizations, the PLO and LNM, to ensure mutual existence, credibility, and attainment of resources and how it produced relations of power. While it is argued that the PLO needed the LNM for political legitimacy in Lebanon in order to carry out armed operations against Israel, the resources that the PLO was able to attain, that the LNM needed to pose a significant threat to the Lebanese right-wing, especially militarily, afforded the PLO increasing amounts of power within the alliance.[169] The PLO had been more strongly established as an organization with infrastructure so what they had to offer tangibly outweighed what the LNM had to offer. This chapter will explore how this dependency manifested and influenced the relationship. To an extent, the dependency

[169] Traboulsi, *A Modern History*, 202.

on the PLO arguably extended beyond the LNM within Lebanon in regard to financial influence because of the magnitude of resources the PLO was able to attain. As such, I argue that internal currents of dependency interplayed with material resources and capital, thus manipulating principles for the benefit of gaining decision-making power and acquiring popular support at the expense of collective and horizontal movement building. This, I argue, elucidates a primary contradiction in the interplay between theory and practice and it also serves as an analytical tool for understanding the practical implementation of Arab ideological currents and revolutionary struggle. In the attempt to dismantle existing power structures, I argue that the cycle of power gets reproduced within the Joint Forces and creates a power dynamic that enables cronyist relations of patronage. Ultimately, I conclude in this regard that even through all of the principles and the goal or revolution, the acquisition of power is both necessary for challenging power and also inevitably reproduces power, even in revolutionary struggle.

Hasna Mikdashi was the first person to narrate to me very simply this notion of dependency, which she describes as a relationship of mutual dependence or need, narrating that:

> At the beginning the Lebanese needed that support and leadership actually. Junblatt and Yasser Arafat were, the two leaders who led this movement and Junblatt needed the support of the PLO to be strengthened against the *Kataeb* Phalange party. And the PLO needed the LNM to be accepted in Lebanon and in Lebanese politics, so to speak. (Mikdashi)

Here Mikdashi locates the shared sentiment that both the LNM and the PLO depended on one another explaining that while the PLO had military strength, the LNM could validate the PLO's existence and operations en masse in Lebanon. While she begins with this

overview, she continues to reflect upon the development of animosity toward the PLO specifically, thinking through when and why this sentiment was developed and feelings of disregard for the Lebanese populace grew. Mikdashi continues:

> Probably later on, because the PLO was the stronger party in weapons, in power that is, they started probably gaining more power in the political street, I mean everywhere everybody was going to the PLO and not the LNM, which annoyed the LNM after a while; not at the beginning. And later on, you know, there was a bigger say for the PLO in directing the events at many instances. Of course, sometimes the LNM had their way for very Lebanese politics, inside Lebanese politics. But on the general scene, I think, I recollect well now, the PLO was in charge and this annoyed some of the Lebanese people who were in support of the PLO saying that it's not the right of the PLO to take over or to be ruling or to have their says. (Mikdashi)

Mikdashi equates resources (money and weapons) with power and explains this as becoming a sensitive reality in relation to the Lebanese and the PLO. The fact that an accumulation of resources could be leveraged for power surfaces supplemental questions including how the resources were being acquired, from where, and how were they being mobilized to exert power – and that exertion of power would be over whom? The Palestinian resistance movement clearly was intent on mobilizing these resources to exert power against the Zionist entity as well as the Lebanese army and right-wing militias during the war most overtly, but I am more intent on unveiling how this power was mobilized internally within configurations of alliance. It was known that the PLO had the resources that the LNM did not have, so people generally knew they could turn to the PLO for assistance, and they did. But was there consequence to turning to the PLO for assistance? If those fighting for liberation have acquired power then does this acquisition of power then reproduce the violent cycle of exercising power as opposed to diffusing it?

And is it possible to liberate without reproducing a repressive form of power? I turn to subsequent interviews for a narrative of how resources and power were mobilized from within the Joint Forces.

Leila Khaled continues to explain to me how the PLO assisted the population with these resources. She shares with us the PLO's different sources of money and its effect on Lebanon, not only in the sense of investment and fueling the economy, but also in the sense of stimulating the job market and increasing the number of employable persons in the country. She states:

> With the presence of the resistance in Lebanon, it naturally became an objective factor on the ground in Lebanon and it had effects, but also the existence of the resistance contributed in a larger presence of monetary liquidity in Lebanon. On a daily basis the resistance was spending around one million dollars, therefore this revived the Lebanese economy naturally. Of course in the time of the war it was different, spending increased because war demanded more spending whether in arming or supplying, and therefore the Palestinian case in Lebanon had a positive effect on the economic end. As an indicator for that, when the Palestinian resistance left Lebanon, the Lebanese economy went down, because the amounts of money that used to be spent in Lebanon no longer existed. When we think that there were one million dollars spent daily in Lebanon, we think how much it had an effect on the situation.
>
> And naturally, the Palestinian resistance, the PLO specifically, used to help the LNM, offering them financial aid. Many of them were firmly connected to the PLO by taking money to carry out their roles, and also one of its goals was probably control, meaning controlling the decision; when the funding is from this source it becomes most capable of taking the decision. But it's true that many projects were made in Lebanon in the presence of the resistance as projects for it in the camps, economic projects and training projects, training in the occupational meaning, different sectors like women and workers made these projects, and one can say that this also contributed to the rise of Lebanese economy by virtue of all of the skills that were employed in the economic sense in Lebanon. This was shown when the resistance left Lebanon; we witnessed the decline of the Lebanese Lera [pound], which of course was a result of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon also,

> the destruction of infrastructure and so on, but also the absence of the resistance from Lebanon had an effect in the economic side also.
>
> The Palestinian resistance had various resources regarding arms, mostly from the Soviet Union, also from China and some Eastern European countries. We also don't want to forget the funding by Arab countries to the Palestinian national fund which was in the hand of the PLO, therefore the PLO had more capabilities than the LNM, therefore, as I mentioned before, the PLO offered different aid to the national factions linked to it, whether in arming or in training or in education. Some Lebanese used to receive the scholarships given to the PLO also, studying at the expense of the PLO, and this also helped the LNM to advance in its internal status or its status between Lebanese people. The scene in these years was that the upper hand was, in all aspects, the Palestinian national movement. (Khaled)

Leila Khaled maps out the different relations that provided economic and material support for the PLO, namely the Soviets, Chinese and other Arabs. Much of the PLO's material resources were obtained by the anti-US block and other Arabs. Seeing how the LNM also had ideological compatibilities with these blocks and the PLO, there is a specificity in Palestinian resistance that garnered support that other regional fronts could not garner. In part, we can understand the Soviet funding in particular in relation to the cold war, as the PLO was not only resisting the Zionists, but also supporting and carrying out resistance against US proxies in Lebanon. As such, this moment is also read as a hot war that manifested in light of the cold war context. As Khaled explains regarding the Arab nations' funding of the Palestine National Fund, one of the strengths the PLO had that garnered support for it was the comprehensive solidification of institutions.

Khaled also makes explicit exactly how much capital the PLO had acquired. The spending of one million dollars a day seems a massive feat and the fact that the PLO acted as a representational body for a nation without territorial bounds gave it the institutions needed to manage such economic growth. Contrarily, though the LNM aimed

to take over Lebanon, they did not have the types of institutions the PLO did as they were fighting to acquire and reorganize existing state institutions. Aside from having an economic impact, the PLO's attainment of resources supported the mass constituent populations of the alliance, not just the Palestinians, through providing social services, including trainings in order for people to enter into the job market and scholarships for students to advance their education so the PLO really focused on the social development of its constituents with the resources they had.[170] This is productive in terms of the development of infrastructure and advancement of society as opposed to just using the resources to provide welfare assistance to families in need. In theory, this is a more sustainable approach, but with the political and economic realities in Lebanon following the PLO's departure, the crisis returned, especially for Palestinians. In addition to these investments in the people, the PLO also served to create industries for Palestinians to work in as Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are barred from working in the Lebanese public sectors and reaping public benefits (like education and healthcare), thus alleviating, at least momentarily, the severity of the dire conditions and extreme poverty of the camps.[171] The PLO's strength in this regard had a major impact on the material livelihood of Palestinian refugees in the camps.

Whereas Leila Khaled gestures to the PLO's generosity in supporting both Palestinian and Lebanese people en masse, my discussion with Samah Idriss directed more sharp critique at the PLO, commenting:

[170] Brynen, "PLO Policy," 48-70.
[171] Rubenberg, "The Civilian Infrastructure", Pgs. 57-61.

> The PLO was never dependent on the LNM; it couldn't care less actually. I don't think Arafat had any respect for the LNM, so, if he did not like what a certain leader did, he can just withdraw the aid and move his support to another Lebanese party. But the LNM was dependent, it was very much dependent to the extent of losing a large part of its independence.
>
> Sometimes, the other way around would work in the sense that the LNM would try to drag the PLO into an internal war in Lebanon, at the expense of the Palestinian cause. But, in a way, that was natural. We are talking about years and years of fighting and coexistence in the same area, so it's really impossible for the Phalange, to hit the LNM without hitting the Palestinian movement at the same time.
>
> Now, of course, there were glorious moments of cooperation and martyrdom and what have you, but politically speaking there was a lot of dependence from the LNM on the PLO, and the PLO, especially Fatah, acted as a state within a state in the areas controlled by the PLO. We can't say that they were controlled by the LNM.
>
> That caused a lot of problems with the population. A lot of the population that lived then was antagonistic to the PLO, although originally these were supposed to be the army of the PLO and the major constituency of the PLO. (Idriss)

Idriss begins his memory of the alliance dynamics by making a strong statement on the PLO's lack of dependency and how the strength that the PLO had made the LNM dependent to the point of lack of independence, but slowly as he continues speaking, he recalls smaller ways in which the PLO needed LNM support. He seems to excuse these reasons as matter of fact, stressing more that the LNM was being take advantage of. While there are different perceptions regarding the nature of mutual dependence between the LNM and PLO, it is clear that this relationship was a necessary one in order to engage in their revolution and that support for one another contributed to their own revolutionary trajectories.

Lastly, the notion that the extent to which the LNM depended on the PLO shifted the way in which the LNM functioned and carried out their operations is a critical point in examining a shift of internal power dynamics within an alliance of shared goals, principles, and practices. The PLO's growing source of capital and military wealth began to have a direct impact on others and altered the ways in which those in power in the PLO related to the aims of the Joint Forces and the constituting parties and organizations. As such, we see here the development of a convergence between political and economic power – and using such power as a form of control of political aspirations and popular mobilizations. This in turn can denote the rise of a political elite that, through economic acquisition, thus develops a relationship of political allegiance through purchase, or the development of cronyism as the nature of relationships between those with resources and those who wanted resources. On the other hand, the resources that were acquired by the PLO were used productively to fund the fighters and to give mass opportunities in the social arena. As such, one cannot simply applaud or, contrarily, critique as the PLO's resource attainment sustained all of the revolutionary aims. However, I will explore further how the abuse of power through the offering of material resources to those in need can shift and manipulate the tactics, strategies and relations necessary to deploy a revolutionary struggle for liberation.

Joint Leadership, Collaboration and Power

When the alliance formed, there was an agreement about how decisions would be taken on behalf of the alliance. Kamal Jumblatt and Yasser Arafat were the inevitable leaders of the alliance as they were the two strongest personalities of each movement and the leaders of their respective umbrella organizations. The alliance had different people responsible for different decisions including military decisions and designing strategy. The accounts below should give some insight into how the collaboration took place and the different dynamics of power that were in play within the alliance that shaped its practice as a whole.

As for the leadership of the alliance, there was a common leadership established between the PLO and the LNM. Salah Salah recounts the formation, explaining to me:

> There was a common leadership, which was called the Palestinian-Lebanese Joint Leadership and which was headed by Arafat and Kamal Jumblatt. They were both leading the meetings of this common leadership. They were discussing everything, their plans to defend the borders with Israel, plans to develop work together against the phalangists – the rightist forces, they talked about resolving some problems that happened between the Palestinians and the Lebanese. Many of the Palestinian fighters made mistakes so they needed to discuss these mistakes and how to solve them. All these things were discussed in the Joint Leadership. …
>
> At the same time, besides this political leadership, there was also military leadership; a kind of military cooperation between the Palestinians and Lebanese. The military leadership was mainly led by the Palestinians. The main leadership of the military activities in the south was in the hands of the Palestinians, with Lebanese participation. The Palestinians would support all the needs for the military bases of the Lebanese; with fighters, with food, supplies, equipment, etc. Even the martyrs, the PLO used to pay the families of martyrs, equally like the Palestinians. (Salah Salah)

It is noted that there was a Palestinian-Lebanese Joint Leadership, which made political and military decisions, discussed the situation and strategized how to move forward, but the Palestinians and Lebanese played different roles based on different arenas and based on who had more power in those certain arenas. The PLO, as has been reflected, was responsible for providing all of the material needs of the alliance, especially militarily. Thus, the PLO had an edge in terms of military decision making and the LNM commanded particular strength in managing the alliance's role in the unraveling of Lebanese affairs in the trajectory of their revolution (or the civil war). This appears to be a particularly strategic way of negotiating support between the two fronts and a logical division of labor that nonetheless was noble in that the strengths that each body held, they distributed across the alliance as a whole.

As we were discussing the internal dynamics of the alliance, Leila Khaled explains her perspective of the collaboration between the two bodies and their influence on one another:

> The Palestinian national movement was an armed, fighting national movement that reflected upon the LNM and which also got armed to defend itself, especially in the civil war. After that it moved to another stage where part of it was with the resistance in fighting against Israel. The PLO made a strong relationship with the LNM, which was embodied in the joint national leadership, in which all decisions about the situation in Lebanon were made. This joint national leadership conducted regular meetings about all issues, especially when the civil war erupted in Lebanon, and played a role in guiding fighters and taking joint Lebanese-Palestinian political positions. (Khaled)

Khaled begins with a simple explanation of the capabilities and influences of the two and a general overview of the relationship. This seemed a very general explanation, but as I

prodded her more, she went on to comment more practically on the way the PLO presence unfolded in Lebanon, continuing:

> Let me say that the PLO had the first say; therefore, sometimes we say that the PLO, especially its leadership, Fatah, confiscated the decisions of the LNM, by virtue of its strength and relations, thus containing it in its political vision for the PLO. But we also have to know that Lebanon is a country where arms were carried, prior to the presence of the resistance, due to its sectarian composition. Thus, when the resistance moved from Jordan to Lebanon, there became an alignment towards the PLO, partly because of some interest for their own protection, but the other part was out of a conviction that they must support the Palestinian resistance in its struggle against the Israeli enemy. … In general, the leadership of the PLO managed to control the decisions of the LNM, especially after the death of Kamal Jumblatt. This wasn't the case in the presence of Kamal Jumblatt; there was some kind of independence in the Lebanese decisions, but after his assassination, the decisions became mainly in the hands of the PLO leadership. (Khaled)

Leila Khaled gives us some insight into how this power the PLO attained effected the movement. She states that the PLO had the upper hand in the relationship and goes as far as to say that the PLO appropriated the decisions of the LNM, in turn suggesting that the joint leadership of the Joint Forces to a degree held the political vision of the PLO. She draws particular attention to Kamal Jumblatt's death as a turning point for the alliance, essentially a turning point in that the PLO held the decision-making power. Walid Jumblatt, Kamal's son and successor as leader of the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) and the LNM and Joint Forces leadership, foreshadowed this in an interview when he referred to the LNM's lack of a new leader following his father's death and attributed this as a challenge that the LNM would have to overcome.[172]

[172] Jumblatt, "Interview with Walid Jumblatt," 7.

