Resistance, Repression, and Gender Politics
in Occupied Palestine and Jordan

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Resistance, Repression, and Gender Politics in Occupied Palestine and Jordan

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Frances S. Hasso

To Jeff, Jamal, and Naseem

■

To Fauzi Hanna Hasso and Amameh Khoury Hasso

■

In memory of Rick Hooper,
who was killed in the 2003 bombing
of the UN headquarters in Iraq

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Jeff Dillman is the life partner I always wanted. This project was fa-

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Introduction

THIS BOOK is a historicized ethnography that examines, among other issues, gender, women's involvement, and sexuality in the ideologies and strategies of a transnational Palestinian political movement. Using organizational documents and the textured narratives of men and women partisans, the book focuses on the central party apparatus of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP),[1] the Democratic Front (DF) branches established in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Jordan in the 1970s, and the most influential and innovative of the DF women's organizations, the Palestinian Federation of Women's Action Committees (Itihad lijan al-'amal al-nisaai al-filastini) in the Occupied Territories. The concluding chapter explores gender and sexual operations in party politics in Lebanon, Syria, and Kuwait.

Military and political studies of Palestinian resistance organizations usually avoid analysis of women's involvement or absence, or neglect to address the ways in which gender, including masculinities, and sexuality shape the presumably more substantive aspects of resistance politics (see, for example, Y. Sayigh 1997; and Younis 2000). In addition to integrating such concerns into an analysis of Palestinian transnational politics, I demonstrate the depth with which women's gendered subjec-

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1. The organization, which was established in February 1969, was originally called the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP) and was renamed the DFLP in 1974.

tivities were shaped by national identification and ideological commit-
ments. In these respects, the book bridges a discursive divide in Middle
East scholarship between gender as a "social" concern and nationalism
as a "political" concern.

The DFLP has been a maverick in the Palestinian resistance move-
ment at the central party and branch levels. Examples of this innova-
tion include its early articulation of a two-state solution as an interim
step toward the eventual establishment of an inclusive democratic state
in historic Palestine, its integration of women in key military and lead-
ership capacities, and its commitment to mass-based organizing. At the
same time, the central party has not been consistently accountable to
its rank and file and its branches, has never experienced a peaceful
turnover of leadership, and has remained a largely male-dominated or-
ganization. In the latter respects, the DFLP has followed the dominant
family patriarchy model of leadership that has marked most Palestinian
movements and parties, whereby leadership rarely changes absent the
death of the father-leader. That party activists have not historically
challenged this leadership model in any significant way speaks to its fa-
miliarity, comfortableness, and cultural resonance with experiences
throughout the Arab world. The DF and its branches, after all, exist in a
larger context in which women and girls are primarily understood as the
daughters, wives, mothers, and sisters of male national subjects, social
movement activists, and citizens, rather than being considered national
subjects, activists, and citizens in their own right or on their own terms.
Many DF women partisans contested and to a degree transformed such
understandings.

Palestinian nationalists largely believed that Arab backwardness—
in cultural, political, economic, and technological arenas—in relation
to Zionist modernity helped to produce the defeats of 1948 and 1967
(Hasso 2000). This context explains the DFLP's marked and self-
consciously modernist ideological orientations, which had wide-
ranging implications for gender status and relations. The early party
viewed "backwardness" as a significant problem and was optimistic that
the liberation of Palestine would be successful if the party modernized
the political attitudes and social values of the dispossessed, particularly

the working class and the peasantry. Modernization was necessary, according to an early party document, because "our people are facing a modern enemy [the Zionist state of Israel], supported by the strongest imperialist country, the United States of America" (Kadi 1969, 153, 169–70). Despite the gendered public-private dichotomy undergirding the challenges to "backwardness," men and especially women DFLP partisans often found this ideological commitment conducive to destabilizing sexual and gender "traditions" in Palestinian and Arab politics.

Gender practices in the DFLP were also positively impacted by the party's intellectualism and dedication to continuous reassessment of questions related to national liberation. The gendered aspects of these partisan commitments to "advancement," intellectualism, and assessment are evident in the following analysis by one of the founders of the DFLP and its highest-ranking leader in the Occupied Territories in 2000, Qais 'Abdul-Karim (Abu Leila):

> The continuous focus [of the party] was that there was no way to divide the struggle to liberate women from social and national struggle generally. We recognized that advancement in terms of women gaining their rights was something that would happen in the course of the larger process of national liberation on one side and social liberation on the other. Because of this, our women's organization programs . . . did not compromise with either of the two sides, neither the side that closes its eyes to the issue of women's equality, nor to the "feminist" (*unthawi*) side that considers the issue of women's liberation to be independent of or isolated from the issues of national and social liberation. ('Abdul-Karim 2000)[2]

At the same time, the intellectualism and gender openness of the party at some historical moments uneasily stood in for feminization in

2. Abu Leila was implicitly criticizing the feminism that made gender the superordinate axis of inequality. But he used a word whose literal translation is closest to "female-ist," which also implies a gender-separatist, even lesbian, orientation. His statement is better understood in the context of 1990s struggles, discussed in chapters 7 and 8, by Palestinian women in DFLP organizations in the territories, in other Palestinian parties, and in relation to the Palestinian Authority.

the most derogatory meanings of the term—dependence, weakness, and penetration by the dominant—given the predominance of male-dominated national liberation and opposition movements and the frequent privileging of militant (usually read as masculine) struggle in all the geographic fields of Palestinian resistance. This gendered reputational politics was at times exacerbated by the ubiquity of women in the leadership of party apparatuses and projects, which was contested by some men partisans and eventually overturned.

Palestinian diaspora politics demonstrate how the imaginings and strategies of movement elites and activists living in different locations for long periods—Amman, Beirut, Tunis, Damascus, Gaza City, or Ramallah—often come to compete with each other. Moreover, given Palestinian statelessness and dispersal, these imaginings and strategies are shaped in significant ways by political conditions in host countries. One of the puzzles addressed in *Resistance, Repression, and Gender Politics* is why DF branches in Jordan and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, although part of one transnational organization, diverged in their identities, mobilization strategies, and outcomes. For example, whereas the DFLP and its branches were unique in their early and continuing commitment to the inclusion of women, comparatively, women partisans were much more influential in the Occupied Territories DF branch.

The word *inside (al-dakhil)* in Palestinian parlance primarily refers to Palestine, in this case the parts occupied by Israel in the June 1967 war. This is in contradistinction to *outside (al-kharij)*, which refers to everywhere else Palestinians have settled in large numbers and have built institutions. For many partisans in the Jordan branch, however, *inside* referred to Jordan, in contradistinction to *outside* as the central party apparatus in Damascus. Especially in the late 1980s, partisans in both branches wanted more "inside" independence from the central party, a desire that was strongly resisted by the most powerful members of the DFLP Political Office (PO). Another piece of the puzzle addressed in this book is how differing conditions and imaginings led to the fragmentation of both DF branches beginning in 1989 and culminating in the 1990s. Beyond the shared centrifugal factors affecting both DF branches, the nature and consequences of fragmentation dif-

fered: in the Occupied Territories there was a reversal of women's historic power, whereas in Jordan branch divisions were at least discursively centered around competing definitions of national identity and belonging. In both cases, the nature and consequences of fragmentation were at least partly tied to political fields and protest histories in the Occupied Territories and Jordan, respectively.

Political Fields and Scale: Sources of Branch Divergence

As a political and social history of a transnational organization, the book draws special attention to how political fields help to shape protest politics in particular locations. Although a "field" typically pertains to a geographic place, a "political field" (*meedan siyasi*) is used to refer to the legal-cultural-historical-political environment within which a protest movement exists and to which it must respond (Ray 1999, 6; Bourdieu 1996, 231). A political field includes "the state, political parties, and social movement organizations" that agree on "legitimate ways of doing politics" (Ray 1999, 7–8). Raka Ray assumes a recursive relationship between the operations of a political field and the operations of its opposition, although she assigns predominant causal weight to political field conditions in producing opposition outcomes.

Though this book demonstrates the impact a discrete political field can have on the form and nature of opposition, it also indicates that excessive stress on a political field as producing the protest dynamics within it can be overly determining in three ways in the Palestinian context. First, it may underestimate the outcomes produced by interactions between "local" (itself plurally experienced and acted upon) and less geographically bordered political, ideological, and cultural processes and regimes. For example, many of the developments in DF branches discussed in this book occurred in interaction with globalized shifts in politics (the fall of the Eastern bloc and the rise of the United States as a sole superpower) and economics (International Monetary Fund-initiated structural adjustment policies and shifts in the world oil economy), regional, international and transnational feminist debates and human rights discourses, and the racialized colonial framework that empowers Israel vis-à-vis the Palestinians.

Second, and relatedly, as Byron Miller has stressed, focusing on conditions in a given local political field (for example, the political opportunity structure of city government) addresses only one scale when spatial processes interact at different scales and "articulate in place-specific contexts" (2000, xv, 166). As indicated in some of the examples above, in the Palestinian conflict, political fields exist at different scales, and "external" fields often become relevant to "local" fields. Moreover, developments (or lack thereof) in a local field can shift the scale and focus of oppositional strategies and demands (from the Jordanian government to the UN Security Council, for example), as well as the responses of state and other actors.

Importantly, Palestinian protest movements have recognized the relevance of scale, making decisions in response to local as well as non-localized geopolitical factors. An example of a major event that, in Byron Miller's terms, "jumped scales" was the rise of the Palestinian resistance movement in Jordan in the mid- to late 1960s and its culmination in civil war, the exile of the Palestinian movement, and a range of regional and bilateral agreements and plans. Another was the rise of the Palestinian resistance movement in Lebanon in the mid-1970s, culminating in the 1982 Israeli-sponsored Phalangist massacres of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and the exile of Palestinian political and military leadership to Tunis.

