

estimated) strength of the regime, which lacked neither clarity of objectives nor initiative -- as did the resistance.

The second consideration was a development internal to the occupied territories themselves. Here the militaristic strategy of "armed combat" isolated from a broad-based political movement proved its shortcomings in responding to the daily needs of the West Bank and Gaza inhabitants. The PLO had become their saviour in an abstract process of liberation, but not their guide in concrete political struggle.

The transformation of the politics of declassment in PLO strategy towards seeking an organisational base in the occupied territories thus led to the formulation of a transitional program (based on the proposals for an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza) and a new strategy of alliances with West Bank and Gaza political forces. But this new strategy was governed by the internal conditions of the occupied territories, whose political fabric and social structure was, and is, radically different from that prevailing in the Palestinian diasporic community. What were the elements in that political fabric?

The withdrawal of the Jordanian regime and its administrative apparatus from the West Bank had created a political vacuum. Municipal councils and professional associations which, before 1967, had simply mediated the rule of the Jordanian bureaucracy were now compelled to fulfill a political function of a much higher level -- that of representation -- acting as organs for the articulation of "the grievances of West Bankers" against Israeli military rule. In addition, they had to fulfill the quasi-governmental functions of coordinating the administration and services of a community in a state of civic rebellion (Nakhleh, 1979:9-24). The two functions were often conflicting, and led municipal councils into alternate positions of collaboration with, or resistance to, the military command