Samah Idriss reinforces the significance of Kamal Jumblatt's assassination saying:

> They had something called *al-quwat al-mushtaraka*, the Joint Forces, and they had military leaders from all parties meeting and deciding about things, but it was basically Fatah that decided most of the things. Now, the situation got very bad after Kamal Junblatt died. When Kamal Jumblatt was still alive he had some say. He had a strong personality, he was respected by everybody, and he would solve most problems between factions, through his charisma, through his history, through his past, etc. After Jumblatt died, you didn't have that Lebanese personality that could try to solve any schism inside this alliance. (Idriss)

Kamal Jumblatt's death was unequivocally seen as a turning point for the Joint Forces and its internal dynamics positioning the PLO and namely Fatah and Yasser Arafat to assume a much more autonomous role in the decision making. There were attempts to restructure the LNM at this point in order to maintain strong leadership and power, but through these reflections we see that, at least on the level of the alliance, the leadership that he assumed was irreplaceable.[173] This reality reflects something about leadership in liberation movements at the time in that strong, charismatic personalities seemed necessary to acquire the respect of the masses in undergoing revolution. The leadership figure, the main voice that communicated political position, conviction, and action, was an essential characteristic of organized mass movement.

In conversation with Asad Abdel Rahman, a former member of the Palestinian National Council who, at the time was a researcher at the Palestine Research Center in Beirut, had political tendencies that leaned toward the PFLP, and is currently a member of the PLO Executive Committee, he reaffirms to me the PLO's power in the Joint Forces,

[173] Raad, "For More Than a Year," 14.

discusses the internal dynamics of the PLO, and also speaks about popular level dynamics, stating:

> The Palestinian leadership really dominated the Lebanese political scene. … The Lebanese were financed by the PLO and they participated in the fighting and military training, in military engagement with the Israelis, and with the competing Lebanese forces, but the military decision-making process was in the hands of Fatah in particular, Arafat specifically. He was the number one, and was by far ahead of number two or number three, whether they were in Fatah or in other groups.
>
> The Lebanese were comrades. And, especially on the levels that were not corrupt, they were brothers, they were comrades. There was a lot of interaction, even inter-marriages, common groups, one camp facing another camp and that creates solidarity, you know. So, the interaction was really, you know, it was important and genuine. But again, it was a unified group, a little bit loose, but definitely with a central command. And the relations were quite good amongst each other, whether in this camp or in another camp. (Asad Abdel Rahman)

On the internal PLO level, Abdel Rahman gives us some insight on how Arafat was able to accumulate so much power and the power differences between him and other leaders. So as the Palestinian leadership dominated the Lebanese scene, by default Arafat and Fatah dominated the Lebanese scene. On the more popular levels, however, he describes the relations, which revolved much less around power and much more around genuine relationships and politics. This interview excerpt begins to reflect a cycle in which, while the Joint Forces were made up of different organizations and parties determined to challenge power, the challenges posed by power were beginning to be reproduced from within the Joint Forces itself, though it wasn't necessarily immediately felt by the popular ranks of the movements.

I aim to prod more at this notion of power and in particular the role of accumulations of power by the PLO and Fateh specifically as a factor in how the alliance was shaped. I was able to discuss this moment and the Joint Forces with Mueen Al-Taher, who was a member of Fateh at the time who also led a militant student brigade (a formation in Palestinian resistance history in Lebanon that I wish to explore in the future of this project), and who is also currently working on an archival project to document this and more histories of the Palestinian revolution. Mueen Al-Taher, a member of Fatah at the time, describes:

> Of course, the biggest fundamental force was Fatah, on both sides. They eventually worked on a kind of formation they called the Joint National Leadership or the Lebanese Palestinian or something. The fundamental military power was Fatah. Now, on the political level…, the block that was close to the Soviet direction had a lot of influence whether in the Communist Party, the Labor Organization, factions of the National Movement, or even factions in Fatah. They had a lot of influence in directing a big part of the policies at that time. (Mueen Al-Taher)

He presents the alliance as though Fatah's power was strictly militarily, but politically the discursive tropes reflected more the Soviet block and the communist or leftist nationalist organizations. This distinction between the military and the political are nuanced distinctions that others I interviewed had not made. This distinction also puts the previous chapter into perspective, particularly giving context to the ways in which parties that were not explicitly communist or leftist adopted these ideological proclivities for the alliance, ultimately rooting the reasoning for the fungibility of ideological currents more strongly.

When talking about the acquisition of power by Fatah, the other interlocutors seem to lump all power under the language of decision-making, without specifying what kind of decision-making. Al-Taher is the first to disaggregate the forms in which leadership

manifested and is also the first to mention that the block supported by the Soviet Union had a lot of influence on the political level at the time, even within Fatah. This small anecdote from Al-Taher reflects a lot about the various discursive practices and positions taken by the PLO and the LNM individually and as the Joint Forces collaboration. It also makes the entanglement of Arab Nationalism, anti-Zionism, anti-imperialism and class consciousness/Marxism much clearer, though they aren't necessarily so interlinked. This short excerpt of my interview with Mueen Al-Taher, makes linkages in the ideological meaning making I am attempting to create and analyze.

In seeing how much internal power was accumulated by the PLO from within the Joint Forces and by default how easily it was for Fatah and Yasser Arafat (as leader of Fatah and the PLO) to have the final word in decision making, particularly after Kamal Jumblatt's assassination, the imbalance of power in the Joint Forces grew to not only include material resources, but also decision-making power beyond the military scope. It is through the understanding and examination of this reality, and with the interest in exploring how the Joint Forces challenged power and in which ways that led to the reproduction of power, I move now to further examine in more detail the ways in which internal power dynamics manifested from within the Joint Forces.

## Cronyism, Patronage and Propaganda

The following should expose the level to which the exploitation of resources and power prevailed, developing a patronage that the lower ranks paid to the leadership to

excuse mistakes made by them, and the propaganda used against the PLO leadership and the Palestinians in general to highlight these mistakes. As the PLO was essentially run by Arafat, the extent to which financial exploitation prevailed most significantly was through his uses and abuses of resources. Though Arafat's exploitation was recognized, supporters undermined this because of the larger struggle that they were fighting for while enemies used this to propagate against the PLO and the Palestinian presence and strength in Lebanon, which eventually succeeded.

Continuing my discussion with Assad Abdel Rahman, he begins to recount exploitation in the alliance as based on interests and power. He offers an overview of how money was used to rally support, explaining:

> Well it was, I wouldn't say a love-hate relationship, but it was mainly a love relationship and second, a relationship of vested interests. Mainly it started as political, ideological, progressive [interests] for the national cause and it ended with some kind of corruption because of vested interest and Abu Ammar [Arafat], God bless his soul, used to buy loyalties and he didn't mind spending money on his allies generously to buy their allegiances. So, with the elapse of time, it became of vested interests, narrow interests as well under the pretext of providing money for factions, whether Lebanese or Palestinian, x, or y, or z, to help in arming, to help in training, to help in this or that, but ultimately, a certain part of it was taken as a bribe and with some corruption definitely, sometimes flagrant corruption. But, that was the name of the game, so political money was really effective at the time.
>
> There were times within every camp, the same applies to the other camp but they didn't have the same power or finance or leadership, so they were the weaker side. … But the other party was not in any way less corrupt, except in the sense that they had less money, they were not less this and that, etc., so it was mainly within the groups, the allies of the PLO, all the PLO factions within the umbrella of the PLO, it was mainly they had very wide, large, common ground ideologically, politically, etc., which was cemented, if I may use the term, with political money. (Abdel Rahman)

So here Abdel Rahman gives us a look into political exploitation and just how powerful Fatah and Arafat were in this alliance on the leadership levels. He shows that though there was support for Arafat's leadership, it was confirmed and accentuated by financial support and bribes. More interestingly, however, is his gesturing that this was common political practice in this moment, that all groups were using fiscal support as an opportunity to garner allegiances, but that due to the amount of resources at Arafat's fingertips and the broad spectrum of political relationships, patronage further strengthened his position. In turn, Abdel Rahman delineates the emergence of a system of cronyistic methods in exchange for political and financial support. What I find of particular interest here is the idea that this was common practice among revolutionary movements. At a time when calls for revolution against imperialist capitalist powers were rampant globally and there existed the global power relations to support these calls, this method of garnering support among peoples and parties already in support of the revolution elucidates a potential contradiction between the aim to overthrow existing, colonial, imperial power and its practice. In effect, I am reading Abdelrahman's words as saying, this practice of fiscal exploitation in exchange for political support already existed and those revolutionary forces were not exempt from it. Whoever had more resources was able to acquire more power, partially through genuine support for the revolution, but also partially through cronyism.

Samah Idriss explains the relationship between the LNM and PLO as one of patronage and views that as a contributing factor to Arafat's ability to act exploitatively:

> With respect to most Lebanese parties, it was more or less a relationship of patronage. Of course, we never said that then. We always talked about an internal alliance and an equal alliance, but basically it was Arafat who dictated everything. And whenever Arafat did not like what was going on, he could either split the Lebanese party or buy some people from this party or anything of that sort. And the Lebanese parties either usually accepted that as being normal because they are the weaker party in this equation or sometimes they would confront them. But then they would lose money or training, military training I mean, and there were many cases that happened in that regard. (Idriss)

Idriss implies all relations between the LNM and PLO as transactional, as the development of cronyism, garnering political allegiance in exchange for resources, which was a generally agreed upon practice by all of the interviewees. Idriss, however, as is consistent throughout his interview, is directing the critique clearly at the PLO, as though the Lebanese were always being manipulated, even in times where they knew that was happening. Because of the desire for money, training, or other forms of support, he expresses that the Lebanese would not challenge the PLO or Arafat unless they were prepared to lose these resources and thus be weakened in their work and aims. While Idriss positions his reflection a bit differently than Abdel Rahman, this practice becomes an interesting case of how power is gained and exercised, how political elitism is formed, and how, although there may be foundational and agreed upon principles within movements, without a balance of power and resources, certain abilities to control and abuse power becomes apparent, and perhaps inevitable. This case proves that because of an imbalance in power within the alliance, the different players could be easily shifted because of their need for resources. And while these groups remained aligned for the PLO's duration in Lebanon, and even after, the ability for the control of this magnitude of resources to fall in the hands of so few can gesture toward a foreshadowing of the

development of a national bourgeoisie class that was birthed out of the revolutionary, anti-colonial front.[174]

In my discussion with Idriss, he continues by comparing Arafat to the second largest figure in Palestinian politics at the time, PFLP's George Habash. Much of the focus on exploitation has been on Yasser Arafat and his abuse of power. However, when participants account the role of George Habash, the perception of his leadership differs greatly. George Habash was the leader of the PFLP (and the Arab Nationalist Movement prior to the PFLP) and one of the strongest and most respected leaders within Arab leftist and nationalist currents. Idriss shares an example of the different between Fatah and the PFLP, which mainly boils down to a difference between Arafat and Habash, and the sentiment seems to be shared by many of the interviewees:

> This is the difference for example that I remember between Fatah on the one hand and PFLP on the other hand. Habash's slogan, the major slogan of the PFLP under Habash was that the alliance, … and I am quoting verbatim, "the alliance between the PLO and the LNM should be under the leadership of the LNM." But Fatah never worked according to that slogan, whereas the PFLP did its best. (Idriss)

I included this here to show that not all of the Palestinian leadership was aiming to participate in the exploitation of other, and particularly Lebanese, counterparts in the struggle and that some leaders actually carried out their responsibilities by upholding their principles as a priority. At least this is the perceived takeaway of this statement by Samah. I also included this to give a sense of the different sentiments about different leaders, being mindful that many (but not all) of my interlocutors had an infinity for or were

[174] Frantz Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*.

members of the PFLP. I am also mindful here that though the PFLP was much more powerful then than it is today, the resources at the party's disposal were nowhere near that of what Arafat and Fatah had to manage. Arafat was the biggest name in Palestinian politics; thus he was subjected to higher levels of scrutiny, but at the same time he may have had more to be criticized for because of the exploitation of capital and abuse of power. Because he had the biggest name in Palestinian politics, he was also the person with the ability to obtain resources from other powers in a way that lesser known parties or political figures were not, and in turn had the ability to share it. I analyze in this way, not to excuse Arafat for his abuses of resources, but rather to consider whether these abuses are symptomatic of the accumulation of material resources itself as opposed to being a critique of principle. This begs the question of whether or not political exploitation is in fact an inevitable factor in movement building or whether principled leadership can be sustained and practiced when managing mass amounts of resources as well as mass popular bases. Arafat's ability to become a well-known and broadly followed figure is also impacted by the pragmatism of Fatah as a mass-based movement[175] that functioned more broadly than the parties oriented toward the left because of the fungibility of ideological currents that left formations did not have.

Idriss continues by giving more examples about how the Palestinians were reckless and thought they could do whatever they wanted; that they were in charge of things in Lebanon. His stories are more anecdotal, but they reflect different sentiments

[175] Helou, Jehan, and Elias Khoury. "Two Portraits in Resistance: Abu 'Umar and Mahjub 'Umar." *Journal of Palestine Studies* 41, no. 4 (2012): 65-76.

that people had in the alliance and how personal it actually was. To give just a small example:

> When we moved from *jam'a al 'arabiya* to Verdun, there were Palestinian fighters in 1982 fighting Israelis from the sea, with just the klashnikovs, nothing. And anytime one bullet comes out from the Palestinians, the Israelis would hit the whole building with 3 or 4 huge rockets. So my mother went downstairs and she talked to the fighters. "ya khaya, ya aami, [my brother, my uncle] what are you doing with these AK 47s. They do nothing. They kill us and then you escape." On the other hand, I could not accept that because I am pro-Palestinian and I was a member of a Palestinian faction so I went down with her and I scolded her in front of the fighters. See, it's inside the family. I would tell her, "what's this, they are defending us, defending our souls, the soul of the Arab nation" you know, bullshit like that. But I believed in it then. And she would say, "what I'm saying is, I am for the cause, but this is not doing anything. They are killing us and they will kill themselves." So it was inside the same family that you would find people who believed in this alliance, people who over-romanticized this alliance, and people who stopped believing in it. (Idriss)

Idriss here reflects on the day-to-day, personal sentiments that people were feeling and the sort of grouping or categorization that happened. People were making excuses for the resistance and defending the resistance because they believed in it and because it was an emotional matter, and others were also critiquing it, especially by 1982 which is the time of his story, because the logic behind defending PLO recklessness eventually became illogical.

Omar, who was consistent in his approach of framing his reflections, frames the theoretical structure of the two movements as well as their relationship and dependency to present how it really played out on the ground as opposed to how it theoretically should have been implemented. He makes the point that though there was a set of common

politics, interests, and goals, the practical formation and implementation of these shared aims was imbalanced. Omar explains:

> Between the two [PLO and LNM], there was supposed, theoretically, to be a relationship of mutual support militarily speaking, but in fact it was a subsidiary relationship; the PLO managed the LNM and manipulated it, and the LNM, a couple of years down the line, … but also before, in a sense, would not have existed without the PLO. But also the PLO would not have become strong and powerful and would not have created its own thing without the LNM opening Lebanon for it. It needed to have the country with it. They couldn't have made it. But in the end, the PLO created its own republic, not even republic, its own governate there and it was scary in many senses.
>
> Now, those of us who were with the PLO and who had unwavering commitment to the cause always found excuses. You know, if your car is hit by somebody who works for Abu Shaheed, you get screwed and you have nobody to support you. If the strong man on your street from sa'eqa decides to annoy you or bully you, then you can't do very much. And I'm giving you small examples. There are big examples, with corruption, with electricity, with services, with money, etc. So, this is what we felt very strongly. But, while the relationship was supposed to be equal, it was a subsidiary relationship. (Omar)

Here Omar discusses not only the political relationships, but how members of the PLO handled the relationship and how generally inactive people were also affected by the presence of the resistance. He presents himself as one of the participants in the struggle who defended the actions of the PLO because of ideological support, however he knew and acknowledged that exploitation was a prevalent issue in the PLO and that it was a formation to be critiqued. The Palestinian resistance also made mistakes and continued to make mistakes and even silence those who were harmed by different PLO individuals and factions.