Finally, too much emphasis on the determinative impact of a political field on opposition movements can disregard the ways in which activists can transform or at least modify a political field. For example, one wonders what the Jordan political field would have looked like after 1971 if activists in the post-1967 resistance movement had chosen different mobilization strategies and tactics. Similarly, it is difficult to adequately explain the success of the DFLP-affiliated PFWAC in the Occupied Territories in the late 1970s and 1980s without acknowledging the possibility that alternative decisions by its organizers would have led to different outcomes. After all, other women's organizations in the Occupied Territories (the same field) during the same period did not have the same impact. More generally, it is easy to retrospectively argue that social movement outcomes are produced by a political field,

and *Resistance, Repression, and Gender Politics* makes this argument to a certain degree. But this argument does not fully explain why and how social movement actors decide on one rather than an alternative strategy, particularly if they choose to innovate. Such movement innovations, when successful, introduce new options, thus acting back on political fields rather than being fully determined by them.

Charles Tilly has argued that the strategies that exist within a given "repertoire of collective action" are impacted by previous success or failure, the prior experience and observation of activists, and repression (1978, 151, 157–58). These factors are relevant to understanding the differing mobilization strategies and outcomes of the Jordan and Occupied Territories branches of the Democratic Front. The guerrilla and civil war periods of the late 1960s through 1971 provided the primary socializing experiences of the partisans who established the DF branch in Jordan in the mid-1970s. During the almost twenty years of martial law that followed, the Jordan DF partisans who were not expelled, imprisoned, or abroad largely mobilized through urban professional organizations (university student unions, labor unions, women's organizations, or physician guilds).

The Jordan DF branch maintained relatively rigid rules of membership and affiliation, particularly given the dangers of being exposed to Jordanian state repression, which was particularly harsh for involvement in leftist Palestinian organizations. Moreover, sector-based DF branch organizations for women, labor, youth, and students were not established until the early to mid-1980s, and even then martial law did not allow them to operate openly. Indeed, the branch-affiliated women's organization that was established, the League of Jordanian Democratic Women (Rand) (Rabitat al-nisaa al-demoqratiyyaat al-urduniyyaat), though influential in the Jordan political field, did not parallel the PFWAC's size or influence in the Occupied Territories. Finally, relatively strong DFLP central party control over the Jordan branch limited the latter's ability to operate and innovate in relation to developments in Jordan.

In comparison to Jordan, the mid- to late 1970s was a democratizing period in the Palestinian national movement in the Occupied Territo-

ries in the sense that activists were increasingly aware of the need to mobilize and organize all sorts of people through the serious development of a range of grassroots options, and DFLP partisans were very active in these efforts. The Occupied Territories DF branch that was established in the mid-1970s mobilized in a more decentralized manner than the Jordan branch, working in villages, urban centers, and refugee camps. Partisans worked within existing organizations for a period, but began establishing new federated structures such as the PFWAC and Workers Unity Bloc (WUB) in the late 1970s. These mass-based organizations innovated and operated semiautonomously from the DF branch. More accurately, the leaders of these organizations were themselves the leaders of the DF branch in the territories and had little difficulty initiating new strategies.

The success of the PFWAC in particular widened the ranks and standing of women in the DF branch. This success can be partly explained by the dominant mobilization model in the Occupied Territories and the organizing "prehistories" of leading partisans. Specifically, many of the leading DF and PFWAC partisans in the Occupied Territories were socialized in the grassroots organizing model that became dominant in the 1970s. This model was particularly inviting to girls and women given its lower risk, although DF women partisans decentralized it further and actively incorporated a feminist dimension as they established new organizations.

There were also other differences in the gender politics of the two branches. Whereas the ideologies of both DF branch women's organizations were articulated in relation to regional and transnational feminist and human rights discourses and organizations, the Western commitment to Israel and the lack of a Palestinian state appear to have helped produce a much deeper, earlier, and more charged engagement with such discourses and organizations by DF women in the territories. In the Jordan branch, in contrast, gender dynamics at the leadership and rank-and-file levels of the party were much more nationally bound, governed by cultural norms that expected leaders to be men, as well as women's legalized inequality relative to men. This situation was very much facilitated by a monarchic state whose leaders have generally allied with gender-conservative forces (religion and clan based) and a Palestinian

and Jordanian male leftist leadership that largely acquiesced to this situation. These factors helped to make the Jordan DF branch more male dominated in membership and leadership in comparison to the Occupied Territories DF branch.

Many of the differences between the two branches were interrelated in the sense that, for example, better articulation of DF branch suborganizations in the Occupied Territories made them more dynamic and larger, and thus more willing to make decisions independently of the central party. Similarly, the 1970–71 Jordan civil war divided the population, precipitated the reinstitution of a police state that consolidated its hegemony partly by actively reinforcing divisions between Palestinian-origin and Jordanian-origin Jordanians, militarized the experiences of DF partisans in Jordan, and ensured a clandestine organizational form given the risks involved, all of which severely constrained organization building and innovation on the ground.

Gender and Communal (Di)visions in the Nation

> In Gaza, during one period, there was not one young man who was a unionist in the DFLP structures here. They ["democratic renewal" men] went and brought any young man . . . and they made him responsible for the labor unions. In spite of the fact that there were women among us [with experience]. . . . But they refused that I or any one of the women be responsible for the unions, saying: "You go, you are women and there must be a man." But the man does not have experience. . . . And one day I told [the leaders]: . . . "Why don't you let each woman choose where she wants to work. I would like to work in the area of unions." One of the male members of the Central Committee responded to me, "Okay, go wear a mustache and come be in the unions." One feels such thwarted hopes. During that time, I spent six months to one year, a period where I was a person who was very, very sick; I was in the hospital for a long time. I was unable to think. . . . [Y]ou have been struggling for long years, and you are proud that you are present in a party that believes in women and her roles, and it was the one point of pride you had and you find that it was all not true.
>
> —Tahani Abu Dakka, interview, October 1995

Tahani Abu Dakka helped to establish the PFWAC in the Gaza Strip. She was also a labor organizer and one of the leaders of the DF branch in the territories. In the epigraph above, she describes the machinations of

women's exclusion from leadership in the founding moments of the "democratic renewal" group (later called Fida), which split from the DFLP in the early 1990s. Her narrative demonstrates the reductiveness of feminist accounts that artificially disaggregate nationalist and class subjectivities from gendered ones. Women, like men, are often motivated by nationalist and other desires, although their imaginings of community include themselves. Her account also indicates the extent to which a masculinist agenda to reverse women's power was explicit, since men and women in the "democratic renewal" group shared a similar point of view with respect to the "political" or nationalist issues that led to their split from the DFLP.

Nationalism often attempts to buttress its project by subsuming the complicating fault lines of gender, religion, age, sexuality, education, class, and ideological differences. Such differences, however, come to the fore as the stakes in the project increase. This occurred in both DF branches and in political organizations more generally in the Occupied Territories and Jordan after the start of the Palestinian uprising in late 1987. In these new circumstances, individuals and organizations in both political fields increasingly jockeyed for power and influence in the incipient Palestinian statist structure and the liberalizing Jordanian state, respectively. In the Occupied Territories branch, struggles centered on women's political influence and power in relation to men partisans. In the Jordan branch, struggles turned on the influence and power of Palestinian-origin in relation to Jordanian-origin partisans or, rather, what it meant to be a Jordan-focused rather than a transnational opposition party.

In the Occupied Territories, the DF branch was distinguished by power sharing between men and women in leadership, high women's participation at the rank-and-file and cadre levels, and the existence of a strong branch-affiliated feminist-nationalist women's organization. Women's influence and participation were such that the party branch developed a reputation in the 1980s as "the women's front" (*jabhat al-niswan*), an epithet intended to demean the organization. With the beginning of the uprising (*intifada*) in December 1987, the PFWAC was redirected from its pre-intifada balance between a combined national-

ist-feminist agenda to a party-building focus in a period of great political change and intense competition within and between Palestinian organizations. Disagreements emerged in 1988 about the political direction of the party with respect to resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and peaked in a split in 1990 that divided the branch and the central party. As this occurred, women were disempowered by men of both factions, as Abu Dakka's excerpt indicates.

The "feminine" reputation of the DF branch may have been seen as a liability in the Palestinian state-building period since femininity is associated with weakness, and the national, regional, and international political terrains in which parties were competing were dominated by men. This seemed to require organizational defeminization, at least in the minds of some male political elites in both factions. More important, many partisan men behaved as if they were more entitled than women to partisan power during the state-building period, when the personal stakes in such influence increased.

The branch split in Jordan, in contrast, was impacted by tensions between the Palestinian (most were refugees from the 1948 and 1967 wars) and Jordanian-origin sectors of the population. These communal strains were largely produced by the 1970–71 civil war between the Hashemite regime and the Palestinian resistance movement, a war in which the DFLP was heavily involved. Although the communal categories of "Palestinian" and "Jordanian" are largely politically articulated and do not withstand close examination (given the historical expansions and contractions of the state's borders, voluntary and involuntary migration, and extensive marital mixing), by the 1990s, a powerful din of nativist chauvinism arose in Jordan called *iqlimiyya* (regionalism). This chauvinism developed in response to a possible resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict that included permanent resettlement *(tawteen)* of Palestinian refugees in Jordan, and was stoked by the policies and discourse of the Hashemite regime.

Leaders of the DF branch established in Jordan, called Majd (the Arabic acronym for "Munathamat al-jabha al-democratiyya fil-urdun") until 1989, were concerned with repairing the social damage of the civil war by building a Jordanian-Palestinian alliance and developing a polit-

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ical program for Jordan, not one that solely focused on liberating Palestine—a tightrope balance that they more or less (depending on who narrated the story) maintained. The issue of whether Majd was a bona fide independent Jordanian party or an undercover branch of an externally based Palestinian party intensified with the 1988 announcement by King Hussein that Jordan would end its sovereignty claims over the Israeli-occupied West Bank, changing what it meant to be "Jordanian." In addition, with the political liberalization that was initiated by the Hashemite regime in 1989 in response to economic unrest, an authentic commitment to "Jordan" (Hashemite, of course) rather than transnational Palestinian politics became a condition for party legalization. Given these factors, DF partisan debates about whether the organization, which indeed included many "Jordanian Jordanians," should remain a DFLP branch or become an independent Jordanian party contributed to splits, one in 1990 and another in 1993–94.

Personal and Intellectual Genealogies

This research emerged from my fascination as an Arab American feminist of mixed Jordanian and Palestinian heritage with the Palestinian intifada that began in December 1987. At that time, many were optimistic that the uprising would lead to a just resolution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. My interest led to a 1989 six-month internship with the PFWAC in the Occupied Territories while I was a master of arts student at Georgetown University. I chose to work with the PFWAC because a number of friends noted that the organization was unusually active in combined feminist and nationalist efforts. The leaders of the PFWAC asked me to work on the three-member newly established Production Committee, which was created to evaluate the organization's five major income-generating projects, make recommendations as to their future direction, and coordinate necessary training in marketing, quality control, packaging, and accounting.[3]

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3. The evaluation of and recommendations for these projects were outlined in an eighty-page internal report that was coauthored by Claude Isakov (a French national who was also a member of the Production Committee) and myself and submitted to the PFWAC Executive Committee in mid-December 1989.

While on the Production Committee, I became interested in whether working in the income-generating projects was indeed transforming working-class women's lives, consistent with the PFWAC's Marxist-feminist analysis of the relationship between public-sphere work and gender inequality in the home. Women's situations during the intifada were less positive than was being portrayed by most journalistic accounts at that time. By 1989, it appeared that men were in charge of "politics," or the nationalist movement. The public narrative about gender at this time rarely went beyond assurances that in the future Palestinian state women would have equal suffrage and access to state resources. The intensified nationalist and Islamist restrictions against women in Algeria were also part of this narrative, with Palestinians arguing that a similar scenario was very unlikely in a Palestinian state.

Questions about transformation in personal spheres, raised by the largely foreign women's delegations visiting the PFWAC, were almost always treated as "Western" concerns that were not appropriate in the existing cultural milieu, even if the PFWAC representative was sympathetic to them. Engaging in an internal gender critique with these delegations, I argue, was viewed by many as destructive because it undermined the international case for Palestinian self-determination, which was assumed to require "civilization." Women's oppression was a mark of the uncivilized in the hegemonic transnational feminist discourses of the 1970s and 1980s. When Third World or Global South feminists in international fora focused on the severely inequitable distribution of political and economic power across nations and regions, First World feminists often accused them of diluting the more important issue of women's status. This cultural politics, in turn, muted Palestinian women's explicit gender critiques of their own societies before English-speaking audiences, where they often focused instead on the costs of colonialism, imperialism, racism, and class oppression (Hasso 1998).

While working with the PFWAC, I designed a study and, with the support of PFWAC leaders Sama 'Aweidhah Liftawi and Zahira Kamal, interviewed sixty-three employees of the PFWAC income-generating projects and preschools, focusing on the influence of women's paid work on gender status and orientations. Like myself, most were unaware of

the troubles brewing in the central party, the DF Occupied Territories branch, or the upper ranks of the PFWAC. I presented early results of this research to the organization in Jerusalem before I returned to the United States in December 1989, but did nothing else with it for a number of years after internal conflicts in the PFWAC and DFLP branch publicly erupted in February 1990. In addition to not understanding the unfolding events, I felt betrayed by the PFWAC for what I perceived as the "selling out" of the gender question for the sake of nationalism.

When I lived and worked in the Occupied Territories between mid-1991 and mid-1992, I avoided present or former PFWAC leaders and activists, with the exception of several close friends.[4] Between September and December 1995, I returned to the territories as a doctoral student at the University of Michigan and reinterviewed fifty-six of the sixty-three employees of PFWAC income-generating projects and preschools interviewed in 1989. I was interested in the women's gender ideologies, the extent to which they were impacted by PFWAC affiliation, the choices they had made (about marriage, child rearing, work, and political activity) in the intervening six years, and their thoughts and feelings regarding the 1990s demobilization of mass-based organizations. I found that being intensely involved in the nationalist-feminist PFWAC program had a long-term impact on women's sense of efficacy and produced feminist subjectivities that were discernible five years after the PFWAC's demise as it had historically been constituted (Hasso 2001).

Resistance, Repression, and Gender Politics begins with the results of an additional twenty-nine interviews I conducted in 1995 with eleven men and eighteen women who were former or continuing midlevel and high-ranking partisans of the PFWAC and the DF in the Occupied Territories, as well as analysis of organizational literature.[5] I wanted to explore the sources of the PFWAC's split in the early 1990s, since this

4. I worked as a visiting researcher with the human rights organization al-Haq.
5. Fourteen of the twenty-nine people were unaffiliated with the DF or PFWAC factions when interviewed. Seventeen of the women and eight of the men had spent most of their political careers in the territories.

event significantly impacted the reinterviewed project women's evaluation of their experiences with the organization. In the process, I learned of women's unusual presence and power in all levels of the DFLP branch between the mid-1970s and 1988, the weakening of the PFWAC as a nationalist-feminist organization during the 1987–91 intifada, and the systematic reassertion of partisan men's power between the late 1980s and mid-1990s.

The third stage of this research project was conducted in 2000 in Jordan, Syria, and the Occupied Territories and was motivated by a desire to determine to what extent the gender dynamics in the DF Occupied Territories branch were similar to dynamics in other Democratic Front branches, to more fully address the two questions of why women became so powerful in the Occupied Territories branch and why they later lost power, and to explore the nature of the "inside-outside" divide between the branches and the central party. The Jordan branch was a logical choice for comparison given the country's significant proportion of Palestinian refugees and that the DFLP was originally established in Jordan by a Jordanian.[6]

With the exception of one interview conducted in English at the person's request, I conducted all other interviews in Arabic. I also audiotaped all the interviews and fully translated and transcribed most of them.[7] Attribution of interview material was addressed in two ways. With a few exceptions, former and continuing partisans agreed at the beginning of the interview to allow their names to be used in publications based on this research; indeed, more than one person insisted that

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6. In addition to eighteen present or former partisans from the Jordan DF branch, the 2000 interviewees were Nada Twair, president of the DFLP-affiliated PFWAC in the territories; DFLP general secretary Nayef Hawatmeh; Nihayah Mohammad, a member of the DF Central Leadership Secretariat in the territories; Saleh Ra'fat, the general secretary of Fida; Saji Salameh Khalil, who had quit the DFLP and was working in a high position in the Palestinian National Authority (PNA); Abu Leila (Qais 'Abdul-Karim), a member of the DFLP Political Office who led the Central Leadership of the DF branch; Mamdouh Nowfal, who had quit Fida and was an adviser in the PNA; and 'Issam 'Abdul Latif (Abu al-'Abed), who had quit Fida and advised Arafat.

7. Allen Clark transcribed and translated the interview with Nayef Hawatmeh.

their names be used "for the sake of history." Nevertheless, I sometimes deleted attributions when using parts of these interviews. I was often torn between an ethical impulse to protect respondents and informants and a recognition that many were public figures with influence. All partisans who asked not to have interview material attributed to them were respected. For reasons I am unclear about, such requests were more likely to come from women interviewed in 2000 who had been active in the DF Jordan branch.

Organization of the Book

Chapter 1 explores the ideological divisions within the movements to liberate Palestine between 1948 and 1967, paying particular attention to the increasing tension between pan-Arabism and Palestinian particularism in the Arab Nationalists Movement (ANM). The chapter also examines the establishment of the two ANM "child" revolutionary organizations that emerged with its demise following the 1967 war, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP).

Chapter 2 comparatively addresses mobilization and opposition politics between 1972 and 1987 in Jordan and between 1967 and 1987 in the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories.

Chapter 3 focuses on the 1970–71 civil war in Jordan and its antecedents. It pays particular attention to the ideologies, gender operations, and participation of the recently minted DFLP and other Palestinian guerrilla organizations.

Chapter 4 addresses the central party history and ideologies of the DFLP, compares Democratic Front branch strategies in Jordan and the Occupied Territories, and discusses branch-central party relations between 1969 and 1987.

Chapter 5 discusses the establishment, history, and strategies of the Palestinian Federation of Women's Action Committees in the Occupied Territories.

Chapter 6 compares gender operations and women's power in DF branches in Jordan and the Occupied Territories through late 1987. It demonstrates that gender dynamics in each branch were dependent on

the interactive factors of hegemonic gender politics, organizing experiences, state restrictions, and the mobilization pattern established by each branch.

Chapter 7 discusses the protest politics of the Palestinian uprising that began in late 1987, including its gendered dimensions, its impact on Jordanian politics, and the ascendance of "outside" authority and men in the territories, which continued during the "self-rule" period of the 1990s. The chapter also examines the rise of Jordanian-origin and Palestinian-origin communal tensions in Jordan, which were related to announced changes in Jordan's borders in 1988, as well as ongoing negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian National Authority regarding the right of return for Palestinian refugees.

Chapter 8 analyzes the fragmentation of the PFWAC, the DF branch in the Occupied Territories, and the DF branch in Jordan. These splits led to the loss of women's historical power in both postsplit factions in the Occupied Territories, the end of the PFWAC as it had historically been constituted, and a decreased influence of the PFWAC and the DF on resistance politics in the Occupied Territories. In Jordan, disagreements and fragmentation were strongly colored by "inside" versus "outside" tensions and the Jordan-origin versus Palestinian-origin communalism that structured Jordanian politics, both of which came to the fore in the state "liberalization" period that began in 1989.

The concluding chapter explores gender and sexual politics in the Democratic Front in Lebanon, Syria, and Kuwait during the 1980s and 1990s. This chapter further demonstrates the significant ways in which gender politics are shaped by political field conditions.