I return to Hasna Mikdashi's personal reflection on the sentiments described above from her political orientation as a Lebanese woman, which reflected the general political climate of Arab unity at the time. She ties this sensitivity to the roots of the divide in Arab society and speaks more practically about mistakes made by the PLO and how they were felt by the Lebanese to further contextualize some of the sentiments at the time. Being someone from southern Lebanon, the region that bared a brunt of Zionist retaliation, she shares:

> I think on the idealistic or the hypothetical level, if we believed in Arab unity, as the LNM I mean, we shouldn't have been annoyed. It should have been a very clear thing that this is the powerful party that we needed and they're going to take over power, whether we are on Lebanese grounds or Palestinian grounds or Syrian grounds, it shouldn't have made any difference for us.
>
> We believe in Arab unity, but of course the divisions ever since Sykes-Picot are deep between the countries and between the peoples and one feels very sorry that events took that angle around. Of course, the people who stayed here, many of them tell you that you cannot just talk hypothetically or idealistically seeing things from afar. We lived here and we, we were really tormented. Some of us were, you know, hurt, scared, felt that the ground was going from underneath our feet and the power is in the hands of the Palestinians.
>
> This is not to say that the Palestinians did not commit mistakes. They did. They are human beings and they did and, unfortunately, some of the mistakes did create divisions between the Lebanese in the south and the Palestinians. And I think this was the main critical thing, probably on the political level more in Beirut actually, but on the physical field levels, the southerners, saw that they are the ones who are protecting the Palestinians inside and giving them way through their lands and their ownership to pass through, to get their training, to do their operations and come back and they were willing even to bear with the counter activity of Israeli aggression against the south because they are helping the Palestinians and operations are taking off out of the south. In Beirut it was those who complained, of course they felt they have lost power. (Mikdashi)

Mikdashi highlights two interesting notions regarding Lebanese perception of Palestinian leadership and action. The first is that, because the borders between us as different peoples and nations hold colonial origins of what was one vast Arab territory, that theoretically, based on principles of Arab unity, whether the leaders of the movement were Palestinian, Lebanese, or Syrian should not have mattered because of the colonial origins of the concept of the nation-state and their attached identities in the region. Second is her distinction between political and material consequences. She notes that for much of the time, the Lebanese criticism of the Palestinians was often from the political level in the metropolitan terrain of Beirut, which interestingly is where, for example, Samah Idriss is commenting from. While acknowledging that the Palestinians made mistakes, as all humans do as she invokes, the terrain in the south where Lebanese populations were bordering Zionist aggression were more forgiving of PLO military activity, though this was a growing source a frustration. This surfaces an interesting point regarding distinctions between urban and rural populations and their stakes and within this comparison between Beirut and the southern villages is the implication of class and that the metropolitan, Beiruti person had more at stake, presumably of a higher, more educated class status with more to lose and less of a target, than the southern villager who was less educated and of a peasant class, who was closer in proximity to the enemy and who was a more regular target directly or indirectly. This paradox of the politically active and intellectual metropolitan subjectivity moving to critique without the direct lived border experience that the southern villagers have, and that are central to their ideological background exposes certain contradictions between ideology and lived experience.

In conversation with Salah Salah, he alludes to propaganda and the role of the media in creating a divide between the Palestinians and Lebanese more broadly. The previous accounts reference corruption or the relationship between exploitation and patronage, mistakes committed, and the excusing of corruption and mistakes for a longer-term end goal. As is the articulated priority: national liberation first, above all. What Salah adds to the conversation is the element of negative propaganda toward the PLO and how it highlighted the PLO mistakes to create a wedge between the Palestinians and Lebanese, recalling:

> Later, mainly the Lebanese government, the Lebanese army, the media, exterior forces, the Israelis had played a very big role in making a difference between the Palestinian identity and the Lebanese. The Israelis were attacking the villages in the South saying they attacked this village because there are Palestinian military bases there, so they pushed the Lebanese to be against the Palestinians. The Lebanese army had supported Lebanese militants fighting against the military bases in the South. You see, the armed Lebanese from one side created militia groups and pushed them to face the Palestinian resistance in the South. The Israelis attacked villages under the pretense that these villages were Palestinian or were supporting the Palestinian bases around them, etc. so, this helped.
>
> The Palestinians are human beings like any others. Some of them were making mistakes like any other in the world, but if any Palestinian made a mistake they were targeted by the media and there was very strong propaganda against it. This, over time, created the impression that the foundation of the military bases for the Palestinians in Lebanon was negative because it damages the economic situation; it causes problems for the Lebanese and causes distractions in the villages, etc., so they created these kinds of differences. At the beginning when they were working together there was no differentiation, but later there were many who worked to create it and they did succeed. (Salah Salah)

With this account it becomes clear that there were different powers at play that worked to create the divide between Palestinians and Lebanese, that it was not necessarily something that happened naturally. As Salah said, mistakes were made, but different

actors, including the Phalangists, the Israelis, the media, etc., were scapegoating the Palestinians to create a divide and break down the strong, progressive forces. This idea of scapegoating Palestinians has also been part of a broader narrative around the Lebanese civil war and consequent issues that arise in Lebanon in general, not only a conversation regarding action against Israel. Each of these players had their own interests in creating this divide, mostly to weaken the resistance and place a wedge between the PLO and the LNM so the imperial powers at play, the Western backed Lebanese Forces and Israel could retain power in the region. This, on the one hand, offers a concrete linkage between the Lebanese and Zionist states to oppose Palestinian and LNM influence through shared media and other propaganda strategies and, on the other hand, facilitated the internalization of antagonisms toward the PLO, the stronger party in the Joint Forces whose support was more important for the maintenance of Joint Forces and LNM power in Lebanon. As we can see in the interviews, this internalization went so far as to impact those in the Lebanese National Movement and those who historically supported the PLO.

Siklawi also accounted for the exploitative relations of the PLO and how external factors that created large internal splits near the end of the PLO's time in Lebanon contributed to the split regarding recklessness of Palestinian action and in turn caused more frustration to the Lebanese who were living the repercussions of Palestinian strength.[176] This should deepen the understanding of internal alliance politics, popular sentiment, and external forces that all led to the same result: after taking lead from,

[176] Siklawi, "The Dynamics," 609.

supporting, and defending the Palestinian presence for several years in Lebanon, the Lebanese near the end finally became fed up with the PLO, even if their political orientation wanted the success of the PLO. The damages were high and popular opinion, especially for those who didn't experience the internal dynamics of the PLO in the alliance, was influenced by media and other powers, embedding general Lebanese sentiment with hegemonic thought to this point of aversion to the Palestinians.

By looking at relations within the alliance as a formation, I bring to the fore what the innerworkings of revolutionary movements look like and am able to elucidate the contradictions that would not have been legible if just looking at the PLO or the LNM in relation only to its enemies and not to one another. It is through this particular lens that I have been able to understand the ways in which power functions, promotes and contradicts aspirations within revolutionary movements, arguing that even from within revolutionary struggles that aim to combat and ultimately dismantle certain forms of dominating power, that other configurations of power arise from within the revolutionary front that works to reinforce the reproduction of certain types of political power. As such, while the dynamics at play are innumerable and there is much more left to explore of this alliance and the period at hand more broadly, I argue that the PLO, in its implementation of revolution through the Joint Forces, acquired power in the form of monetary and material resources and through this acquisition of resources, the PLO reproduced the exercise of power in the political arena in the Joint Forces and Fatah in the PLO.

## Chapter 3

## Guerilla Matters:
## Colonial Violence and Decolonization

*It is our duty to fight for our freedom. It is our duty to win. We must love and protect one another. We have nothing to lose but our chains.*

*- Assata Shakur*

The Lebanese National Movement (LNM) – Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) alliance was formed at a time when the PLO was reaching the peak of its resistance and the Lebanese social and political landscape was becoming increasingly turbulent as a result of growing class and sectarian divide. This alliance formed preceding the outbreak of the Lebanese Civil War in 1975 and functioned to overthrow the sectarian Lebanese government while simultaneously resisting the colonization of Palestine and fighting against the Zionist colonial project. This all must be situated in a regional context in which Arab nation states were newly established with strong imperial linkages to their former colonial powers and to the United States and/or through military-centered infrastructures. This context produced heightened and ongoing quests for power, with the different cold war powers supporting different regional formations, and a debate on the presence of the state of Israel and its implications for the region. Through this context, I will re-conceptualize violence to rethink armed resistance as a generative method for decolonization.

The PLO functioned as a national infrastructure of refugee, exiled, and occupied Palestinian communities without territorial boundaries that most other nations were afforded. This created a unique structure for organizing transnational Palestinian life and

resistance, centralizing the movement for the liberation of Palestine and serving the interests of the Palestinian people, providing community-led social services to them in the face of repression, violence, and dire living conditions by multiple state actors and powers where Palestinians resided. It contained all the Palestinian parties, independents, and various institutions, decision-making bodies, and unions in order to create a popular and all-encompassing umbrella structure for the Palestinian people. Though each faction and independent members differed politically, ideologically, and methodologically, the constituents of the PLO united under aspirations of assuming their inherent political and other rights and achieving the right of return of the refugees and the total liberation of Palestine.

The LNM emerged officially in 1973 as a coalition of parties that aligned to implement a program for political, economic, and social reorganization in Lebanon. It was composed of various communist, socialist and (Arab) nationalist parties that worked to implement the following platform:

1. “Abolition of sectarianism as a basis for political organization and appointments;
2. Electoral reform based on proportional representation;
3. Reorganization of the military structure;
4. Improve labor, social and welfare rights, including an end to arbitrary firing and an increase in the minimum wage;
5. The “Arabism” of Lebanon – (which implies within it Lebanon’s obligation to support Palestinian and anti-imperialist struggles); and

Support for the right of a Palestinian armed presence in Lebanon."[177]

Following the 1967 Arab defeat, the Palestinian resistance began to strengthen in Lebanon as many of the resistance groups were building and training there. This surfaced issues within Lebanese society about the Palestinian resistance and whether or not its presence was welcome in Lebanon.[178] As a result, there were heavy tensions and clashes between the Palestinian *feda'iyin* (guerilla fighters) and the Lebanese Army, which was controlled by right wing forces, though the regional rise and strengthening of the *feda'i* organizations garnered popular Arab support. When the *feda'iyin* began building and carrying out military actions in Lebanon the Lebanese Army tried to suppress it and, at this time, Syria and Egypt were applying pressure on the Lebanese to allow the resistance to operate from Lebanon, as was a large portion of Lebanese society, mainly from individuals and political parties that were to comprise the LNM. This ultimate strengthening and support for the Palestinian resistance led to the signing of the Cairo Agreement on November 3, 1969.[179]

The terms of the Cairo Agreement were that the PLO coordinate its activity with the Lebanese Army and "recognize the requirements of Lebanese 'sovereignty and security'" and the PLO would be granted official legitimization of its presence in Lebanon. It was afforded control of the Palestinian refugee camps, the ability to establish its institutions from within the camps and was granted freedom of movement in the south of

[177] Farsoun, "Lebanon Explodes," 16.
[178] Siklawi, "The Dynamics," 597-611.
[179] Brynen, "PLO Policy," 48-70.

Lebanon.[180] Siklawi expands on the terms of the Cairo Agreement saying it should also give Palestinians in Lebanon the right to employment, residence, development of the resistance in the camps, and the release of prisoners and confiscated arms as well as a mutual agreement to end the propaganda between the Lebanese and Palestinians.[181] In reality, the rights this document gave to the Palestinians was only through the jurisdiction of the PLO, and not through Lebanese social and public programming, so we can read this as a temporary solution to the issue of Palestinian sustenance in Lebanon, placing responsibility on the PLO and not the Israeli state that displace them or the Lebanese state that was hosting them.

However, according to Sayigh, Palestinian military actions had sustained three main aims: "mobilizing the Palestinian people; demonstrating their presence to the world; and actively wearing down the Israelis."[182] Sayigh also evaluates the actions of the PLO through these aims and with the perspective of armed struggle as a tool and this type of a statement may imply that the Palestinians were trying to gain strength over the Israelis but were looking also for external attention or help for the end process of liberation and return.[183] Possibly the most important role the PLO played in Lebanon and beyond was building and solidifying all of its institutions. The PLO institutions not only were able to take on certain parts of the work needed to be done to take on the Zionists while the

[180] Brynen, "PLO Policy," 48-70.
[181] Siklawi, "The Dynamics," 597-611.
[182] Sayigh, "The Politics of Palestinian Exile," 56.
[183] Sayigh, "The Politics of Palestinian Exile," 28-66.

leadership was still able to maintain control of that work, but the development of social institutions aided greatly the PLO's political position.[184]

The Palestinian refugee camp conditions were particularly dire in Lebanon because of the denial of Palestinian rights by the Lebanese government for fear of Palestinian integration into society, which would shift the demographic of the Lebanese state to an overwhelming Muslim majority. The Christian Lebanese sects, and specifically the Maronites, had major control over Lebanese governance and the army. However, it is important to note that this dominant group was also supported by Muslim economic elites.[185] This is crucial because, while Lebanese history often gets reduced to a sectarian character, class played a fundamental role. Intra-Lebanese tension was largely a result of various unjust economic policies that created a large class divide leaving many Lebanese poor and only a small ruling elite dominating the country's economy and government.[186] These policies were being formed around major sectors, mainly agriculture and trade. Policies around banking, control of capital, and non-existent social services coupled with inflation created a high amount of domestic tension in Lebanon.[187] This tension was further exacerbated because of repression of political freedoms on the student, union, and party levels, to silence the challenges to the Lebanese political system.[188] This Lebanese tension manifested also in military repression against Palestinians and Lebanese opposition groups. The Palestinians in Lebanon were, and

[184] Sayigh, "The Politics of Palestinian Exile,"28-66.
[185] Traboulsi, *A Modern History*, 149-164.
[186] Traboulsi, *A Modern History*, 149-164.
[187] Traboulsi, *A Modern History*, 158-169.
[188] Traboulsi, *A Modern History*, 158-169.

continue to be today, scapegoated and denied access to basic public and survival services and needs like healthcare, education, employment and other subsidies. As such, the Palestinian refugee condition, created by the Zionist settler colonial state, was being perpetuated by the Lebanese government with support from the US and Israel. Additionally, the Israeli military was striking Palestinian resistance groups (and the Lebanese in the area) across the Lebanon border, escalating tensions.

By situating the anti-colonial liberation project of the PLO and LNM in its historical and material conditions of power and conquest, I will explicate the necessity of armed resistance for the liberation project and counter the kinds of reductive vilifying portrayals and conceptualizations of violence that emerge in support of militarized, racial state formations.