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Abbreviations

ANM	Arab Nationalists Movement
AUB	American University of Beirut
CC	Central Committee of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine
CEDAW	Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
DF	Democratic Front
DFLP	Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine
DOP	Declaration of Principles
GFTU	General Federation of Trade Unions
GUPS	General Union of Palestinian Students
GUPW	General Union of Palestinian Women
IAF	Islamic Action Front
IDP	*International Documents on Palestine*
JCP	Jordanian Communist Party
NGC	National Guidance Committee
OTC	Occupied Territories Committee
PA	Palestinian Authority
PAC	Palestinian Action Command
PCP	Palestinian Communist Party
PDFLP	Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine
PFLP	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
PFWAC	Palestinian Federation of Women's Action Committees
PLA	Palestine Liberation Army

PLC	Palestinian Legislative Council
PLF	Palestine Liberation Front
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
PNA	Palestinian National Authority
PNC	Palestine National Council
PNF	Palestine National Front
PO	Political Office
PRM	Palestinian Resistance Movement
PUWWC	Palestinian Union of Women's Work Committees
PWWC	Palestinian Women's Work Committees
RAND	League of Jordanian Democratic Women
RYO	Revenge Youth Organization
UAR	United Arab Republic
UNLU	Unified National Leadership of the Uprising
UPWC	Union of Palestinian Women's Committees
VWC	Voluntary Work Committee
VWW	Voluntary Women's Work Committee
WATC	Women's Affairs Technical Committee
WUB	Workers Unity Bloc
WWC	Women's Work Committee

Resistance, Repression, and Gender Politics
in Occupied Palestine and Jordan

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1

Origins of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine

THE ARAB NATIONALISTS MOVEMENT (Harakat al-qawmiyyin al-'arab) was established following the 1947–48 war and was the primary political socializing organization for the men and women who established the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine in February 1969. Pan-Arabism, the prevailing nationalist paradigm between 1948 and 1967, operated on the premise that regional state boundaries were colonial creations and that Israel was a European-sponsored settler-colonial and expansionist power that all Arab anti-colonial forces should fight. Palestinianism, which became ascendent after 1967, assumed that the focus of revolutionary movements should be the creation of a Palestinian state brought to fruition by activists who were independent of the sponsorship and supervision of Arab states. The popularity of pan-Arabism in the 1950s and 1960s indicated optimism in the liberatory potential of Arab governments, such as that of Egypt's Gamal 'Abd al-Nasser, in the flush of the postcolonial moment. Several of these states experienced coups d'état or revolutions by the early to mid-1950s (Syria, Iraq, and Egypt), although Jordan continued to be led by a British-installed family regime with the end of direct British military control in the late 1940s. Palestine liberation movements became increasingly conflicted over whether pan-Arabism was effective. An important factor in this debate was the frequent contradiction between the rhetoric and action of postcolonial Arab states.

By the mid-1960s, Palestinianism was on the rise, and activists throughout the region increasingly viewed Palestinian statist (rather than pan-Arab) politics as the only viable option despite the social and territorial fragmentation of the Palestinian population (Y. Sayigh 1997, 22, 46). Arab popular support for pan-Arabism also waned following the 1967 defeat of the Arab armies by Israel, as the leading proponents of pan-Arabism were increasingly viewed as being motivated by expansionist, and state- and regime-preservation, motives. Awareness of the tensions between pan-Arabism and Palestinian particularism, as well as whether pan-Arabism should be revolutionary or linked to existing states, is important for understanding the ideological basis for the DFLP's establishment.

The Arab Nationalists Movement

The Arab Nationalists Movement helped to define the identities and ideologies of the first generation of DFLP partisans. The ANM, whose cadres were often referred to as the *harakiyyeen*, according to the late Hanna Batatu, was initiated in earlier forms by Arab students from throughout the region at the American University of Beirut (AUB) in 1948. At that time, they referred to themselves as the Circle (al-Halqa). The establishing group included Iraqi Hani al-Hindi and Palestinian George Habash.[1] In 1952, the Beirut group linked to the Firm Bond (al-'Urwa-l-wuthqa), a student society supervised by Constantine Zurayq and Nabīh Faris, professors at AUB. During a December 1956 congress, they established a movement named the Arab Nationalist Youth (Ash-shabab al-qawmi al-'arabi). The Iraqi branch of the party was the first to use the name the Arab Nationalists Movement, in 1958. In addition to Habash and al-Hindi, the Arab Nationalist Youth/ANM branches were led by Christian-, Sunni-, and Shi'i-origin Arab men of the professional and merchant classes, as well as students (Batatu 1978, 1029–30; Kazziha 1975, esp. chap. 2).

1. The late George Habash was born in 1926. His family left Lydda, Palestine, for Jordan during the 1948 war. After earning his medical degree at the AUB in 1951, he was not allowed to return to Palestine (Kazziha 1975, 17).

Activists who established the ANM criticized Arab states that sought peace with Israel, as well as "Western and Zionist interests" in the region. They stressed "political violence" for the purpose of liberating Palestine. They viewed the liberation of Palestine as impossible, however, without the resources of Arab countries, which themselves needed to be freed from Western colonial domination (Y. Sayigh 1997, 32, 72–73; Quandt, Jabber, and Lesch 1973, 59). Although originally suspicious of the Free Officers who overthrew the Egyptian monarchy in 1952, by the mid-1950s ANM activists were impressed with Gamal 'Abd al-Nasser's opposition to the U.S.-sponsored Baghdad Pact, his anti-Western and anticolonial stances, and his nationalization of the Suez Canal (Y. Sayigh 1997, 75).

After committing to Nasserism, ANM activists essentially existed to serve Nasser's foreign policy goals in the region. For example, they agreed to wait to liberate Palestine until Arab countries were united, took "virulently anticommunist" positions, worked to overthrow anti-Nasser or pro-Western governments in the region, and even dissolved their branches in Syria, Egypt, and the Gaza Strip (which Egypt administered) following Nasser's March 1958 decree ending party pluralism within the United Arab Republic (UAR) of Egypt and Syria (Y. Sayigh 1997, 75–76; Kazziha 1975, 22). The organization grew significantly in 1956–57, including among its most active cadres men who taught school in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and refugee camps (Y. Sayigh 1997, 74). ANM partisans also became very active in Egypt and Beirut in the powerful Palestinian student branches that eventually consolidated into the General Union of Palestinian Students (GUPS) (Brand 1988, 70–77).

The ANM leadership was increasingly faced with reconciling support for Nasserist pan-Arabism with the desire at the rank-and-file level to liberate Palestine through armed action against Israel, a dilemma that became stark with Nasser's March 1959 announcement that he had "no plan for the liberation of Palestine" (Y. Sayigh 1997, 77–78). The ANM's leadership was suspicious of any particularistic nationalist identity (31, 78) and with Syria's secession from the UAR in late 1961 became even more closely allied with Nasser. Many Palestinian ANM activists supported specifically Palestinian organizations by mid-1962,

and a number of Palestinian guerrilla groups were formed within the ANM, despite the leadership's reiteration of its opposition to independent military action for fear of Arab states' abdication of "their responsibility for the liberation of Palestine" (79).

There was also an ideological source of internal tension that had been developing since the late 1950s regarding the relative weight assigned by the ANM to class analysis and "social revolution" (Y. Sayigh 1997, 79). Whereas the ANM leadership believed that Palestine would be liberated when national revolution at the pan-Arab state level occurred and social revolution would follow, an ideological minority composed of non-Palestinians Muhsin Ibrahim, Muhammad Kishli, and Nayef Hawatmeh, among others, disagreed.[2] They argued that social, political, and economic revolution could not be disaggregated and believed that the Arab upper classes were part of the problem (Kazziha 1975, esp. chap. 4; Y. Sayigh 1997, 77–79).

In October 1963, a separate Palestinian branch within the ANM was formed by Palestinian cadres who met in Beirut, while Habash and al-Hindi were still hiding in Syria after their failed pro-Nasser coup attempt in July (Y. Sayigh 1997, 79–80, 108). Though not anti-Nasserist, these activists were "impatient with the ideological debate" in the ANM and generally distrusted the leftists and the "Marxist turn." Most Palestinian ANM cadres in the various fields of operation were "regrouped in separate sections: they remained subordinate to the local regional command (*qiyadat iqleem*) but also came into contact with a newly formed" Palestinian Action Command (PAC) (Qiyadat 'amal al-filastini) based in Beirut (79–80, 108). Ideological leftists in the ANM worried about the PAC's Palestinian particularism, while others believed that military action independent of supportive Arab states would be ineffective. The ANM leadership continued to adhere to a Nasserist policy that "opposed . . . an early start of the armed struggle," and the PAC was at least formally constrained by Habash's membership in the central leadership of both the ANM and the PAC (109).

2. Ibrahim was the "son of a clerk in a Shi'ite religious court" who lent the ANM "its main intellectual strength" (Y. Sayigh 1997, 71, 73; Kazziha 1975, 24).

The differences regarding independent armed struggle became more intense with the creation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) (Munathamat al-tahrir al-filastiniyya) and the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA) in March 1964. The ANM leadership reached a compromise whereby PAC cadres would recruit and train for reconnaissance missions in Israel and Arab countries but would not initiate combat. Ghassan Kanafani, a leading ANM intellectual, called the balance the organization was required to maintain as "above zero, and below entanglement" (*fawq al-sifr wa taht al-tawreet*) of Nasser in a war with Israel (Y. Sayigh 1997, 110–11). Some of the ANM's Palestinian members, particularly those elements in the West Bank and Gaza, chafed under the constraint of this formula (Nowfal 2000).

When Nasser refused Habash, al-Hindi, and Ibrahim's proposal for an ANM merger with Egypt into a "revolutionary socialist coalition," the group began to prepare for armed struggle focused on Palestine. The PAC changed its name to the Revenge Youth Organization (RYO) (Munathamat shabab al-tha'ir) and urged its members to take military training courses in the PLA, which many did (Y. Sayigh 1997, 130). The three-way tension in the ANM remained, however, among the group headed by Habash and al-Hindi that relied on its Palestinian constituency but wanted to control independent military action against Israel, the "leftists" headed by Hawatmeh and Ibrahim who called for socialist transformation and also worried about a premature military attack, and the Palestinianists in the PAC/RYO who believed that military action against Israel was key (130–31). These disagreements paralyzed the organization through much of 1966.

A new military group, Heroes of the Return (Abtal al-'awda), was established in mid-1966, financed and trained by the PLA and nominally under its authority, but in fact controlled by the ANM. The main task of the group was intelligence, although it engaged in some raids as well. The ANM generally remained "circumspect" about escalating conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbors, unlike Fateh's strategy of military actions that "entangled" Arab states in confrontations with Israel (Y. Sayigh 1997, 137–39). By May 1967, as war talk escalated and Nasser stated that Palestinians had a legitimate right to fight Israel, the

ANM leadership allowed the RYO to participate in raids against Israel under its own name (139, 141).