Paradoxes of Colonial Logic

Anti-colonial liberation struggle directly confronts colonial and imperial power, contested land claims, and as such, the situating of the historical linkages of colonialism in these struggles is necessary for the examination of violence. In colonizer-colonized struggle, one of the two opposing logics must prevail as both opposing parties rationalize similar claims to the same land, thus undermining one another. As such, it is not possible for both parties to actualize their aspirations within the same time and place. To draw on Frantz Fanon and Lewis Gordon, the process of colonization requires not only a process of ongoing conquest, as Patrick Wolfe reminds us, but also a dehumanization of the

colonized subject.[189] Because of Fanon and Gordon's claims that the struggle to decolonize is a struggle to become human, and that the process of colonization is inherently a violent one, the struggle to decolonize must also be a violent process of becoming Human, with conditions of possibility secured outside the parameters of colonial and imperial constructions of Humanity and civility. I want to be explicit that the notion of violence extends far beyond the commonly understood notion of brute force, to every facet of colonized life.[190] The Palestinian refugee and exiled condition, the repression and scapegoating by multiple state actors, the hindrance of ability for collective sustenance are all components of colonial violence. The Lebanese sectarian and class struggle is a condition of the interconnectedness of colonial and imperialist characteristics of civility: capitalist, western, and Christian in nature. Thus, any existence in contradiction to that is uncivilized and inhuman. Conversely, through an expanded reading of violence, the dichotomy of violence versus non-violence does not exist because there is no form of resistance that is non-violent. In fact, Gordon argues, that if violence is understood by different scales of ethics, and within the colonial context those ethics are competing, (ie: colonizer and colonized each believe they have inherent rights to a land) then those various forces are violent solely because of their presence.[191] In turn, Gordon reads into Fanon the notion that because mere presence is violent, that a process of non-violent decolonization is actually non-decolonization.[192] Decolonization thus cannot be undertaken without the presence and negotiation of violence. Therefore, alongside

[189] Fanon, *Wretched.*; Gordon, "Fanon and Violence."
[190] Fanon, *Wretched.*
[191] Gordon, "Fanon and Violence."
[192] Gordon, "Fanon and Violence."

coordinated armed resistance, the ability to be educated, employed, feel part of a nation, etc. all contribute to this notion of violent resistance, this notion of becoming human.

In an interview[193] done in English in 1970 on behalf of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) in regards to the popular and armed resistance of the Palestinians in Jordan prior to their move to Lebanon, Ghassan Kanafani makes several claims that gesture toward the significance of resistance as the only mode of survival for the Palestinian people. To open the interview, Kanafani states, "I know what I know really that the history of the world is always the history of weak people fighting strong people. Of weak people who has a correct case fighting strong people who use their strength to exploit the weak."[194] Here Kanafani exemplifies the struggle of the weak, or the colonized as a just struggle, arguing, in the context of Gordon, that the scale of ethics of the oppressed is that of the just, noble or "correct" one. He is also comparing here the struggle of the Palestinian people to the struggle of all peoples in the world who are being exploited by global powers and who are resisting that exploitation and show of strength. He continues to say that "the Palestinian people prefer to die standing than lose its case…. [that] we achieved proving that this nation is going to continue fighting til victory. We achived that our people could never be defeated. We achieved teaching every single person in this world that we are a small, brave nation who are going to fight to the last drop of blood, to put justice for ourselves after the world failed giving it to us."[195] Kanafani is demonstrating that the struggle of the Palestinian people and the struggle of the

[193] Kanafani, Ghassan. "PFLP Ghassan Kanafani, Richard Carleton Interview Complete." Interview by Richard Carleton, (1970) YouTube (August 14, 2017).
[194] Kanafani, interview.
[195] Kanafani, interview.

resistance serves to demonstrate two points. First, that the Palestinian people, in their steadfast and popular struggle, are resisting and fighting with dignity and the second is that, through these resistance activities, popular and armed, the Palestinian struggle was able to be shared with the world. That the work that was done in this resistance has provided a global narrative that was previously missing that demonstrated to the world the fight for justice in the Palestinian struggle.

Here we learn that the coordinated Palestinian resistance movement is one that both works to sustain the steadfastness and dignity of its people while also creating an intentional platform for building traction in global media circuits as well as being shared across other struggles. In his interview he continues by speaking to the ways in which Palestinian resistance is being framed, the movement's principles and why this rhetoric is both essential to understanding the struggle with nuance as well as demonstrating the power relations that exists with the Palestinians as the colonized and oppressed. The interviewer, Australian journalist Richard Carleton, continues to ask questions that inaccurately frame the Palestinian condition. He first frames the struggle as civil war, to which Kanafani cuts him off and responds that "it is not a civil war, it is a people defending themselves against a fascist government, which you are defending …"[196] Carleton proceeds to frame the question as conflict, to which Kanafani immediately disrupts saying, "It's not a conflict, it's a liberation movement fighting for justice."[197] Carleton continues to say, "well, whatever it might be best called,"[198] to which Kanafani directly refutes again.

[196] Kanafani, interview.
[197] Kanafani, interview.
[198] Kanafani, interview.

Kanafani's push for specificity of rhetoric is a direct combatting of the types of language used to contradict the real root of the problem, and the root of the struggle, naming these flawed and inaccurate framings as part of that. He states:

> It's not whatever because this is where the problem starts. Because this is what makes you ask all your questions, this is exactly where the problem starts. This is a people who is discriminated fighting for its rights. This is the story. If you will say it's a civil war then your question will be justified. If you will say it is a conflict than of course it is a surprise to know what's happening.[199]

Kanafani's intervention is a direct reflection of a resistance that aims at attacking the violence done onto the Palestinian people not only by the Zionist regime, but also by the propaganda proliferated for the Zionist regime by many media outlets from those powerful nations that exploit the colonized. And it is precisely this rhetorical intervention that serves to undercut the exact violence of power structures that any colonized person faces. This is an exemplification of a sustained decolonial violence that extends beyond brute force.

In the next and last part of the interview, Carleton asks "why not just talk,"[200] to which Kanafani responds, "talk to whom."[201] When Carleton clarifies "Israeli leaders" Kanafani responds saying, "that's kind of conversation between the sword and the neck you mean."[202] Carleton proceeds with, "well if there were not swords and no guns in the room, you could still talk"[203] to which Kanafani responds "…I have never seen a talk between a colonialist case and a national liberation movement."[204] This is precisely

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[199] Kanafani, interview.
[200] Kanafani, interview.
[201] Kanafani, interview.
[202] Kanafani, interview.
[203] Kanafani, interview.
[204] Kanafani, interview.

because there is nothing to say. There is no break of the power relation between colonizer and colonize, it would only serve to reinforce that power relation, essentially it would be an act of non-decolonization. The conversation continues in this way:

> Carleton: “But despite this, why not talk?”
>
> Kanafani: “Talk about what?”
>
> Carleton: “Talk about the possibility of not fighting.”
>
> Kanafani: “Not fighting for what?”
>
> Carleton: “Not fighting at all, no matter what for.”
>
> Kanafani: “People usually fight for something and they stop fighting for something. So you can’t tell me even why should we, speak about what. “stop fighting” Or talk about stop fighting why?”
>
> Carleton: “Talk to stop fighting to stop the death, the misery, destruction and pain.”
>
> Kanafani: “The misery and the destruction and the death and pain of whom?”
>
> Carleton: “Of Palestinians, of Israelis, of Arabs.”
>
> Kanafani: “Of the Palestinian people who are uprooted, thrown in the camps, living in starvation, killed for 20 years, and forbidden to use even the name Palestinians.”
>
> Carleton: “They’re better that way than dead though.”
>
> Kanafani: “Maybe to you, but to us it’s not. To us to liberate our country, to have dignity, to have respect, to have our mere human rights is something as essential as life itself.”

The conclusion of this short conversation demonstrates the break between a basic or common understanding of violence and the understanding of colonial violence. There is a humanitarian proclivity by Carleton to understand the situation as just a situation of

conflict, of brute force, or commonly understood notions of violence and a suggestion that this should be ended under any circumstances. What he fails to understand though, and what Kanafani is sticking to in his explanation, is that a national liberation movement against a settler colonial force is that ending violence and death does not actually address the issue at hand. Kanafani is explaining that while some may see the end of this type of violence as the most necessary step for the Palestinians and Zionists, this is not actually what the people want. To the contrary, the struggle of the Palestinian people is much larger than their own lives as individuals. Their struggle for their homeland is a struggle worth dying for because their life as colonized subjects in one of death. In this sense, the armed struggle, the popular struggle, the media struggle are all part of the notion of becoming human as a collective people. The individual death that is incurred is a collective death, whether lives are lost or whether individuals of the collective continue to live because their existence is undermined, unrecognized, and rejected entirely by their colonizer in a project to silence and erase any semblance of a Palestinian identity. To be a people who live with dignity, with sovereignty in their homeland is a struggle worth fighting and dying for.

Reflections on Arms as Decolonial Praxis

In my interviews, I found a very clear orientation toward a comprehensive strategy that was situated within the larger framework of ridding the region of colonial and imperial forces. The active participants very clearly situated their struggle as a unified struggle

because of the larger implications of ongoing colonial and imperial rule and their manifestations in regional configurations of power.

Salah Salah, a former leader and Political Bureau member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) who held a position on the PLO Executive Committee and remains today an independent member of the Central Council, begins by delineating three contextual common points between the PLO and LNM that reflect their shared conditions of state violences and threats. He explicitly notes the reasons for Lebanese support and participation in Palestinian resistance and frames the two communities as being subjected to violence by the same powers: the Israeli and Lebanese states. He notes the concrete forces that serve to repress Palestinian and Lebanese society, and shows the strategy behind combining forces for revolutionary aims, stating:

> I think there were political and theoretical common points between the PLO and the LNM. The first is that both believed that Israel, or let's say the Zionist movement, from the beginning, was planning to occupy Palestine as a part of general strategic aims to create a part of Israel with borders from the Nile to the Euphrates. The Zionist movement strategy wants to create this state including Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and a part of Iraq, even a part of Saudi Arabia. This is the main concept of the Zionist movement strategy. So, in this case, it means that Israel, when it was founded in Palestine, it was the first step to occupying more lands starting with Lebanon, or including Lebanon. … We fought together against Israel for the Palestinians to liberate Palestine and for the Lebanese to defend themselves from the Israeli strategy to occupy their land….
>
> I think the second main point is that the Lebanese army … made a very big mistake. From the beginning they tried to face the resistance and took a position against the Palestinian and the Lebanese resistance. Also, in this case, the Palestinians needed to be supported by the Lebanese to defend themselves from the Lebanese army.
>
> And the third, in Lebanon, as it is now, there is a contradiction between two main forces, which is the LNM, which is leftist, socialist progressive forces, and [that] which is what is called the rightist forces; …. The LNM were behaving to change the regime. … At that time the LNM thought it was time

> now, there was a possibility with this cooperation between them and the Palestinian resistance. They believed that it was an opportunity now to change the regime to make a new regime, to be the lead of a democratic, socialist regime. This is, I think, the common point that helped to make this good relationship with the Palestinians. (Salah Salah)

Salah suggests that Lebanese participation in the Palestinian resistance and in the LNM was due to Lebanese interests on two fronts: fear of occupation of Lebanon by the Zionists, as well as the resistance providing military power to the LNM in their internal struggle. He also suggests that the LNM was in a place where it was ready to embark on its own revolution for a new Lebanese regime that was revolutionary, socialist and democratic in nature, which was a common point of interest.

In general, all three of these things, Zionist plans for expansion beyond Palestine, Lebanese army repression, and the possibility to win through building alliance, contributed to the anti-colonial nature of the LNM, particularly if we consider the role of Israel within the imperialist project. By default, the Western-backed Lebanese right, the implementation of capitalist expansion resulting in increased class divide and poverty, and Zionist aspirations to acquire more Arab land can all be connected to dominating power in the region which favored Israeli interests. Thus, any political, economic or revolutionary program that attempts to combat capitalism and imperialism in the Arab region must take into account the role of Israel in sustaining the structures they attempt to dismantle.

In addition to the political, military and land-based threats of the colluding Israeli and Lebanese powers, Omar situates the cultural impacts of colonialism and imperialism on the Arab people. Omar was a young Lebanese man at the time of the war who was

active in military action and closely affiliated with the PFLP. His account historically situates configurations of power in the region, framing the larger context of cultural imperialism and noting a particular manifestation of Arab nationalism, as the guiding framework for anti-colonial struggle, stating:

> Subjectively, people in Lebanon who wanted a better deal for the region, who wanted its integration into the region, had dreams of [Arab] nationalism. But why did dreams of nationalism come? They came because cultural imperialism was being strongly felt. Cultural colonialism, cultural imperialism was blooming and you would feel that you were not worth very much if you don't adjust or adapt and the history of colonialism was something that had stifled Arab identity, so Arabism was an identity that was coming forth. I'm talking about the LNM and … the [centering] of justice, not with everybody in the movement, but those who didn't have it split. (Omar)

Omar brings in many intersecting political dimensions under what he calls a justice-centered framework. He links the Arab Nationalist tendencies as a mechanism for combatting the impacts of colonialism and imperialism, which had taken form culturally, politically, and economically in Lebanon, Palestine and other parts of the region. He specifically notes a pervasive culture of colonialism and imperialism, which connotes the violence of existing outside of hegemonic currents of value and worth. As such, Arab Nationalism and unity was forged to combat this imperialist influence and socialism or economic Marxism then played a role in the struggle for economic justice across the Arab world. He bridges together these different components of oppression on Lebanon and the Arab world under the umbrella of justice and thus claims that to be part of an Arab anti-colonial movement was to be engaged in a fight for justice, a fight against colonialism and empire. This is particularly situated within time and place as the idea of nation-states in the region were very newly defined, with all but Palestine achieving some sort of national independence that gave rise to national bourgeoisie classes with maintained ties to the

colonial powers. As such, the Arab Nationalist Movement (ANM) and various iterations of Arab nationalist ideology across different parties and fronts was an important rejection of colonialism's fabricated borders and imperial rule through mobilizing a regionalism that functioned to raise consciousness and directly combat threats to local sovereignties. While there are critiques to be made about the practice of Arab nationalism, as with all nationalisms, this ideology served as a native oppositional hegemony that empowered mobilization against colonial and imperial culture, politics and economy that was manifesting among the ruling national bourgeoisie.

Omar proceeds to situate the various dynamics at play on the ground, reframing the discourse of civil war, situating the Israeli state as a regional imperial force, and claiming that the only way to enact decolonization and justice in Lebanon is to directly address Zionism through the struggle for Palestine, stating:

> There was tremendous [support], in the first couple of years of war, we … put Palestine before Lebanon. … I think, by and large, if you think you can disassociate Lebanese politics from the Zionist project, you got it wrong somewhere. And if you feel that you can address the Zionist project from Lebanese politics, then you're wrong too. The Zionist project has to be addressed through the Palestine issue. Now, how you address it, what does it take in terms of changes in the country's realm, that's extremely important. But we need to resolve the Palestine issue and the Palestine issue is our bridge to removing the Zionist project. What needs to be removed in this region is the Zionist project. … It's an Arab issue, it's a regional issue, and it's going to continue as a colonial entity to poison all the region around it and also because it serves as the bully of the Americans here and also as an aircraft carrier in the region here to scare and to bully; the enforcer. So, that's why it needs to be that way.
>
> During the civil war, I don't like to call it a civil war, because also we fought by proxy with the Israeli project, we did not fight only to get control. … Every time we directed a weapon, it was against the Israelis or against their proxies here. That's very important. (Omar)

Omar prioritizes freeing the region of the Zionist project as both a colonial and imperial entity and this is what shaped his participation in the war. The war, in his view, was not a Lebanese war, it was a war against Zionism through the armed resistance he engaged in. He also suggests that this was how most of the armed resistance was channeled, not against the Lebanese Front, but against the Zionist entity and its local proxies. This account pushes the narrative of civil war in Lebanon to consider a reframing of this period of struggle from civil war to anti-colonial liberation struggle and anti-imperialist struggle. It is through this lens that we can situate Zionism as playing both a colonial role in Palestine and an imperial role regionally, and as such it enacts the violences required to maintain both.

Omar highlights the idea that Lebanon is not a cause, but a condition - that Arab and regional politics cannot be disconnected from Zionism, and that Zionism must be challenged through the Palestine cause. Consequently, Omar connects solving Arab issues with ending Zionism and that any single Arab issue (Lebanon in this case) cannot be solved without focusing first on the Palestinian cause and removing Zionism from the region. As Michael Hudson concluded in "The Palestinian Factor in the Lebanese Civil War," "it has become almost a cliché to say that a solution to the Lebanese problem requires a solution to the Palestinian problem; yet it is true, and one of the few things that all parties to the conflict in Lebanon agreed upon."[205]

[205] Hudson, "The Palestinian Factor," 277.

Leila Khaled shifts us into a conversation about the acquisition and use of arms and other economic factors as it impacted the local communities in Lebanon. Leila Khaled is a member of the PFLP, was active in both the women's union and the armed resistance at the time and currently holds a position on the PFLP's political bureau. She brings to the fore the PLO's work of more comprehensive resistance through providing resources to Palestinian and Lebanese communities for economic development and contributing to overall community sustenance, noting strategic financial allies that shifted the Lebanese economy. She shares:

> With the presence of the resistance in Lebanon, it naturally became an objective factor on the ground in Lebanon and … also the existence of the resistance contributed … a larger presence of monetary liquidity in Lebanon. …
>
> And naturally, the Palestinian resistance, the PLO specifically, used to help the LNM, offering them financial aid. … Many projects were made in Lebanon in the presence of the resistance as projects for it in the camps, economic projects and training projects, training in the occupational sense, different sectors like women and workers made these projects, and one can say that this also contributed to the rise of Lebanese economy by virtue of all of the skills that were employed …
>
> The Palestinian resistance had various resources regarding arms, mostly from the Soviet Union, also from China and some Eastern European countries. We also don't want to forget the funding by Arab countries to the Palestinian national fund which was in the hands of the PLO, therefore the PLO had more capabilities than the LNM, therefore, as I mentioned before, the PLO offered different aid to the national factions linked to it, whether in arming or in training or in education. Some Lebanese used to receive the scholarships given by the PLO also, studying at the expense of the PLO, and this also helped the LNM to advance in its internal status or its status between Lebanese people. (Khaled)

Here Khaled implicates the relationship of armed struggle to broader sustenance of communities and shows us that, while the armed resistance was being mobilized to combat Zionist and Lebanese state power, the larger infrastructure of the PLO offered

and expanded social programming that contributed to community growth in the face of dire conditions as Palestinian refugee and poor Lebanese communities. The services that the PLO provided garnered a heightened ability for mass bases to participate in society with less struggle and, in turn, this contributed to mass participation in the revolution. So, the alliance's active participants saw the growth of their communities on a social level as part and parcel of the larger aim of revolution, as a move in the direction of building sustained communities, and of organizing social participation around overall community resistance. As such, through programs like tutoring and scholarships, caring for orphans from destroyed camps and villages, medical aid, etc., the alliance built an entire social structure that centered around resisting state violence, colonialism and imperialism. As such, I argue that this type of infrastructure is a monumental feat that allows for a more encompassing revolutionary praxis whereby both political and social empowerment work together to create the new society that revolution envisions. Additionally, by empowering the social bases who are struggling against power to do simple things they are deprived of by the state like working and going to school, these seemingly ordinary and insignificant practices actually combat the state, regional and global powers who wish to maintain the status quo and thus reflect coordinated and collaborative modes of quotidian resistance against repression.

Khaled also shows us the ways in which the PLO acquired material resources through other Arab nations and through the eastern bloc of the cold war. This reflects a larger global dynamic in which the eastern bloc was supporting struggles against US imperialism and we can see that both the context of the Lebanese civil war as well as the

revolutionary struggle against Israel manifested a regional “hot war” within the cold war paradigm. While the Israeli state and the Lebanese government colluded with one another, the US, and other regional configurations for the spread of capitalist and imperialist power regionally, I argue that the opposition bloc, or the PLO and LNM, while being supported by the eastern bloc, were able to self-determine their resistance in anti-colonial liberation struggle. This is reflected in a multitude of anti-colonial liberation struggles following World War II and is not specific to this context, though different struggles manifested their own resistance and agency in different ways. In turn, we can see that this struggle was part of larger global currents to freedom from colonialism, capitalism and empire.

Khaled continues to note how the PLO and LNM depended on their unity to strategically encompass, support and defend each other’s struggles in the face of colonial and imperial violence. This places importance on the role of alliance building in a time where imperial alliances were working to suppress them. She continues:

> The Palestinian national movement was an armed, fighting national movement that reflected upon the LNM and which also got armed to defend itself, especially in the civil war. After that it moved to another stage where part of it was with the resistance in fighting against Israel. The PLO made a strong relationship with the LNM, which was embodied in the joint national leadership, in which all decisions about the situation in Lebanon were made. This joint national leadership conducted regular meetings about all issues, especially when the civil war erupted in Lebanon, and played a role in guiding fighters and taking joint Lebanese-Palestinian political positions.

Here Khaled notes that the acquisition of arms was acquired for defense against colonial, state violence. As the development of the resistance grew, it was assumed as part of an all-encompassing anti-colonial liberation program and was directed at state military

powers. I would like to note here that having a military is a reflection of a nation-state formation. It is because the nation-state is a normative, valued formation that military action is viewed as legitimate power. In the context of the Palestinians, they had created a nation, but one that is transnational, exilic, refugee, and without territorial bounds or recognition – thus rendering the Palestinian nation a stateless one. As such, the Palestinian Liberation Army, though within a larger national infrastructure, was rendered an illegitimate military. I express this to show how arms and violence is palatable and legitimized only through the infrastructure of the state. As such, particularly in media circuits and Western discourses, we see the emergence at this time, not post-9/11, of the terrorism discourse. As Melani McAlister delineates, there are a few instances in which this discourse emerges, as a result of action from the region, and particularly with certain actions enacted by the Palestinian resistance.[206] So, whereas we see Israeli official military and intelligence action – including massacres, airport bombings, sieges, imprisonment, etc. that affected unarmed Palestinians and Lebanese – as legitimate forms of violence enacted under the banner of fighting terrorism and ensuring national security, all supported by western imperial forces, we see the Palestinian military actions that were largely directed at Israeli military forces delegitimized as terrorist in nature. This in turn gestures toward the relationship between power, militarism and their linkages to meaning-making in popular discourse.

In this chapter, I aimed to understand the function of armed resistance in the alliance, in time, place and historical and material conditions of power and conquest in

[206] McAlister, Melani. "A Cultural History of the War without End." *The Journal of American History* 89, no. 2 (2002): 439-55.

the face of the kinds of reductive vilifying portrayals and conceptualizations of violence that support militarized states and empire. Through a Fanonian lens, I reconstructed notions of violence to reveal colonized life itself as violence and called for a rereading of violence *and* being as legible only to the colonial and imperial constructs of humanity and civility. I engaged the active participants' exposure of quotidian violence and their resistance to it as a way of achieving personhood. While armed resistance is the commonly denoted exercise of violence to the dominant lens, its practice is rather a necessary show of larger tropes of resistance to colonial, imperial and state violences that are commonly constructed as legitimate, if at all violent in and of themselves. In the colonial and imperial context, there is a competition in logics, whereby a dialectical discursive practice informs one another. However, the disproportionality of power, on a global scale, gestures toward a hegemonic colonial narrative, thus rendering the opposing anti-colonial narrative as a threat. Not only is the existence of the colonized a continuation of that threat, but any infrastructure or practice built toward sustenance, the living of a human life of dignity, is thus rendered violent. All of this contributes to the argument that there is no non-violent process of decolonization.

I have demonstrated the ways in which all facets of colonized life are a product of the colonial and imperial violence that persists in order to maintain the dominant narrative and, of course, the dominant power structures that come with it. I argue that the assumption of violence, in all of the ways in which it manifests, beyond brute force, was necessary for the process of decolonization; for the process of non-violence is a process of non-decolonization. I place high importance on historicization and as such have shown

the co-constitutive relationship between an ongoing colonial process and imperialism as structures that are co-dependent in the context of Lebanon and the Palestinian struggle, structures that uphold one another at the expense of the powerless. These relations manifest through the use of militarism, state violence, border sovereignty, repression of mobility, and discursive practices, like the rhetoric of terrorism, which emerges at this time to delegitimize Palestinian resistance, and pervades popular consciousness to the extent that even the colonized are subject to reproducing their own vilification, as was reflected by Omar in the quote on the resonance of cultural imperialism.[207] I have drawn connections between race and logics of criminality in relation to hegemonic discourses mediated through state power. I center the question of power as it relates to the oppressed, construct a narrative from below, work to highlight the material conditions it produces, and move to understand how colonial and imperial subjects subvert power through movement practices of resistance. Through this undertaking, I am able to capture how former active agents of social change strove to build a more accountable future.

[207] Omar, oral history interview, 2011.

## Chapter 4

## Unsung Sheroes:
## The Backbone of Revolution

*There's really no such thing as the voiceless. There are only the deliberately silenced, or the preferably unheard.*
*- Arundhati Roy*

The exploration of the role of women in the alliance is not to look at the role of women as part of the foundation of the alliance, but rather, this section has a secondary aim of exploring gender as a dynamic within the alliance from a social perspective. I use the guide of the active participants and political narratives to define the social as issues of concern in society at large and for which may be considered an issue fit for liberation struggle, but one that comes secondary to national liberation. As was articulated by one of the revolutionary women of Algeria Danièle Djamila Amrane-Minne, "[a]s far as men were concerned – nationalists, as well as communists – any thoughts about the condition of women were invariably put aside to be considered later, until after independence for some, and to the time where there would be a socialist government for others."[208] The concept that women's liberation is secondary to the nation has been reinforced by the women revolutionaries of the time I have met and interviewed, including Leila Khaled who is often seen as a revolutionary left figure who speaks to women and gender in the movement. As such, part of this inquiry will be into the practice of disaggregating the nation and the social in liberation praxis.

[208] Amrane-Minne, Danièle Djamila, and Farida Abu-Haidar. "Women and Politics in Algeria from the War of Independence to Our Day." *Research in African Literatures* 30, no. 3 (1999): 62.

This period of time was widely approached as the most liberating period for women when the question of gender was posed. The role of women in the leadership and their practical work in the movement as a whole will be explored in an attempt to address some social dimensions within the alliance that pose some interesting questions about women and social issues in times of revolution. The role of women was approached by describing the image of the woman at that time, the different achievements that were made by women, the different arenas in which they participated and the different responsibilities that they held as part of society that contributed to the overall achievements of the time. It is clear, however, that women were not able to move up in ranks within the same capacity as the men though they may have been equally worthy, which brings up some questions I hope to address here. These questions look into the idea of a premeditated, defined role for women from the leadership that ensured the security of the existing leadership structures as well as the tokenization of women by the leadership when needed.

This prompts a more fundamental question: was there an established program of social liberation that was being implemented hand-in-hand with political and economic liberation? Through the narratives of my interlocutors, I will discuss the role of women in the revolution, fighting alongside men or leading in supporting the fighters and society in other ways, and will analyze the participants' reflections on why women were involved in the ways they were and what changed after this period. This question becomes important in how the concept of liberation is understood and can be the basis of why women in the struggle were only able to move so far as well as why women in the struggle found

themselves in a similar position in society to where they had been before the war. This is not to say that this period of liberation for women was not actually liberating, and it is not to say that women did not achieve a lot or take pride in their accomplishments, but this does beg the question of why the liberation of women proved unsustainable after the revolutionary period and how a more sustainable solution to social issues might be better implemented in the future. While there is a particular space for critique regarding the inequity of power in leadership and decision-making among women's participation, I also aim to probe more deeply into the question of gendered labor as a spectrum of conceptualized value, while juxtaposing the layers of labor performed against the notions of pride, dignity, and affect that the women I spoke to put forth.

Women's Liberation: Comradery, Power, and Ranks

To start with some general words from Fawwaz Traboulsi:

> In both organizations, in the LNM and the PLO, you had men and women fighters. Now not a high proportion of women, but a non-negligible portion of women. Now when the war started, now we're talking about the war and not acts of resistance but we're talking about the war, in the first period of the war especially, there was big women's participation in the fighting and in all the military related activities. There was a high percentage of women's participation in politics in general on both sides, in the LF militias and among the militias of the LNM. Now, significantly enough, a lot of this would recede in the Lebanese part after the first round. In fact, the Phalangist party made a call to all Lebanese women who had been fighting, to go back home and take care of their husbands and children. There was a famous call by a woman member of the Phalangist party on this. There were not similar calls from the left, but I mean that was on the more euphoric part of the war where people thought change would come, and after that part, the role of women receded. (Traboulsi)

Traboulsi gives us insight into the participation of Lebanese women who were engaged in military operations. After the beginning part of the war, Lebanese women's participation decreased in general though the call for Lebanese women to withdraw themselves from the fighting came from the Phalangists. Because I have been unable to find the exact language and moment in which this call was put forth, it is difficult for me to speculate why directives toward the Phalangist women could ripple to the LNM women, however this seems to hold some significance and is something I hope to investigate further. Interestingly though, many of those interviewed discussed how the PLO and the Palestinian resistance hosted participation of Lebanese women and was a place where thousands of Lebanese joined. So while this call for women to return home during the civil war seems to have had an impact on the Lebanese from both the LF and the LNM, it does not seem to have transferred to the Palestinian organizations.

Salah Salah describes to me the image of the Palestinian woman at that time and in comparison to previous times, recounting:

> I think it was one of the best periods for the woman. At that time, the woman had been liberated for the Palestinian resistance. Mainly women were at home and barely any women had jobs because in general the Palestinians in the camps are a bit conservative, but after the Palestinian resistance in 1967, and '69-70, *khalas,* everything was broken. There were no limits for the woman to work. So, this resistance had broken everything. The woman went out, she was no longer locked in the house. She went to be part of the military bases, to participate in the fighting. She was a *fida'iya*.
>
> Besides that, many of them were members in the political factions and many of them had reached the leadership, but of course the percentage of women in the leadership, with the decision makers, was not so high. (Salah Salah)

Salah Salah explains here that the situation for Palestinian women actually improved as a result of the revolutionary period. It became widely accepted for women to leave the

house, work, receive military training, and join the movement and this is what many Palestinian women did. The language he uses to describe the women's position as liberated for the Palestinian resistance is interesting because it implies here that liberation can be temporary. If liberation for women is temporary for the Palestinian resistance and there is the chance of it being reverted, then how can we understand the concept of liberation? Where did the liberation come from? It seems as though the understanding of liberation for women is congruent with the countering of patriarchal notions of gender roles, that gender roles can be blurred and that their redefinition or crossing is liberatory. This may be true, but if liberation is suspended in time, then what can we deduce from this form of implementation? It seems that one approach to understanding this concept is to see women's reconfiguration of roles as a necessary characteristic of national liberation and revolution whereby both the political leadership and the community at large accommodates the breaking of social boundaries for the betterment of the nation and national struggle.