As was the case with political organizations that coexisted with and came after the ANM, political instability, diverse regional conditions, and individual differences in ideology and personality made for sometimes very distinct politics in various branches and also explained frequent organizational fragmentation and regrouping. The ANM stressed "obsessive rituals of secrecy," discipline, and "absolute obedience to the orders of superiors," which limited its following, increased its isolation, and led to accusations of authoritarianism (Y. Sayigh 1997, 73; Kazziha 1975, 47). Such hierarchical control continued in the Palestinian resistance organizations that emerged later and was likely exacerbated by communication lags and fear of organizational fragmentation.

The 1967 War and the Formation of the PFLP and DFLP

> The PLO is an institution for the Palestinian people, symbolizing their will to struggle. With their dispersal, they lost all their institutions and their sense of belonging, and consequently their cohesion as a society. Therefore we regard the PLO as a revolutionary institution giving the Palestinian people a point of reference, and toward which they feel a militant sense of belonging.
> —Khalid al-Hassan, "Khalid al-Hassan: Fatah"

The 1967 defeat produced an explosion of political and military activity in various parts of the Arab world and wide-ranging debates among Palestinians about ideology and strategy. Arabs and Palestinians had pinned their hopes on Gamal 'Abd al-Nasser as the anti-imperial solution to Israeli and Jordanian regional machinations. The defeat of the Arab armies in the June 1967 war was the end of Nasserist pan-Arabism, marked the ascendance of guerrilla warfare as the Palestinian Resistance Movement's (PRM) tactic of choice, and crystallized the necessity of an independent, Palestinian-driven struggle against Israel for most Palestinians.

Before the June war, according to the late Clovis Maksoud, "Palestinian militant and resistance activities were never conceived of as being outside of, or independent from, an Arab national involvement, framework, or organization. Palestinian militants and revolutionaries

were sure that the attainment of power by their ideological or political counterparts in any Arab state brought them much closer to their goal of liberation" (1973, 5). Although there is much truth in this statement, it overstates the unanimity on this issue among Palestinian activists and militants before 1967, as indicated by divisions within the ANM.

Palestinian militia groups increasingly gained a foothold within the PLO and its legislative body, the Palestine National Council (PNC). The PLO's previously appointed chairman, Ahmad Shuqayri, was forced to resign and was replaced in late 1967 by Yahya Hammudah. In February 1969, Fateh, reverse acronym for "Harakat al-tahrir al-watani al-filastini," or the Movement of Palestinian National Liberation, came to dominate the PLO when its leader, Yasir Arafat, was elected chair of the PLO's Executive Committee. This marked the PLO's "shift from an emphasis on political and diplomatic activity . . . to . . . independent Palestinian military activity" (Brand 1988, 57).

The PLO was nevertheless entangled in the contradictions between, on the one hand, its institutional identity as a parastatal entity representing Palestinians without a homeland and, on the other hand, the revolutionary and militant aims of the major Palestinian groups that came to lead and "reside" in the structures of the PLO (Khalaf 1973, 57). Functioning as both the umbrella organization for a revolution and a state has produced many of the problems that have historically bedeviled the PLO. Moreover, the PLO has existed as a government-in-exile without territorial sovereignty, a standing military, a tax base, or legal authority over a represented population.

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine

Following the June 1967 defeat, the ANM began to rebuild its branches in Jordan and the West Bank, establishing a senior command that was led by George Habash, with Wadi' Haddad and Hani al-Hindi. Consistent with a late July 1967 ANM Executive Committee resolution calling to "strike the enemy everywhere," the organization established a militia that undertook a series of airplane hijacks. A support command established in Jordan included "newly arrived cadres from Cairo and

Beirut universities such as Adib (better known as Yasir) 'Abd-Rabbu, Taysir Qubba'a, and Salih Ra'fat" (Y. Sayigh 1997, 160–61).[3] Following a failed 11 December 1967 attack on Ben Gurion Airport in Lydda by ANM militants, a statement published in Beirut on the same day announced the formation of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. The organization, cofounded by the ANM's Habash, was an amalgam of groups that included Ahmed Jibril's Palestine Liberation Front (PLF), the ANM's Heroes of the Return, and the ANM's Revolutionary Youth Organization, among others (Kazziha 1975, 86; Y. Sayigh 1997, 167).[4] In addition to the arrest of those individuals involved in the Lydda attack, the ANM lost the "bulk of its organization" in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to Israeli imprisonment in January and February 1968. In the meantime, the "ANM Centre ordered survivors who were not originally residents of the occupied territories to take refuge in Jordan, in an attempt to preserve the remaining membership" (Y. Sayigh 1997, 167).

In early 1968, Nayef Hawatmeh and a group that included a number of Palestinian and non-Palestinian Arabs also left the ANM to join the PFLP. The PFLP, however, was divided by the transplanted ideological struggle between the so-called left and right factions, with the leftist minority represented by Saleh Ra'fat, 'Omar al-Qassem, Yasser 'Abd-Rabbo, Hawatmeh, Mamdouh Nowfal, Muhammad Katmattu, and Hasan Ju'ba, among others (Y. Sayigh 1997, 208, 228). During the August 1968 congress of the PFLP, while Habash was imprisoned in Syria, the group revised the platform of the PFLP to incorporate class struggle as an important component (*International Documents on Palestine [IDP]* 1971, 424) and came to dominate the new PFLP Executive Committee. After Habash's prison escape in November 1968, the PFLP Executive Committee was reformulated to include only one of the dissidents (El-Rayyes and Nahas 1974, 37). When the PFLP leadership at-

3. 'Abd-Rabbu (which I spell 'Abd-Rabbo) and Ra'fat become key to the tensions within the DFLP Political Office in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

4. Jibril, formerly a junior Palestinian officer in the Syrian army, withdrew from the PFLP in late 1968.

tempted to purge the dissenters, Fateh intervened (O'Neill 1978, 129). This conflict was resolved when the dissenters split from the PFLP to form the DFLP.

Similar to Fateh, the leading PFLP cadres believed in the importance of "armed Palestinian action" and "revolutionary violence" against Israel in response to the 1967 defeat (El-Rayyes and Nahas 1974, 29–30; Habash 1973, 74). In the early 1970s, Habash, obviously referring to Fateh's relationship with the Jordanian regime, believed that the Palestinian revolution needed to take explicit positions regarding "reactionary regimes where an appreciable segment of the Palestinian people is found," and in solidarity with liberation movements throughout the world (Habash 1973, 72–73, 82). Habash's statements reflected the rawness of the recently ended civil war in Jordan, rather than PFLP practice, since the organization generally did not involve itself in Jordanian national politics following the 1970–71 war.

The PFLP viewed a people's guerrilla war as critical to motivating and energizing the Palestinian population and weakening the mighty force of Israel. The logic, according to Habash, was to avoid large-scale confrontations with Israel by choosing "sensitive targets" but "ones that are acceptable by the majority and are not open to extensive debate as to their legality and validity" (Habash 1973, 76). In addition to its involvement in the Jordan civil war, in its early years PFLP activities included hijacking Israeli and U.S. airplanes (usually destroying them following emptying them of passengers), guerrilla attacks against Israeli forces and Palestinian collaborators (particularly in Gaza), and attacks on Arab and Israeli interests (for example, pipelines and tankers) (Habash 1973, 79). For the PFLP, the driving impulse of such violence was to "shock the international community and shake its complacency regarding the plight of the Palestinians" (Y. Sayigh 1997, 214).

Although the PFLP political position has shifted over the years and there is ideological diversity among its followers, it has at key historical moments dramatically challenged Fateh's leadership of the PLO. Often labeled as part of the "rejection" front, it has remained the second most powerful secular political organization among Palestinians. It regularly challenged especially the late Yasir Arafat's at times unprincipled and

secretly undertaken plans to negotiate away Palestinian rights, usually in bids to maintain personal power. Its secularism and Marxist-Leninist orientation have historically not been barriers to alliances with Islamist and other organizations based on the national question. The PFLP, true to the passions of its founders, has viewed Palestinian national liberation as superseding all other social divisions and political differences.

The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine

The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, originally named the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, was created on 21 February 1969, when the thirty-three-year-old Hawatmeh broke away from the PFLP with a group of other cadres, including Qais Samarrai 'Abdul-Karim (Abu Leila).[5] The DFLP was immediately incorporated into the PLO. The organization established a military wing in Jordan (the East Bank) but remained small in its first year in the Occupied Territories. It won support among younger members in the north and center of the West Bank but failed to attract a following in Gaza, which "was firmly controlled by old guard cadres and former ANM stalwarts" (Y. Sayigh 1997, 208).

The PFLP's analysis of the split sheds light on the foundational political orientations of the DFLP and how the two factions differed. According to an early polemic published by the PFLP to explain the split, armed struggle focused on regaining Palestine should be the first line of action—especially given the reality that Israel had recently taken Palestinian land through war—and political and social change in the Arab world and Palestinian society would follow (PFLP 1970, 9–10).

5. Abu Leila is a "theoretician born to an Iraqi father and a Palestinian mother [and] had studied economics in London" (Smith 1984, 184). Other splitting cadres were Bilal al-Hassan, a Palestinian and brother of Fateh leaders Khalid and Hani al-Hassan; Sami Dahi, a Syrian Christian; Saleh Ra'fat, a Palestinian from 'Arrabah, Jenin, whose family were 1948 refugees from Haifa (Ra'fat 2000); and Muhsin Ibrahim, a Lebanese Shi'i Muslim (Quandt, Jabber, and Lesch 1973, 85–86). Ibrahim was the editor of the ANM magazine *Al-hurriyya* (Freedom), which became a PFLP and later a DFLP magazine. The splitting cadres were sometimes referred to as "the *Hurriyya* group" because of their association with the magazine.

The PFLP took exception to the DFLP's focus on world revolution, its condemnation of alliances with the "petit bourgeoisie" (a veiled reference to the PFLP's willingness to work with Fateh's commando groups), and its use of class analysis. Alliance with Fateh commandos, the PFLP argued, was reasonable since Palestinian national interests superceded class interests and Fateh had the resources and willingness to engage in armed struggle. Though the PFLP did not disagree with the DFLP that "local backwardness" was a problem, its leaders accused DFLP ideologues, Muhsin Ibrahim in particular, of being armchair revolutionaries who refused to advocate military confrontation.[6] Whereas the DFLP had no specific plan for regaining Palestine, the PFLP argued that its own partisans were taking immediate military action in response to the 1967 defeat (PFLP 1970, 9–10).