Investigating in more detail the gender dynamics and the role of women in the movement, I would like to present two different approaches: women and their role in leadership and their role specifically in the women's sector movements, namely the General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW). Asad Abdel Rahman speaks to women and leadership stating:

> This whole movement, as having been progressive in that sense, contributed to what we may call the empowerment of women in different ways and women were quite active. I mean even to a maximum degree, in as much as it was possible in Arab culture. So that added to the progressiveness of the movement. So women were active, I mean if we're talking about Lebanese women, Palestinian women, they were working in

> their women's association, in fighting; they were militarily trained. They participated in guerrilla attacks. They participated in providing assistance to fighters all over, in folkloric cultural things as well. They were very active, politically definitely, also.
>
> In the leadership also, but not in the upper echelon I would say, but definitely they were represented well. In the number one leadership, it was a one-man show, more or less. But if we talk about the first 100 Palestinian or Lebanese political and military leadership, let's say 100, there were almost zero women in it. But if you go to the first 2,000, yes, women were underrepresented, but they were much more represented if compared with other Arab societies, so emancipation was one of the achievements of this movement. (Abdel Rahman)

Abdel Rahman comments on the nature of the movement as being progressive and that because of this, women were emancipated. The way he articulates his comments, he also affirms this idea that women's empowerment was an achievement of this movement, thus also implying that the empowerment ended with the movement's end – reinforcing the possibility of liberation as temporary. He furthers the discussion by tracing women's participation in relation to leadership as significant, but still underrepresented. Abdel Rahman positions this as being relative to Arab culture, however in my discussion with Omar, he rebuts the idea of Arab culture having influence on the way the women's role was culminated by comparing it with US culture around women's equality, saying:

> Yes, I mean, men and women are unequal in the US in terms of places in government, you know, anywhere else. Especially that you are in a situation of war, I don't think this has anything to do with Islam, Arab, etc. I don't think it would be very different anywhere else, and we had fierce comrades, women, very liberated comradeship.… But I think that in the leadership position, you don't have a lot. Perhaps in the Communist Party, Communist Action Party, you know, but you didn't see a lot. I remember, also in the PFLP, especially later on, on the board, on the National Council of the PFLP, there were a couple of women.… But the General Command, and the Political Bureau, there were a couple of women….

> [T]here were women fighters and there were women who, I think the war liberated them a lot. But still, the probability was not very big. But there was a sense of freedom, a sense of yes, you can do anything you want. This was the revolution; especially in the first few years. It was very important. I remember this vividly. I was located in Dahieh[209] and these young girls from Dahieh were dressing in jeans and t-shirts and, you know, going out and organizing in cineclubs and organizing fighting, carrying weapons. There was a very strong liberating movement. (Omar)

Omar's account offers some practical accomplishments that he saw in terms of the woman's ability to participate in popular organizing as something that was widely accepted at the time, and arguably for the first time in the present period, though he also recognizes that representation of women in leadership positions was minimal. In these narratives, there is some overlapping consistency in the imagery and aesthetics of what women's liberation or emancipation looked like, and this was contingent upon participation in the different political organizations at the time. This overall image of the woman emerging from the home, wearing jeans and kuffiyehs, participating in military and other civil action was what symbolized a type of emancipation that had yet to be seen. So when we look at this narrative, the direct connotations of progress for women are intrinsically tied to the conditions of revolution and war.

This also reigned true for women in the Algerian revolution, which this movement draws heavily upon. "As soon as war broke out, Algerian women joined in the struggle"[210] and made their presence felt as militants in the anti-colonial nationalist struggle for independence. As Amrane-Minne describes, under French rule and leading up to the national revolution, Algerian women were excluded from public life and political life. It was

[209] Dahieh is a shi'a suburb in Beirut and is relatively conservative.
[210] Amrane-Minne, "Women and Politics in Algeria," 62.

through armed resistance operations in national struggle and other components that supported those operations, that women's involvement flourished and there was an emancipatory environment in the Algerian resistance landscape.[211] And it was the assumption made by the French of the woman's place in society in the Algerian war of independence that enabled women to play a significant role in armed struggle. Because there was a presumed role for women by the colonizers, the colonized used this as a tactic garnering access to certain things their male counterparts couldn't, like accessing enemy territory or harboring male militants in hiding. These types of actions and other gendered labors of revolution played a significant role in the sustenance of the movement. Amrane-Minne, one of the infamous resistance fighters herself, discusses that while there was heightened liberation during the war, she notes that it was difficult to completely retract the accomplishments of women after the war on the social level, though politically women were both excluded from and did not push to enter the post-independence political arena.[212] As will be discussed in the next section, the roles assumed by women in both contexts were very similar and were very proud moments for the women who participated.

While many communities engaging in anti-colonial struggle in the region and beyond at the time conceived of women's roles in society in particular ways, and anti-colonial, armed resistance movements marked a departure for women from more traditional roles, the idea of these transformations in gender seem to have specific characteristics given context. While women from urban, rural, and refugee camp landscapes differed in terms of role, each dialectically assumed respective gendered

[211] Amrane-Minne, "Women and Politics in Algeria," 68.
[212] Amrane-Minne, "Women and Politics in Algeria," 68-69.

positions within their communities and nations as a whole. These roles also depended on class. For example, rural women of the peasantry would farm the land alongside men while wealthier urban women of the merchant classes would stay at home while the men were out to work. However during these movements, there was a socially accepted breakage from these ideas and some of the characteristics included in taking up arms, harboring resistance fighters, attending to medical needs, etc., creating a climate whereby interaction and exchange between men and women outside of familial realms became noble and thus uncriticizable because of the climate of resistance.

As these movements of resistance move toward anti-colonial aims, it is worth discussing the coloniality of gender as a global system of genders that adds layers of gender to the colonizer/colonized relationship. On the one hand, prevalent physical traits of the socially constructed gender body have implied certain types of roles in a region whereby monotheism originates and is anchored, however, on the other hand, the colonial dimension that has been internalized enables a reading of gender as more than binary as well as positioning women as a subjectivity in relation to men.[213] And as such, the colonized woman as positioned both in relation to the colonized man as well as the colonizer woman and is thus neither.[214] Though I need more information to comment definitively, seeing as the call for women to return back to a traditional role in the war came from the Lebanese Front which positions itself in close proximity to Europeanness and in opposition to Arabness, the internalization of the coloniality of power and the

[213] Lugones, María. "Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System." *Hypatia* 22, no. 1 (2007): 186-219.
[214] Lugones, “Heterosexualism,” 186-219.

gender that gets inscribed within it in the Lebanese landscape may have enabled the conditions whereby the Lebanese women of the left also followed this call. While gender systems may have already been in place locally, the colonial/modern gender system that Lugones defines inscribes upon both sexes locally a presumed colonial naturalization of gender,[215] however this naturalization of gender, while pervasive in the role of women in the resistance, is also pervasive among the Arab population as a whole visa vi those colonial and imperialist relations that continue to impact Lebanese and Palestinians and that inscribe upon them gendered masculinity as well as a delegitimization of the colonized man as man.[216] This in turn perpetuates, from within the movement and within colonized societies, the false notion of gender as intrinsically tied to some understanding of modernity that colonized subjects can aspire to. However, colonized subjects may be physically classified in sexed terms, but are not read as men or women because the maintenance of the coloniality of power and the coloniality of gender necessitates their dehumanization.[217] Thus, Lugones marks the construction of gender as a knowledge of modernity – which she describes through Quijano's work as the merging of colonialism and coloniality[218] – which I argue is something that is unachievable of the Arab populous, from any orientation, right or left, Christian or Muslim. It is precisely the aspiration of modernity that allows for the coloniality of power to persist through their proponents among the colonized. As such, Lugones moves for resistance as a decolonial praxis of rejecting modernity and coloniality and the overcoming of the coloniality of gender as

[215] Lugones, "Heterosexualism," 186-219.
[216] Lugones, "Toward a Decolonial Feminism," 744.
[217] Lugones, "Toward a Decolonial Feminism," 745.
[218] Lugones, "Heterosexualism," 186-219.

decolonial feminism.[219] In this vein, while Palestinian and Lebanese women on the one hand were subjected to a kind of western imaginary of inequality, on the other hand their heroing role in resistance against colonial and imperialist influence is precisely the type of decolonial praxis that has the potential for liberatory gains. As such, we cannot simply say that the movement was patriarchal in its practice, but rather we need to look at the ways in which the movement countered the coloniality of power while situating gender roles within an appropriate cultural context as well as through the eyes of the women in the movement.

Mueen Al-Taher continues to imply a natural flux of the participation of women during times of war, saying:

> Look, always in revolutions and wars and such, the differences between men and women shrink and there's more equality, but undoubtedly, at the end of the day, the men were the main fuel for this Civil War and it was as if they wouldn't allow more participation of women in certain areas and battles, etc. But the role of women in general revolved more around the social aspect or the political aspect and such. Undoubtedly, of course, there were women pioneers and there were women who moved up within the women's movement or within women organizations, etc. but for example, on the military level, I don't think there is any obvious prominence for such women. (Al-Taher)

As Al-Taher states here, it was as if there was certain control or certain allowance for how much women's participation would grow as the Civil War was fueled by men, in his words. However, as reflective of prior narratives, Al-Taher frames the shrinking of the differences between men and women as rooted within conditions of revolution and war. He also discusses women's role in leadership as moving up more so in the women's organization,

[219] Lugones, "Toward a Decolonial Feminism," 746-747.

however not in the guerilla organizations. This gestures toward the notion that what was clearly valued more was the military level, or even the other political decision-making and strategizing bodies as the prior interviews recount. While the women's organizations in many ways sustained the conditions for the militants and political leaders, their value as leaders in other institutions was seen as secondary to the militant and political leadership. This prods a deeper question of the social dimension of revolution and whether or not this moment accounted for the sustenance of this type of social liberation, or whether it was a temporary product of the particular needs of the revolution at the time.

Women's Voices: Pride and Power

I now turn to some of the women to share their accounts of the movement and what they were doing at the time and will show how they conceptualized and experienced their own participation in the struggle. Leila Khaled discusses her general sentiments and work that the women were doing during the time of the alliance:

> Let me limit my talk to the Palestinian situation by virtue of my experience and life in that area. The existence of a joint leadership in Lebanon, a Palestinian-Lebanese one, was reflected in other categories. For example, regarding the Palestinian women in Lebanon who joined the ranks of the revolution in all factions whose role was prominent, this was reflected through the General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW). The GUPW was able to gather all Lebanese women's organizations in order to carry out joint activities, especially since in the civil war period the women played an important role especially in relation to the displaced; aiding and harboring them, etc. And, for example, the PLO approved that the GUPW play this role, meaning harboring the displaced, offering aids, also going to hospitals, whether field hospitals or regular hospitals to care for the wounded, and this was one of the things that attracted additional numbers. Coordination was made between the Palestinian and Lebanese women's movements because the Palestinian women's movement was united under one frame by the name of the General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW), thus it

was able to guide in a unified manner, whereas the Lebanese women's movement wasn't united under one frame.

Later on there was a women's council, but the most prominent role was for the women's rights committee, which was part of the communist party, with Lebanese members. This role was important because there was some chaos during the war and people were being displaced and not finding places to stay, so this role was played by women, whether from the Palestinian or Lebanese women's movements, and there was always coordination in this area. Nothing was exclusively done by one side, we worked together in this area, therefore this relationship stayed between us till 1982, and continued afterwards in another form, but this relationship didn't stop, especially since we are talking about national factions. These factions were able to manage their matters to play a role in the scene whether in wars or not.

The remarkable thing was that whenever the resistance was under attack by any side, the women were immediately out to work, whether to hospitals for first aid, or to care for the displaced, they opened their homes to harbor families with no place to stay, and we noticed that in all the periods we were in Lebanon. …

This indicates that women have the ability to confront, alongside the men, in any battles, especially when we speak about the Palestinian case. … And here I want to point out that in a number of factions, women were in leadership ranks, but not in the front line. It was rare. This change came after 1982, but in Lebanon women were part of decision-making, whether in Fatah, PFLP, the DFLP, they were in the central committee in PFLP for example, but not in the political bureau, but in Fatah in the revolutionary council there were several women, same thing in the DFLP. I'm presenting examples, it's the same case in other organizations. Meaning they were part of decision making not in the daily form, but in the formulation of policies in these organizations. In the PLO they were in the national council by a percentage of 10%, which was a reasonable percentage at the start of something like the Palestinian case, but women weren't present in the executive committee, they were represented in the central committee of the PLO, but they weren't in the front lines. Afterward, some evolution happened regarding this, and they came to be in the political bureaus and the central committee. Women reached these positions in Fatah, after 1982. (Khaled)

There seems to be some general agreement on the role of women in decision-making: there was a very small number of women who participated in this. Khaled's account also

shows that the GUPW and the women in general played a very prominent role in the social arena with different services. Through the development of certain sector-based infrastructures, it appears there was some autonomy for women through particularly gendered tasks. Most interesting in this interview though is the way in which Leila Khaled places importance on the role of women and their organizing in support of the movement. While she herself was a fighter prior to this period, it seems that though she notes certain inequalities, she also shows a sense of pride in being part of the women's labor, working side by side with Lebanese women, and supporting the infrastructures of the revolution. Samira Salah, a former member of the same party, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and a leader in the women's union, adds:

> Actually at that time the struggle was overwhelming as there was no difference between a man and a woman, but women worked more in the social field, especially after the fall of Tel al Zaatar. At that time the Palestinian leadership gave the GUPW this assignment. We were the lead; the women in all the parties were in the union as well as women who were not in any party. We worked together as one team to help the families in Tel al Zaatar and the GUPW made a house for the children who lost their parents because Tel al Zaatar was a massacre so many adults had been killed, and as a result there were many orphans. So, we built a house and called it "Beit al-Sumoud," which is in Bir Hassan. Arafat bought the building while the GUPW prepared it. Each woman was responsible for one family's children. If there was an elder sister in the family she would be the responsible person.
>
> In my opinion the house was the most important project as without it the children were going to be homeless and the Palestinian leadership decided to keep the brothers and sisters together because it was insane to cause the child more loss in his family. So the system was that each room would host one family's children and for each room there would be a supervisor. I think this system was good and I'm so proud of this experience, which started in the war days and continues until now.
>
> The GUPW was providing the fighters with meals in this area. There were always hot meals for the fighters in duty. Of course, if they needed anything,

> we would provide them. Girls became fighters as there was a woman battalion. (Samira Salah)

Samira Salah discusses further the role of the GUPW saying that the alliance had given the women full control over projects like helping families seek refuge and giving homes to orphans. This is a necessary role in times of war, but it begs the question of the motives behind giving the women full autonomy of these types of operations. Is there an intentional reinforcement of gendered labor? Did this happen, in a sense, to keep women distracted from the larger political decisions and actions that were taking place by keeping them in the field of social services? What can be made of the question of women's agency in this instance. There is a great deal of pride that has been brought forth by women in regard to their labor for the revolution and this cannot be undermined. In turn, it is important to highlight and uplift these narratives and to acknowledge that this labor played a significant role in sustaining the overall infrastructure of the movement and this revolutionary effort could not have been made possible without all of the different roles that were assumed under its banner. As a result, and in an attempt to uplift the voices and feelings of pride by the women themselves, I pose the question not of why women's roles assumed a gendered nature, but rather why is it that labor gendered as feminine is not valued in the same ways that labor gendered as masculine are?