Nayef Hawatmeh, the secretary-general of the DFLP since its establishment, had been one of the first recruits to the ANM after Habash moved to Jordan in late 1952 to establish a branch there. Hawatmeh was born in 1935 to Jordanian Christian parents from the Salt region (north of Amman). His family "belonged to the poorer section of the [settled] tribe and lived a life of subsistence" (Kazziha 1975, 26). He attended Cairo University's medical school for one year, returning to Amman in order to "defend Egypt" following the October 1956 invasion and occupation of the Suez Canal by Israel, France, and Britain in response to Nasser's decision to nationalize the Suez Canal Company. In April 1957, Hawatmeh was engaged in secret political work in Jordan (Hawatmeh 2000). Following a capital punishment judgment against him, he left for Syria and then Lebanon, where he commanded ANM members in Tripoli and Tyre (Y. Sayigh 1997, 76). Following this task, he worked with the ANM in Baghdad. In 1963, the Iraqi government, which accused Hawatmeh of organizing to overthrow it, imposed two capital punishment judgments against him. Nasser successfully in-

6. Those who split from the PFLP to create the DFLP constituted the organization's intelligentsia. In order to fill this gap, the PFLP "became one of the first commando groups to institute a formal program of training . . . during successive four-month courses" (Quandt, Jabber, and Lesch 1973, 86n. 13).

tervened on his behalf, and Hawatmeh left for Cairo (Hawatmeh 2000).[7]

At least some of the ideological differences between the leading groups of the DFLP and PFLP were the result of a generation gap.[8] Walid W. Kazziha convincingly argues for the relevance of differences in the historical moments and regional contexts in which the DFLP and PFLP leaders developed their ideologies:

> Habash and his colleagues matured politically under circumstances which required closer national cohesion among the Arabs. The creation of Israel and the attempts of the Western powers to include the Arab Middle East in their military pacts posed the two major threats which undermined the independence and aspirations of the Arab nation. The reaction of Arab nationalists to these threats was to reassert their attachment to the idea of Arab unity as the only means by which they would preserve their strength and national identity. . . . On the other hand, Hawatima and his Iraqi comrades were greatly influenced by the trend of political events in Iraq. Following Qasim's military takeover in 1958, the Communists dominated the whole political and intellectual climate of Iraq. . . . Consequently Hawatima and Muhsin Ibrahim, together with their Lebanese comrades, who had come to similar theoretical conclusions on a purely intellectual level, increasingly pushed the Movement to take a more radical stand. (1975, 80–81)

To conclude, the Palestinianism versus pan-Arabism debate became increasingly complicated by the relationships of Arab states to the United States, and Arab state complicity or lack of power with respect to the liberation of Palestine. The 1967 defeat of the Arab armies,

7. Subsidized by the ANM (Kazziha 1975, 26), Hawatmeh studied philosophy and psychology at the Beirut Arab University (which was established as an affiliate of Alexandria University by Nasser in 1960), where he completed a bachelor's degree in 1967. He received a Ph.D. in political science from Moscow University in 1976 (Hawatmeh 2000).

8. Almost all the splitting cadres were in their mid- to late twenties when the DFLP was created. The average age of DFLP Central Committee members in 1970 was about thirty, whereas PFLP and Fateh leaders were approximately forty years old (Quandt, Jabber, and Lesch 1973, 86n. 12).

which resulted in Israel's occupation of the remainder of historic Palestine, as well as parts of Egypt, pushed leftist movements away from state-sponsored pan-Arabism, and particularly its most respected proponent, Gamal 'Abd al-Nasser. But the Palestinianist direction, as discussed in the following chapter, was fraught with its own sometimes devastating problems and eventually led to a frontal attack against the Palestinian Resistance Movement by the Jordanian regime, compelling new strategies and debates within the movement. Differences persisted within the Palestinian resistance over class struggle and militarism and the extent to which it was possible to remain independent of Arab states.

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From Revolution to Pragmatism

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2

Mobilization and the State in Jordan and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, 1967–1987

BOTH JORDAN AND ISRAEL actively repressed and attempted to control independent social movement activity in the twenty-year period between 1967 and 1987. Both states regularly arrested, deported, and tortured political activists. In both cases, the nature of state power shaped and delimited, if not fully determined, resistance-movement strategies. Gender and sexuality provided powerful idioms and institutional bases for social control in both Jordan and the Occupied Territories, and gendered cultural and legal logics were very similar. Jordan, unlike Israel, did not imprison women for political activity (choosing other forms of harassment), but even Israel imprisoned far fewer women than men, making the two political fields in this respect also quite alike.

In terms of differences, the Jordanian state during this period maintained its power by co-opting tribal groups and weakening their autonomy and power, while at the same time producing tribal identity and belonging as authentically Jordanian, especially following the 1970–71 civil war (the civil war is addressed in some detail in chapter 3). Leftist and feminist challenges of the state could easily be defined as challenging "authentic" Jordanianness. The regime also legally and discursively reinforced a form of patriarchal social organization that subordinated women to men in their socioeconomic and religious group because its

stability partly relied on alliance with conservative tribal and religious forces. Here a patriarchal gender order serves as a palliative for men who might otherwise resist an undemocratic regime, evidencing how gender and sexuality are often at the heart of politics.

In the Palestinian context, in contrast, "overthrow of the fathers" was part of the radical ideology of the post-1948 and post-1967 Palestinian national movements, since the political strategies and attitudes of the "old generation," in addition to "tradition" and "backwardness," were often seen as sources of the war defeats (Hasso 2000). Whereas this orientation by men activists focused on themselves as "sons" in a patriarchal system, it had a variety of unintended consequences that provided Palestinian women in the Occupied Territories with space to maneuver within the nationalist movement. In addition, because women lived under a universally unpopular foreign occupation and organized resistance to it was ubiquitous and often included girls and women, the patriarchal authority of familial, religious, and (Israeli) state authorities was more unstable and permeable in comparison to Jordan.

Assertions of Hegemony, "Regionalism," and Repression in Jordan, 1972–1987

In March 1972, despite rejection from Arab states, Israel, and the PLO, King Hussein announced an unsuccessful plan to establish a federation of Jordan and the West Bank into the United Arab Kingdom. In 1974, the Arab League summit in Rabat, against Hussein's wishes, designated the PLO as the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people." The king dissolved the Jordanian parliament in response, "contending that if it were to continue to function as constituted it would be a violation of the Rabat accord" because the West Bank continued to be represented by members of parliament. But new parliamentary elections were also postponed, ostensibly in order to "avoid an electoral legitimation of the 1967 Israeli occupation of the West Bank and its consequent separation from Jordan" (Brand 1998, 100). West Bank mayoral elections in 1976 were almost entirely swept by pro-PLO candidates, indicating the extent to which Jordan had lost significant political traction over Palestinians west of the river (Massad 2001, 258).

The Problem of "Regionalism"

> [Before the 1970s], no one ever asked the question, "Is this a Jordanian or Palestinian?" . . . Before that time, the revolution, which was a national resistance, was able to encompass all the children of the Arab countries and other nationalities. . . . Just like the sympathy for Vietnam, or South Africa, like the sympathy for Algeria, . . .there were French that fought in the Algerian ranks. . . . Who says that Franz Fanon is not an Algerian? . . . [I]f we examine the number of martyrs among Jordanians-Jordanians within the Palestinian revolution ranks . . . there is a wide gap in favor of the Jordanians [in comparison to Lebanese or Syrians].
>
> —Nayef Hawatmeh, interview, July 2000

One consequence of the 1970–71 civil war was that the distinction between East Bankers and Jordanian citizens of Palestinian origin was exacerbated and, in turn, reinforced by the state, even as it embarked on a national "unification" project whose unstated purpose was to build "a popular base of support for the regime" (Massad 2001, 246–47). The government purged its institutions of resistance supporters, which was in effect largely an ousting of Palestinian-origin Jordanians, who came to predominate in the private sector (Brand 1998, 96).

The Jordanian versus Palestinian distinctions were enhanced by King Hussein's regular reference, first made in a November 1974 public address, to Palestinians in Jordan as *muhajireen* (emigrants, guests, and therefore temporary) and Transjordanians as *ansaar* (supporters of Palestinians, advocates, hosts, and therefore permanent) (Abu-Odeh 1999, 211–12, 228–29; Brand 1999). This distinction coexists with another historical reality: the boundaries dividing Jordan and Jordanians from Palestine and Palestinians have been well traversed through commerce, as well as marital, class, and political (pan-Arab, Marxist, nationalist, and Islamist) alliances.

After 1970, the Hashemite regime increasingly defined an authentic Jordanian as tribal and bedouin, challenging modernists who argued otherwise, but did so in a manner that encompassed settled populations of East Bank origin (Massad 2001, 70–71; Layne 1994, 4, 9–10). This

maneuver served to juxtapose a new "Jordanian" political subject against an internal Palestinian other. The regime concurrently disempowered independent tribal institutions and laws and continued its long-standing policies of making sedentary the bedouins and territorializing their identities. It did so largely because, as Joseph Massad argues, it has been natives of bedouin origin who have posed the most serious threats to Hashemite power and legitimacy given the Hashemites' Saudi ancestry and the support they have received from colonial and imperial powers (2001, 66–72, 55, 58–62).

Protest Politics under Martial Law

Opposition activity in Jordan did not end with the 1970–71 war, although its venues were reduced to workplaces, professional gatherings, and campuses. The Hashemite kingdom's policy was to co-opt or crush political opposition and independent institutions, including women's organizations (Brand 1998, 124–27). Similarly, the regime, at the behest of capitalists, instituted a number of laws to weaken the labor movement and interfere in its governance structures (Brand 1988, 194–95). Trade unionists, like other opposition activists, were regularly arrested, harassed, and dismissed from their jobs by security forces. Moreover, union organizing was banned in many public employment sectors (such as teachers, with the exception of those employed by the UN Relief and Works Agency in refugee camps), and employment was contingent on government security clearance of no previous political or union activism (195, 207).