Hasna Mikdashi reflects on women in armed struggle efforts, in the women's organizations and in the leadership level and she brings up an important dimension of tokenization in the way women were treated when achieving leadership positions. Mikdashi discusses:

> Women and men did have, I cannot say identical or completely equal roles, but the participation of women was more feasible and got more feasible in the Palestinian movement, it was encouraged by leaders and women did participate in all walks of life including carrying arms, including training, including hospitals and hospitalizing, but the outcome at the end of the day was, no penetration of the political elite or the ruling levels, on the upper levels, even in elections I mean. A few women could run for elections and many times did not get elected. So, on the ground they were equal. There was no gender isolation or gender bias from anybody at all. On the *real politique* struggle for power within each political party, women did not have fair representation and they did not get fair encouragement at that level. (Mikdashi)

Mikdashi here talks about the difference between the popular levels and the political levels. On the one hand, women were able to participate in everything and were even encouraged to do so, whether it was through the realm of social services or militarization, but on the political and leadership levels, as others mentioned, women's representation was not as visible. She alludes to the fact that the leadership played a role in this and continues the discussion to bring in an element of tokenization of women into the picture with more concrete examples, stating:

> They were always encouraged to represent abroad. To be in a delegation you had to have a woman among 4 or 5 men you know because we are civilized (laugh) and women who knew more languages had a better chance to go abroad and travel and things like that.… You know Jehan Helou edited a book or she just published a book about women from the Lebanese and Palestinian side who worked together … and she came out with the results to show that although women gave a lot and had status on all these levels, they could not achieve what was fair for them or what you would say is equal for them. They were always in the backstage.
>
> Some of them became very outstanding, like Hanan Mikhael [Ashrawi]. And she could become a minister or a leader of an NGO and she led strikes and was hit by the Israelis. Some of them were outstanding and they had what it takes. Others did not have the same chance, I mean for different circumstances. Not every woman could be a good speaker for Palestine, not every woman could be elected to be a student leader. And this was, I think, mainly agreed upon or planned among the political parties of who is

> going to win and who was going to lose. I think it's political. The gender bias was there from the beginning among the leadership so they knew what they wanted and they knew how to get it, so it was in their hands.
>
> So, women did achieve a lot and women were empowered among the student body, the women in the camps. They became highly participatory in social work, in educating others, in going outside of their houses. This was never done before. Becoming politically active, doing military operations, becoming martyrs. So I think women have achieved a lot, but they were not recognized enough. (Mikdashi)

Mikdashi also highlights this point that the leadership knew what they were doing and what they wanted to do with the women, where their participation would be, etc., and there was a premeditated plan for this. The decision was in the hands of the male leadership. She also brings up an interesting point about needing one woman, for imaging's sake, to take on a delegation of five or six to talk about, present, have meetings about Palestine and the struggle, etc. This adds an interesting dimension: that women were tokenized when they were needed, but in terms of really achieving leadership, it was always in the hands of the men.

Through these accounts, it is apparent that on the popular level there was little difference between men and women and their joint participation and interaction was normalized though tasks may have been different at points, however this decreased moving up the ranks when we talk about the people with the real power. As Lugones suggests, gendered distinctions between the sexes are not so apparent among the colonized, but rather it is in the leadership levels, where power functions in relation to the colonizers (ie: leadership in anti-colonial struggle), that more distinct, colonial gender categories become exaggerated, functioning and being analyzed in response to the colonizer's notion of gender, modernity and liberation – hence the pervasiveness of

coloniality of power. It also is clear that, in terms of the higher ranks, there were certain interests being fulfilled in ensuring the participation of women in the struggle and there was some exploitation in this sense. There also seemed to be general pride from the women and men regarding the role that women had played at that time.

In terms of gender, there are two main points that reflect on the involvement of women in this period. The first is that women undoubtedly played a significant role in the war in all aspects of revolutionary life. They were trained fighters, they helped in the social arena, they provided, in some ways what people would consider natural for women to provide (ie.: food for the fighters). In this sense, there was an assumption of a gendered aspect of labor that was normalized as practice in this revolutionary struggle. The second point is that there were many women seriously committed to the struggle, yet they were not able to move up in the rankings the way that the men were. This reality also reflects a patriarchal lens for nationalist movement and continues to normalize movement labor as needing to be gendered. It calls into question the amount of power men played in keeping women out of the leadership and Al-Taher, Idriss and Mikdashi specifically address this as a deliberate plan. Nonetheless, everyone talked about this period as a liberating period for women. The one question that this leaves me with is: is it true liberation if the situation and participation of women in politics has retracted back to the way it was before the war or was it an unsustainable liberation out of necessity for the best interests of the politics of war?[220]

[220] Khaldieh, Juheina. "A Book Review of *Palestinian Women in Lebanon: Resistance and Social Transformation* by Jehan Helou." *As Safir* (2009): 4.

*Fida'iya*: Guerilla Femme Iconography

As has been shown throughout this chapter, women played roles in various arenas including roles more traditionally understood as feminine while also playing a role in the armed struggle. while there was a glaring misrepresentation of women in the armed front, there also is a particular glorification of individual women in more leadership and military roles. As was addressed above, this could manifest in tokenism as Hasna describes of Hanan Ashrawi and there was also selective glorification of women fighters, though the percentage of women taking up arms was small. I am interested in interrogating the iconography of specific women in the movement, one of whom I interviewed and arguably one of the greatest revolutionary women icons of her time, Leila Khaled. By interrogating the role of women in the most masculine role in the revolution, I am able to analyze their symbolic use juxtaposed against the on the ground reality of gendered roles and labor in the movement as a whole. To begin, Samah Idriss shares an anecdote from his military training, recalling:

> Well, I was 14 in 1975, but I remember that there were women fighting of course, in all parties, not just the Left, even in the Phalange party. It was one of the dominos of change for women. So, it was like, we join a party, it was part of our liberation as women. Now, I remember very well that men exploited this. It's not that so-called leaders and male figures liked this idea of women engaging, but they encouraged it and used it….
>
> I remember, many girls were with me when I took my first military training and they were very eager to learn everything. I remember, the first military camp I went to was in 1978 and at the end, after all this training, the one who was in charge said "whoever did the best training, whoever got the highest shots on the target will be allowed to shoot an RPG," a Rocket-Propelled Grenade. And it was a middle-class girl, a teenager, maybe 17, 18, and she was the one. We were like 25 people, 18 men and 7 women, and the woman was the best so she got to shoot the RPG. And that was the

> day when Dalal al-Moughrabi did her operation in Jerusalem. The same day, yes, because, the Israelis came into Lebanon and this is when I took my first training. (Idriss)

Idriss gives an interesting recollection of a military training camp and the successes of women fighters. This further brings to question the idea of a lack of women moving up to the higher ranks although they may have been superior. He also brings in a new dimension that is not just to say that the leadership had already imagined roles for controlling women's participation, but he adds that the participation was exploited by the different parties, factions and movements.

The martyr Idriss speaks of, Dalal al-Moghrabi, who performed an operation the same day as his training story, was one of the few iconographic women used in countless posters, media and other images disseminated at the time (another being Leila Khaled, who I will discuss below). Dalal al-Moghrabi was a member and fighter with the Fatah Movement who was martyred at age 19 leading a raid on the Zionist state in March 1978 and her image was reproduced several times as emblematic of the way in which the liberation of Palestine must be actualized. The images below, taken from the Palestine Poster Project archive[221], are a few of several reprints of her image that circulated after the military operation she conducted that claimed her life and proliferated the widespread honoring of her martyrdom.

[221] "The Palestine Poster Project Archives." The Palestine Poster Project Archives, http://www.palestineposterproject.org.

The first poster, published by the PLO in 1978, is an image of Dalal with a red background with Palestine subtly scripted across the background, says “The Path to the Homeland” in the big, bold yellow font and is titled “Operation Martyr Kamal Adwan” at the top in white.

Figure 2: The Path to the Homeland[222]

Operation Martyr Kamal Adwan was the name of the operation she led and for which she was martyred. The second poster clearly depicting Dalal as a *fida'iya* was published in 1978 and while research is still in progress on this poster, I presume it was disseminated after her martyrdom and used as a martyr poster for her.

[222] "Dalal Mughrabi." The Palestine Poster Project Archives, https://www.palestineposterproject.org/special-collection/dalal-mughrabi.

Figure 3: The Martyr Dalal Said Al-Moughrabi (Jehad) [223]

The caption says “the Martyr Dalal Said Al-Moughrabi (Jihad)” and below it reads “born in Beirut in 1958 (originally from Lyd) _ she joined in the year 1972”. The last poster was published by her party, Fatah, in 1978 and reads “Dalal and her Comrades .. Fatah and Palestine Embracing Until Victory”.

[223] Palestine Poster Project, “Dalal Mughrabi.”

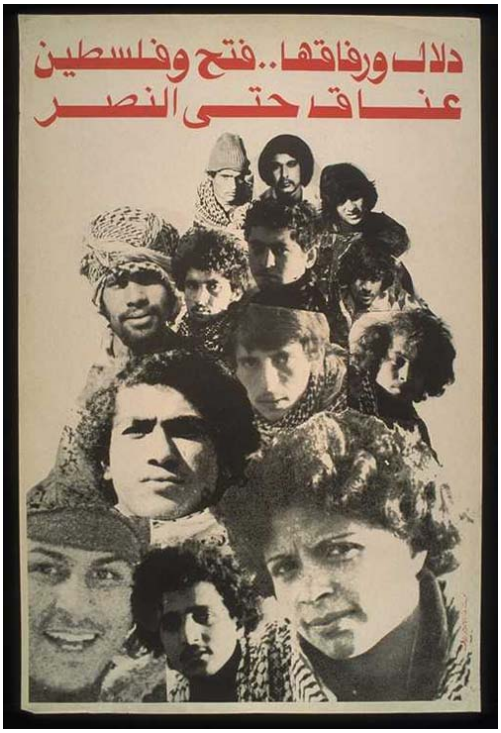

Figure 4: Dalal and her Comrades .. Fatah and Palestine Embracing Until Victory[224]

Research for this poster is also still in progress, but is another of several posters honoring Dalal's martyrdom and depicting her as a leader. Dalal was honored as a resistance fighter and martyr internally by the Palestinian movement and this permeated the Palestinian, Arab, and international revolutionary scenes.

What I find interesting about Dalal al-Moughrabi as icon in comparison to Leila Khaled as icon is that Dalal's iconography, much sparser than Leila's, was proliferated by the Palestinian movement itself whereas Leila Khaled's iconography was largely spread by non-Palestinian, non-Arab organizations and movements and outside of the Arab region. And while Dalal's iconography was relatively suspended in the time of the Palestinian revolution, especially internationally, Leila Khaled iconography continues to

[224] Palestine Poster Project, "Dalal Mughrabi."

be reproduced today intergenerationally on a global scale. One important distinction I see is the difference in position. While both carried out operations in service of the Palestinian revolution and in the name of their respective parties, Dalal was martyred and Leila still lives. Furthermore, while Leila became an icon, it wasn't until later that she became a leader in the highest levels of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). Her continued political growth and relevance institutionally, I believe, accounts for her continued pervasiveness in Palestinian, third world, and activist circles globally and from the revolutionary period until today. She continues to be invited as a speaker and participant in many movement gatherings, transnational convenings, Palestine awareness initiatives, etc. and is invited as both a political leader as well as a speaker on Palestinian women and even feminism. I say *even* feminism here because while listening to Leila speak for international women's day at the American University of Beirut in 2010, her talk was less feminist and more nationalist, was lacking in analysis of Palestinian or Arab women and she clearly continued to discuss women's issues as secondary to nationalism. I say this with a critical tone, but I want to also acknowledge that a critique of Palestinian nationalism is not paralleled with other pervasive nationalist critiques precisely because of the Palestinian condition of statelessness. Regardless of the desire to uphold or dismantle the state infrastructure, the reality of having a state for your nation as part of the current nation-state context of the world is an important achievement. In the Palestinian case, we have no territorial bounds to congregate or sustain ourselves in as a nation. So while I am critical of the notion of national liberation before social liberation, I don't see this as invalid or as the problem of Palestinian national thought necessarily,

whether from Leila Khaled or anyone else, but rather I see it as an attempt to participate in the continued brainstorming of paths to liberation within the generational context of my Palestinian generation – a generation in which tactics like those used by Dalal and Leila are no longer feasible. And while her hijacking operations have long been complete, she remains politically relevant decades later.

Figure 5: Leila Khaled, Freedom Fighter[225]

The infamous photo of Leila Khaled[226] that would bring her and the Palestinian resistance into the public eye was taken by Eddie Adams, a white American man who built a career

[225] "Leila Khaled: The Poster Girl of Palestinian Militancy." (2017). https://www.plutobooks.com/blog/leila-khaled-the-poster-girl-of-palestinian-militancy-international-womans-day.; "That's What Happens When You Dress up Like a Palestinian Freedom Fighter." *Al Bawaba*. https://www.albawaba.com/mena_voices/thats-what-happens-when-you-dress-palestinian-freedom-fighter-855062.

[226] Pluto Books, "Leila Khaled."; Al Bawaba, "That's What Happens."

off of photographing various contexts of war and devastation, often in favor of US militarism. Namely, he won a Pulitzer for a photo of a South Vietnamese police chief executing a Viet Cong officer.[227] His photography can be analyzed as servicing US imperialist policy and uplifting US militarism while also capturing racially and politically oppositional (to the US) imagery that invokes both demonic and pathologizing sentiments. By looking at collections of his popularized and awarded photos that are compiled now in his book *Bigger than the Frame* (2017), you can see how the practice of photography doesn't just capture a moment, but the photographer's selection and compilation of photos together create a particular lens through which to see the world.[228] It is through his work, alongside many other third world portrayals, that the simultaneous demonization and fetishization of guerilla freedom fighter Leila Khaled becomes a Western and global phenomenon. While this picture was taken in 1969, it continues to be reproduced today. In an interview with Khaled in 2001, Katharine Viner of the Guardian wrote that Leila, international hijacker of the PFLP, was "the papers' favourite 70s 'girl terrorist' and 'deadly beauty'," the "international pin-up girl of armed struggle," and she continues the focus on Khaled's aesthetics by commenting on her appearance and demeanor. Viner begins her article by describing the photo:

> In a way, the whole story is in the ring. The iconic photograph of Leila Khaled, the picture which made her the symbol of Palestinian resistance and female power, is extraordinary in many ways: the gun held in fragile hands, the shiny hair wrapped in a keffiah, the delicate Audrey Hepburn face refusing to meet your eye. But it's the ring, resting delicately on her

[227] Gass-Poore, Jordan. "Eddie Adams's Bigger Than the Frame Book's Stunning Photos." *Dailymail.co.uk* (2017). https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4435138/Striking-images-photojournalist-Eddie-Adams-s-book.html.

[228] "The Photojournalism of Eddie Adams – in Pictures." *The Guardian* (2017). https://www.theguardian.com/culture/gallery/2017/apr/10/eddie-adam-photojournalism-saigon-execution-pictures.

> third finger. To fuse an object of feminine adornment, of frivolity, with a bullet: that is Khaled's story, the reason behind her image's enduring power. Beauty mixed with violence.[229]

These words are an echo of all of the ways in which Khaled was framed after the popularization of not just her action, but in particular the photo. She was deemed a terrorist while being hyper-sexualized. In her autobiography *My People Shall Live* she talks about getting asked out and hit on during the different stages of her first operation by men of different nationalities and in different languages.[230] She also gets patronized by a seemingly well-intentioned American man for being an Arab girl who is able to travel by herself to Europe and meet her fiancé (her spur of the moment cover story).[231] Of course they did not know her position or what she was doing, however they managed to mark her as a young, free girl untainted by "traditional" Arab (or other brown) ways and soft enough to accept solicitations. However, she fervently would combat and reject such propositions, unless doing so countered her ability to complete her mission. She was very assertive and quick witted in her narration of her hijackings in *My People Shall Live* and she demonstrates her sole commitment to the struggle for national liberation. She saw herself as part of the revolution and whether undergoing operations or imprisoned, though she seemed to have moral debates among herself that made her vigilantly opposed to the operation ending in injury and death of those on the planes she hijacked, she never wavered in her conviction of the revolution.