After 1967, professional associations (engineers, lawyers, physicians, journalists, writers, pharmacists, and dentists), in alliance with trade unionists, coordinated and increased their activity (Brand 1998, 96; Brand 1988, 177–78, 211–12; al-Khazendar 1997, 111). They reemerged as a powerful force in the late 1970s, when there was a renaissance of leftist political activity in Jordan but few forums for political expression (al-Khazendar 1997, 105). Because the government could not legally interfere in the governance of these professional associations, and their members had significant clout when government interference did occur, they had "the distinction of

holding the only free and democratic elections in Jordan" (Brand 1988, 179).[1]

Students, particularly those at the University of Jordan and Yarmouk University, were active on Palestinian solidarity issues and economic and academic matters related to students, despite arrests (only of men) and school expulsions. In 1973–74, the state agreed to the formation of the Union of Jordan Students at the University of Jordan, which was dominated by Democratic Front, Communist Party, and leftist Fateh partisans. The 1978–79 school year on both campuses ended with killings, arrests, and expulsions. Yarmouk students also undertook major demonstrations regarding economic, political, and academic concerns in February 1984 and May 1986. The university was fundamentally reorganized in the aftermath to allow better state penetration and control (Brand 1988, 217–20).

Protest Politics under Israeli Occupation, 1967–1987

The limited opportunities for Palestinian capitalists in the territories following the Israeli occupation encouraged their outmigration and, until the recession of the early 1980s, proportionally increased the ranks of a relatively well-paid working class dependent on wages from the Israeli economy. Combined with the expansion of university education and financial aid for needy students, these changes also led to the rise of a politicized and educated activist group composed of peasants, refugee-camp residents, and individuals of middle- and lower-middle-class backgrounds and "diminished the domination of the traditional elite in West Bank politics," thus widening the "circle of participatory politics" (Sahliyeh 1988, 41; Taraki 1990, 66; Younis 2000, 145–59). Resistance politics were fashioned in relation to both the oppression of Israeli occupation and political developments outside the Occupied

1. Between 1986 and 1989 leftist influence in these associations was increasingly eclipsed by the government's hard-line policies against them, a leftist focus on parliamentary politics, and divisions within leftist parties. This gap was filled by the Islamist movement (al-Khazendar 1997, 112), which continued to have much organizing freedom in the Jordanian field and was generally pro-royal family until the 1990s.

Territories, leading to the emergence of the "inside-outside" tensions that would later fragment Palestinian resistance organizations.

Repression and National Resistance

Between the mid-1970s and late 1987, Palestinian political resistance in the Occupied Territories predominantly took the form of grassroots, professional, and electoral organizing. As in Jordan, the lack of legally permitted avenues for participation contributed to the politicization of professional organizations so that their election results were seen to reflect Palestinian opinion on the latest national issues.

Especially in the early years of Israeli occupation, Gaza was marked by significantly more militant and continuous resistance and Israeli repression in comparison to the West Bank, since the Egyptian government had allowed the PLA to operate in Gaza during its administration of the area. This resistance was crushed by Israel by the end of 1971 (Lesch 1980, 42–43). Unlike the West Bank, where the Israelis attempted to hold municipal elections in 1972 (which were effectively boycotted) and 1976 (which were swept by pro-PLO candidates), elections were not held in Gaza.

One of the most significant organizational efforts in the West Bank during the 1970s was the Voluntary Work Committees (VWCs), which were often referred to as an early source of politicization by DFLP activists in the territories. The VWCs were initiated in 1972 by Birzeit University students and professors, secondary school teachers, young professionals, and youths from the Jerusalem and Ramallah areas and led by communist activists (Sahliyeh 1988, 106; Taraki 1990, 59).[2] The VWCs eventually included hundreds of women in their ranks and were the earliest "substantial community effort that brought young men and women together." Their work primarily consisted of manual labor such as land reclamation, tree planting, fruit picking, road paving, painting, and neighborhood cleanup, thereby filling a vacuum created by a lack of

2. The Palestinian Communist Party (PCP) (al-Hizb al-shuyu'i al-filastini) was established in the Occupied Palestinian Territories in only 1982. The party was renamed the Palestinian People's Party (Hizb al-sha'b) in late 1991.

agricultural laborers and substandard social and municipal services (Taraki 1990, 59). Membership included many young people who had not committed to a political party. By 1976, factional competition within the VWCs led to the creation of party-based "voluntary work committees" (Hiltermann 1991, 50). The original VWCs continued to grow, with thirty-seven branches and twelve hundred members by 1980 (Sahliyeh 1988, 106).

In mid-August 1973, communist activists, with DFLP, Fateh, Ba'th, and PFLP partisans, also formed the Palestine National Front (PNF) in the territories (Sahliyeh 1988, 53). Only one woman was part of the PNF, and her role "was to coordinate the mobilization of women in resistance to occupation" (Jad 1990, 129). The first point in the PNF thirteen-point program was a commitment to an interim plan focused on "liberating our occupied Arab territory" as opposed to all of historic Palestine (IDP 1976, 459). The program also stressed the grassroots nature of the struggle and aimed to "refute allegations that there is a vacuum in the occupied terri- tory" (460), since the Jordanian regime was interested in reincorporating the territories into the United Arab Kingdom (Gresh 1985, 133).

These early organizing efforts demonstrated that strains were already developing between the diasporic leadership of the Palestinian organiza- tions and party activists in the Occupied Territories, anticipating the later more dramatic "outside" versus "inside" tensions within the DFLP and other Palestinian political factions. For example, although PFLP branch activists participated in the formation of the PNF, the PFLP cen- tral party did not formally endorse the PNF's support for an interim two- state solution. Moreover, although the PNF pushed to increase the representation of Palestinians from the Occupied Territories in PLO structures, as opposed to positing itself as an alternative leadership, Fateh leaders outside began to view it as a rival (Sahliyeh 1988, 58–59).

Tensions peaked in 1975, when the PLO "requested that the PNF confine its activities to issuing pro-PLO statements" and the PLO Exec- utive Committee "requested that the PNF's literature be prepared out- side the occupied territories, with the PNF responsible only for its distribution in the West Bank and Gaza Strip" (Sahliyeh 1988, 59). Given that the main Palestinian organizations except the communists

were represented on the PLO Executive Committee, it is unlikely that only Fateh members were anxious about the possibility of independent action by Palestinians in the territories. Although the PNF advocated a political as opposed to a military solution, the Israeli government viewed the organization as a threat and deported and arrested its activists and leaders until the organization collapsed by 1977 (62).

On 17 September 1978, the framework for the Camp David Accords was signed by Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin, Egyptian president Anwar Sadat, and U.S. president Jimmy Carter; a peace treaty between Israel and Egypt followed in March 1979. Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip condemned the accords "for establishing a separate peace between Israel and Egypt and for promoting the establishment of an anti-PLO political representation in the territories," stressing that any peace plan must allow for self-determination and sovereignty (Aronson 1987, 181). Activists created a new National Guidance Committee (NGC-II) to coordinate political opposition to the Camp David agreements (Aronson 1987, 181; Sahliyeh 1988, 72). Although the NGC-II represented a wide cross section of Palestinian *men*, the only woman on a list of members was the late Samiha al-Khalil, the founder of the most well-known Palestinian charitable women's association, In'ash al-usra (Sahliyeh 1988, 73n. 56; R. Sayigh 1984).

By the spring of 1980, the leadership of the NGC-II was divided between the leftists (communists, DFLP, and PFLP) on one side and the followers of Fateh and pro-Jordanian forces on the other. The leftists believed that the NGC-II should be more confrontational in the territories and that decentralized NGCs should be formed; they accused pro-Jordanian and Fateh forces of wanting to limit mass mobilization in order to protect their economic interests (Sahliyeh 1988, 75–76). In the spring and summer of 1980, the NGC-II was debilitated by intensified Israeli military repression (deportations and town arrests) and Jewish settler attacks, such as car bombings. Israel declared the organization illegal in March 1982 (Sahliyeh 1988, 51, 83).

Women's and Labor Organizations

With the exception of the VWCs, political activity in the Occupied Territories in the mid-1970s was frequently limited to elite urban-based

organizing or (less frequently) isolated violent actions. Violence against the Israeli occupation was costly for Palestinians, as indicated by the Gaza experience in the early years of occupation, and engaged only the young people most willing to risk their lives, and for women their reputations (Hasso 1998). Rather than confine themselves to underground, high-risk activities, leftist-nationalist parties in the late 1970s and early 1980s established women's, labor, and other types of mass-based organizations. These groups differed from previous organizations because they were composed of chapterlike committees in villages, towns, and refugee camps and their leaders were more democratically chosen (Hiltermann 1991, 14). These committees coexisted with Jordanian and Israeli-sponsored political and economic institutions, under military occupation, and worked to various degrees independently of the sponsoring Palestinian parties that existed outside the territories.[3]

The first mass-based organization was initiated by DF and other leftist women on 8 March 1978, International Women's Day. The Women's Work Committees (WWCs) (see chapters 4 and 5) became the Palestinian Union of Women's Work Committees (PUWWC) in the early 1980s.[4] Communist women created the Union of Palestinian Working Women's Committees in March 1980, which was an expanded and federated version of the Working Women's Committees they had earlier established at workplaces within the labor union structure. PFLP-affiliated women created the Palestinian Women's Committees (later the Union of Palestinian Women's Committees) in March 1981. Fateh-affiliated women created the Women's Social Work Committees in June 1983 by uniting preexisting *shabiba* (Fateh's youth organization) committees in various locations.

The leftist women's committees combined mobilization with social service, establishing day-care centers, preschools, health clinics, literacy projects, skill-training sessions, and income-generating projects in towns, villages, and refugee camps. In addition, they organized demon-

3. The Palestinian Communist Party was not a branch of an "outside" organization.

4. In 1988, the official English translation was changed to the Palestinian Federation of Women's Action Committees.

strations and sit-ins, prison visits, political seminars, and educational seminars on health care, first aid, family planning, and child rearing. By 1987, approximately 2 percent to 3 percent of women in the territories were affiliated with these committees: "10 percent used their services, and a total of 15–20 percent were involved in them in some way" (Strum 1992, 66). The positions of the four women's federations on the national question corresponded with the ideologies of the political parties with which they were affiliated.