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[229] Viner, Katharine. "G2: Profile of Palestinian Fighter Leila Khaled." *The Guardian* (2001). https://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/jan/26/israel.
[230] Khaled, Leila, and George Hajjar. *My People Shall Live: The Autobiography of a Revolutionary*. Hodder and Stoughton London, 1973, 78-79.
[231] Khaled, *My People Shall Live*, 77.

Yet one picture could mold her legacy into so many different assumptions from both Western, anti-Palestinian, and third world, Palestine-supporting peoples. In “The Politics of the Exotic: The Paradox of Cultural Voyeurism,” Hawthorne asserts that “cultural voyeurism relies on a belief in "objective knowledge" (that there is an object, an "other" to objectify).”[232] This particular photograph of Leila Khaled was able to capture a snapshot of the Palestinian resistance efforts through the image of an Arab, “Audrey Hepburn-esque,” gun-wielding hijacker who defied the stereotypes of her own identity and that contrasted the assumptions of the western viewer –thus marking Khaled as a cultural object for commodification. Hawthorne continues by stating that “the so-called ‘gender-marked’ experience of women or ‘culturally-marked’ experience of non-Westerners does not always match up to the ‘objective’ standard of experience had by white males.”[233] She posits that this difference in experience allows for the ability to commodify cultural products (ie: this image) and attach value to it for its mass production and consumption.

On this note, I argue that Leila Khaled’s image was proliferated both by western enemies as well as by third world comrades and her image continues to be taken up in both ways and in particular by third world organizers and activists. I highlight this because her image has also become a product of consumption for those who continue to admire and romanticize her political actions as a Palestinian revolutionary icon, and the main woman icon of the Palestinian resistance to be consumed globally across place and time. The photograph itself is listed on Getty images for upwards of $500 or perhaps more for

[232] Hawthorne, Susan. "The Politics of the Exotic: The Paradox of Cultural Voyeurism." *NWSA Journal* (1989): 628.
[233] Hawthorne, “Politics of the Exotic,” 628.

republishing rights and dozens of other less iconic photos of her over the years are also packaged as such.[234] The language in such websites, as well as in countless articles discussing her from the time and through the present, reproduces terror discourse and US and Zionist hegemonic knowledges, normalizing their hegemonies and not allowing the image to speak for itself or be classified on its own terms, on Leila's terms.

Contrarily, I find it interesting that in the Palestine Poster Project archive[235] there is not a single poster that was created by her party or the PLO. Some were created for unions of the PLO outside of the Arab countries and a bulk of those produced in the 70s were by other formations seen as comrades including Italian, Japanese, Iranian, and American organizations, among others. There are also a plethora of art works from the 90s, 2000s and today that continue to reproduce her image in poster form, as other artistic images, on t-shirts, earrings, etc. and many of these art works with her image on them are and continue to be sold for profit and they are often worn by progressive young people of color, including diasporic Palestinians, who strive to continue her legacy and who also romanticize it. Her image, and moreso her revolutionary accomplishments, are important markers of history and are a legacy from "an age when hijacks were a political tool of the moment, when commitment, extreme risk and sacrifice were admired and often romanticized."[236] We are no longer in a time where these types of political strategies are

[234] "Miss Layla Khaled, One of Two Hijackers of an American T.W.A.... News Photo." edited by Getty Images: Getty Images. https://www.gettyimages.com/photos/leila-khaled?family=editorial&sort=mostpopular&phrase=leila%20khaled&page=1&recency=anydate&suppressfamilycorrection=true
[235] "Leila Khaled." The Palestine Poster Project Archives, https://www.palestineposterproject.org/special-collection/leila-khaled.
[236] Viner, "G2: Profile of Palestinian Fighter Leila Khaled."

undertaken in the same way, yet she continues to be an icon to aspire toward. On this note, I want to consider two points. The first is that when we iconize someone, we often miss the point. According to Leila in her autobiography, she underwent plastic surgery to change her appearance not only to complete another hijacking operation, but also because she did not want to be recognized as the woman who hijacked the plane. Now, Leila Khaled is the first woman to hijack a plane and she did so in the name of the PFLP and the Palestinian resistance and this is a great accomplishment that holds great significance for Palestinians, Arab women, and beyond. This should be a source of pride. However, I argue that the fixation on this undermines the entirety of her role in the revolution until today while it also undermines the collection of resistance operations undertaken during the revolution (including by other women like Dalal Al-Moughrabi). Additionally, it presumes a particular type of resistance as that to aspire to, while it is not a realistic tactic to implement today. Further, the glorification of Leila Khaled often translates also to a glorification of the PFLP and party politics among subsequent generations who wish to assume a communist or socialist, left politics. Both the romanticization of her and of the PFLP in the Palestinian far diaspora where we are geographically and generationally far removed from on the ground politics decontextualizes the role of the party and particularly the leftist parties and the PFLP in Palestinian society today and as they have grown over the decades since then and it presumes the possibility of mobilizing revolution through the party. However, the role of the party and the role of the left in Palestinian politics has changed, whatever the claimed reasons (and there are many) and the relevance and impact on the popular bases is not

what it once was. In turn, this turn to the party thus recycles old discourses that were once relevant, but that are now being applied reductively and that lack the cultural and political depth of the present-day conundrum of the fragmented and depleted Palestinian political arena. Lastly, the taking up of Khaled in this way diminishes her sources of pride. As she discussed in the Viner interview:

> 'I no longer think it's necessary to prove ourselves as women by imitating men,' she says. 'I have learned that a woman can be a fighter, a freedom fighter, a political activist, and that she can fall in love, and be loved, she can be married, have children, be a mother.
>
> 'You see, at the beginning we were only interested in the revolution. We were not mature enough politically. The question of women is a part of our struggle but not the only part. Revolution must mean life also; every aspect of life.' Is she a Palestinian first, or a woman first? 'I cannot differentiate,' she says. 'A woman and a Palestinian at the same time.'[237]

While Khaled discusses her reflection of the political moment that marks her infamy, she complicates the ideas of revolution that she once had. And in conjunction with my interview with her, I argue that, by limiting our idea of Leila Khaled to her image and action, we are taking away her ability to speak her truth and to uplift the moments and memories that are a source of pride for her. While there are continued attempts at demonizing her paramount moments as a fighter, we must always legitimize these and other moments as real tactics against colonial violence, not as initiating acts of violence in and of themselves as they are often framed, however we can also try to understand the entirety of Khaled's work and the works of all the revolutionaries. While the act of hijacking will always be attached to the name of Leila Khaled, she also finds the gendered

[237] Viner, "G2: Profile of Palestinian Fighter Leila Khaled."

labors and autonomous work housed within the women's union as a source of pride and as not only relevant but necessary for supporting the militant dimension of the revolution. In my interviews with her, the work of the women's union was a focal point of the discussion and one that brings a source of pride and joy. It is precisely by looking at Leila Khaled as a whole person and by rejecting the fetishization and commodification of her as an icon that we are then able to broaden our reading of her, of women, and of revolution in this history. And through this reframing lens, we can then see that the women of the revolution do not necessarily become a significant part of the revolution by completing masculine tasks. It is rather that, because we place higher value on masculine tasks, that women thus are seen as less significant except those like Leila Khaled, and especially her, who infamously achieved a femme masculinity in her action. As such, I argue that all components and tactics of anti-colonial struggle, armed or otherwise, played an equally essential role in the revolution as contextualized at this particular time, but revolutionary value, as opposed to being equally distributed is rather masculinized.

## Epilogue

> Each generation must discover its mission, fulfil it or betray it, in relative opacity.
>
> - Frantz Fanon

How do we evaluate revolution, its successes, its failures? And if total liberation isn't maximized, like the retrieval of Palestine from its colonizer, then has revolution entirely failed?

It is too simplistic to say that the revolution succeeded or failed. Victories and losses are not black and white. And the impact on the masses of such an encompassing movement is also not black and white. In many senses, this dissertation is an attempt at exemplifying this reality – that supporters of revolutions can also be their critics. And that the praxis of liberation that movements adopt can't be determined by the individual, but rather by a collective. In this dissertation I hope I have presented ideas that contribute to this collective brainstorm, that contribute to developing a collective liberation.

Revolutions are not only a reflection of their local realities, they are a reflection of a moment in time in the world that has local manifestations. While the newness of the settler colonial state in Palestine was unique during a generally post-colonial era, the realities of independence movements and post-independence neo-colonial or imperialist relations and the fights against them in the context of post-WWII cold war reverberated globally. And today, post-cold war, the reality of neoliberal globalization is reverberating globally. This cataloguing of contexts is very real in the Arab world or SWANA (South West Asia North Africa) region and, while there are repercussions of these eras of power

on all regions of the world, they produce particular material effects on a local level. As the world moved from having two opposing superpowers of two different ideological currents (American capitalism vs. Societ socialism) to one dominant global hegemony economically, so too did the local infrastructures in the region. In the Arab region, the commodification of natural resources became political bargaining chips for maintaining a certain type of status-quo of political relations regionally – these relations rely heavily on US support for the sustenance of Zionism and growing privatization that is monopolizing industry, growing class divisions and reducing social support programs and, to a lesser extent, Russian support for anti-US nations and policies which also are growing efforts of privatization and thus class division while lessening social programming. Thus is the conundrum of the 21st century.

The lack of competing ideologies today is undermined by the will for anti-US-imperialist aspiration to persist in the same power landscape as preceding decades. And this is simply an insufficient lens for examining revolution today.

Part of my inspiration for reflecting on revolution in the 1970s (or 60s-80s more broadly) is to situate and understand how revolution was conceptualized in a specific time and place. This offers a lesson for how revolution was rationalized in this time and place. It is not to make broad generalizations about revolution that we can apply today or circumvent the failings of the revolution by accounting for this context, but rather it is a lesson in re-reading and reflecting on the history in order to build ideological proclivities

that are contemporarily relevant as opposed to recycling ideological frameworks of the past, which I find to be a particular trend right now, and a dangerous one. We cannot view the world through ideologies that don't account for global political and economic shifts over time and it is reductive to implant past ideologies on our present and future.

A major part of this project is to both document and demystify the revolution and its icons by reflecting on the day-to-day and overarching political negotiations it entailed and to offer contextual and analytical frameworks for understanding them. It is important to understand how meaning is made of the different ideological markers of this era and of Palestinian and Arab ideologies that persist today. I often see the oversimplification of these ideologies being taken up by diasporic Palestinians today, even those who were once part of formations practicing these ideologies, and I see the nostalgia of this period cross generations and the notion of return to that moment or the aims of that moment as recurring desires. By demystifying the revolution, I aim to honor its triumphs, not only elucidate criticisms of it. However, my intention is also to analyze it as a moment in history that is relevant to its time and place. Even if our conditions have not changed or have worsened, the context has shifted. Knowing our histories and their temporal and spatial specificities is necessary for understanding our present reality, though we must persist in developing further analytical continuity to account for the temporal and spatial shifts. As such, I will persist in arguing that as Palestinians, as our colonization by a settler state apparatus continues, our political analyses and ideologies must also continue to develop to account for the ways in which the settler state apparatus and its hegemonic structures continue to develop tools and technologies that suppress our survivance.

By analyzing and demystifying the revolution, I am in essence attempting to show that it is ok to either abandon or develop further ideologies that we value and hold dear to our hearts. I am concerned with all Palestinian ideology, though I also feel that leftist thought globally in particular has hit certain limits and necessitates a revamping that accounts for the current global economic reality. It is precisely due to my valuing of the legacies of Palestinian ideological currents – left, nationalist, and otherwise – that I am propelled to learn more and in more depth about those legacies, to analyze them and to share them. The commitment to redefining the struggle as it unfolds is a commitment to accounting for the material conditions of our present realities, and the centering of those colonial conditions – the entire plurality of those conditions – should serve as a lens for liberation.

As I hope I have indicated in this dissertation, the revolution was a genuine one and it showed a commitment to a collective imagination of what the movement should look like. It fostered a healthy practice of internal debate that was necessary for moving forward as a collective, and its infrastructure was designed to reflect this collective movement and to house a coalition of parties under one umbrella. I believe that if we are to take seriously a move toward revolution in the contemporary period, a new development of this type of collective practice that is relevant to the current realities of the time (like technological advancement) must be taken seriously and must consider security in its development.

One thing that we can learn from this moment is that power has a way of reproducing itself even as it is being fought. Perhaps one of the most difficult dynamics

to shift, it is important for any move toward liberation to consider how power will be usurped and contained for the larger political aspirations as opposed to continuing to feed the cycle of power. One proposition to consider, as I have discussed in my chapter on women, is if it is necessary to develop a practice of liberatory social relations and platforms as a methodology for more accountability in the path toward the overall goal of liberation.

One point here that I wish to consider is that revolution is ongoing struggle. In a way, the movement at this time self-proclaimed revolution as a mechanism for actually achieving it. Part of revolution is the performance of a type of strength that creates conditions of possibility for subverting and overcoming the powers of the enemy. However, as we have witnessed in countless revolutions, including the 21st century revolutions, a revolution is not merely an overthrow. For Palestine, it is not simply the reclaiming of the land or the return of her people. Rather, while the work necessary to get to the point of returning to the land as Palestinian land is a deep, committed, long-term struggle, reaching this point is just the tip of the iceberg. If we are committed to the process of total liberation, then the retrieval of land, or the overthrow of the Zionist government, like the overthrow of the Arab regimes today, are precisely the moment in which revolution commences or, at least, enters a new phase. While the overthrow is a necessary piece, it is unsustainable as it doesn't offer a clear systemic alternative shift. As such, to attain true liberation, revolution must be an ongoing process and structure, as is colonialism and its undoing. The sustenance of the overthrow, its replacement by a liberatory governing structure, the shedding of repressive structures and habits and the

fending off of counter-revolutions are all necessary processes of revolution for sustained liberation.

In part, in a moment in which the Palestinian political arena has, for some time now, been overwhelmingly inept to determine new strategies for liberation, studying a period of more victorious and revolutionarily engaged politics and strategy making is a refreshing departure from the somber realities of today, which are that of stagnancy coupled with simultaneous urgency. This is perhaps one of the project's inspirations. But as I pried deeper into the context of the time, I realized that there is so much to learn, so much unknown and unspoken in today's commonly understood lexicon of Palestinian history in activist circuits, and much to evaluate critically, as opposed to with nostalgic longing, if we are to collectively determine a break in today's political stalemate. We cannot turn to the past as a model to aspire to for the future. It was relevant in that particular moment that no longer exists. Rather we may turn to the past as a mechanism for contextualizing our present in order to determine a new future. One that still entails the liberation of Palestinian land and people, but also one that draws strategy from the current global political, social, and economic realities. Because the present reality has become the biggest deadlock in our history, nostalgic desires come to the fore. And maybe this is part of the process of moving beyond the nostalgia. It is my hope that this project contributes to the documentation of the legacy as well as offers framings for those of the present in order to honor and learn from this moment without necessitating a desire to return to it, but rather spark a desire to grow from it. I believe that these lenses can help us depart from the conundrum, and I also believe that the lessons learned from the

Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM), which arose in the face of the political conundrum and stagnancy and from which I draw my inspiration, and Loubna Qutami's reflections in her dissertation *Before the New Sky: Protracted Struggle and Possibilities of the Beyond for Palestine's New Youth Movement* of the PYM and Palestinian youth during this period of in-betweenness, are pieces that can hopefully encourage more deep and thoughtful analyses through those actively engaged in the movement in order to propel us beyond the current deadlock into a new strategy for liberation.

While we ripen in a time of darkness, let us never lose hope. The liberation of Palestine and of the world is on the horizon. May we be the ancestors who helped free her.

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