After women, the most significant sector organized in this manner was laborers, particularly ones who migrated daily to Israel. Most unions representing Palestinian workers in the West Bank during the 1970s were affiliated with the communist-dominated General Federation of Trade Unions (GFTU). In Gaza, in contrast, little trade union activity occurred between 1967 and 1979 because it was banned by the Israeli authorities; even after the ban was lifted, union activity was rare until 1986–87 (Hiltermann 1991, 61). The DFLP branch was the first Palestinian organization (in 1978) to set up its own Workers Unity Bloc within the GFTU (67). The communists, following suit, created a union organization, the Progressive Workers' Bloc, in 1979. Fateh (the Workers' Youth Movement) and the Progressive Unionist Action Front did the same in 1980, all within the GFTU. In August 1981, the federation split because the Fateh bloc was pushing for its power within the GFTU to reflect its 51 percent majority power in PLO institutions. After the split, one federation represented the communist, PFLP, and DFLP blocs (with continued communist organizational hegemony), and one (also called GFTU) represented Fateh and was funded by the Jordanian Joint Committee. In mid-1985, Israeli state repression increased to address this new level of mobilization (Farsoun and Landis 1990, 20–21; Hajjar, Rabbani, and Beinin 1989, 110).

Comparing Jordan and the Occupied Territories

The authoritarianism of the Jordanian state produced different models of opposition and protest in comparison to the mobilization against Israel's foreign military occupation of the Palestinian territories. In Jordan, the effects of the civil war between the Jordanian state and

the Palestinian Resistance Movement, the conditions of secret work under martial law, and more effective state penetration and control of daily life limited democratic mass-based organizing. Almost half of the population was employed by the state and its apparatuses, and university acceptance and financial aid disproportionately benefited the Jordanian-origined and apolitical young people. The security services were empowered to ban the employment of political activists in the public and private sectors and to restrict the licensing of businesses established by them. Finally, few institutions in Jordan could exist independently of the state, which made it difficult for autonomous political organizing to develop.

In the Occupied Territories, in contrast, all sectors of the Palestinian population shared an antipathy to foreign military occupation, settlement, and resource appropriation. Moreover, an economically and politically conservative Palestinian elite was far outnumbered by Palestinian migrant laborers (who traveled to Israel to work) and a politicized student body attending Palestinian-sponsored universities in the territories. Leftist organizers responded to the dangers of underground, high-risk resistance against the Israeli occupation by developing a successful model of mass-based mobilization that was ideologically flexible, relatively democratic, and decentralized.

The legal and cultural subordination of girls and women in relation to boys and men in Jordan, the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Arab Jerusalem was quite similar between 1967 and 1987 with respect to personal status issues—marriage, divorce, child custody, dowry, maintenance, mobility, and inheritance rights and obligations (Welchman 2000a, 73; Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counseling 1995, 37).[5] In the occupied West Bank, *shari'a* court jurisdiction over personal status matters is codified in the Ottoman Law of Family Rights of 1917, the

5. In the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Sunni Muslims use largely Hanafi-guided *shari'a* courts, whereas Christians have three sets of courts (Roman Catholic, Anglican, and Greek Orthodox) (Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counseling 1995, preface). Welchman discusses Jordanian law with regard to Christian denominations (2000a, 49).

British Order-in-Council of 1922, the Jordanian Law of Family Rights of 1951, and the 1976 Jordanian Law of Personal Status (Moors 1995, 84–87). Gaza *shari'a* courts under occupation continued to address Muslim personal-status cases by applying the Gaza-specific Law of Family Rights of 1954, which was unaffected by post-1967 developments in Egyptian family law and closely resembles the 1917 Ottoman Family Law (Welchman 2000b, 294–95). In Jordan, women's relationship to the state has been premised on their need for male protection and requires male representation, permission, and mediation (Sonbol 2003, 117–50; Amawi 2000), and their status has been negatively impacted by the proportional importance of male-dominated military apparatuses (Brand 1998, 101). The following chapter examines the 1970–71 civil war in Jordan, its antecedents, and its consequences for the DFLP and other Palestinian resistance organizations.

3

Civil War in Jordan, 1969–1971

THE 1970–71 CIVIL WAR IN JORDAN fundamentally redefined what was possible in Palestinian and Jordanian politics. It also facilitated Jordanian- and Palestinian-origin distinctions in the country, which played a pivotal role in the direction taken by the Democratic Front branch that was later established in the country. The DFLP's most important central party structures and partisans were in Jordan between the front's establishment in February 1969 and the end of the civil war in late 1971. Partisans were active in the civil war itself and the rise of the Palestinian resistance movement that preceded it, and were dramatically impacted by these experiences.

The main bases for PLO military activity between 1967 and 1987 were the largely unwilling Arab host countries of Jordan and Lebanon. Jordan was the primary ground for these early activities by dint of its contiguousness with the West Bank and Israel, its large Palestinian population, and the lack of legitimacy of the Jordanian military and security apparatus with the loss of the West Bank to Israeli occupation (Brand 1998, 99).[1] By 1970, resistance organizations expanded to such a degree

1. Lebanon was also a base for Palestinian militant activity against Israel, even in the early period. The November 1969 Cairo Agreement between the Lebanese government and the PLO under the auspices of the Egyptian government allowed the Palestinian resistance to establish itself within refugee camps, recruit Palestinians, and conduct military operations against Israel in border areas of Lebanon, as long as the resistance refrained from interfering in Lebanese politics and did not violate Lebanese

that the Palestinian Resistance Movement had established parallel political, military, and social institutions in Jordan. Moreover, the influence of the PRM was such that between mid-1967 and 1971 it became the "backbone" of the Jordanian opposition, whose programs and activities became "Palestinianized," focusing on "the liberation of Palestine, anti-imperialism, and rejection of UN Resolution 242" (al-Khazendar 1997, 104–5).[2]

In turn, the identities of the PRM and the Palestine Liberation Organization were forged in relation to conditions in Jordan during this period, and thus very much Jordanized. The constituent organizations learned from the Jordan experience to be cynical toward the professions of Arab state support for the Palestinians, the costs of frontal challenges to the authority and self-interest of Arab states, and the unlikelihood that Palestinian self-determination could be won in all of historic Palestine. Soon after the 1970–71 civil war, the focus of the PRM turned to gaining international legitimacy for the PLO, and most Palestinian organizations came to support a two-state solution, often with ambivalence.

Buildup to War

A month after the June 1967 Israeli occupation of the West Bank, the Jordanian government reiterated the "all-Arab" nature of the Palestinian cause and the "sacredness" for Jordan of the unity of the two banks, a bond that, according to the prime minister, "will never be broken under the leadership of King Hussein" (Abu-Odeh 1999, 140). Within two months, the East Bank, where Fateh was supported by many Jordanian military personnel and residents, became a staging ground for cross-border guerrilla (fedaa'i) raids against Israel (158). Popular support was eventually corroded by hundreds of Israeli reprisals and air

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sovereignty. This agreement was formally abrogated by the Lebanese government in May 1987.

2. Among other things, UN Resolution 242 called for the right of all states in the area to live in peace and security. This resolution was considered antithetical to a democratic state in all of Palestine.

strikes on Jordanian villages and Palestinian refugee camps, which drove the guerrillas deeper into Jordanian cities such as Amman (174).

The Jordan regime's desire to reign in the PRM was difficult given regional popular support for Palestinian resistance, the military power and influence of Egypt (Brand 1988, 57), and the threat of Syrian intervention from the north. Nevertheless, on 2 February 1968, the Jordan royal forces attacked Fateh guerrillas in Karameh, reportedly the only area from which the guerrillas were undertaking attacks against Israel (Hawatmeh 1973, 86). Tension between the PRM and the Hashemite regime came to a head on 10 February 1970 when, after returning from a Cairo conference that included state representatives of Syria, Egypt, and Iraq, King Hussein clamped down on the PRM (Abu-Odeh 1999, 175). On 25 June 1970, Nasser accepted the U.S.-sponsored Rogers Plan (earlier rejected by Israel), and on 29 August of the same year Hussein accepted it. The Rogers Plan called for implementation of the substantive aspects of UN Security Council Resolution 242, which emphasized the "inadmissability of the acquisition of territory by war" and called for Israeli withdrawal to its pre-June 1967 borders in return for recognition of its right to exist by Egypt and Jordan. A major flaw in the Rogers Plan from a Palestinian perspective was that it would have reestablished Egyptian and Jordanian sovereignty over the West Bank and Gaza Strip, excluding the possibility of Palestinian self-governance.

By 1970, increased U.S. financial aid had allowed the Hashemite regime to expand the state to the point that it was the country's largest employer of Jordanians, many of whom were now invested in its stability. Moreover, since pan-Arabist opposition organizations had disintegrated, Palestinian opposition to the state was increasingly isolated (Brand 1988, 171), although the PRM included many non-Palestinians. Confrontations intensified between the Jordanian state and the PRM, and on 15 September King Hussein formed a military cabinet and ordered the disarming of the guerrillas. The major battle of the civil war ensued from 17 September to 27 September 1970 ("Black September") in Amman and its surrounding areas, which ended with what turned out to be a brief reconciliation between Hussein and Arafat that was mediated by Nasser, who died of heart trouble on 28 September

(58). Clashes between Jordanian and PRM forces continued until the second major battle between 12 July and 17 July 1971, when the army evicted the last of the guerrillas from their remaining strongholds in the mountainous woods of 'Ajlun and Jerash (Abu-Odeh 1999, 177–87).

During and following the civil war, thousands of Palestinian activists surrendered to Jordanian military forces and were imprisoned or expelled, others were forced to work underground, and the PLO "closed" its institutions in Jordan.[3] The International Committee of the Red Cross estimated that three thousand people had been killed and ten thousand wounded in the war, largely refugee-camp residents (Quandt, Jabber, and Lesch 1973, 128; Brand 1988, 171).

Modernity and Leftism in the Early DFLP

The leading DFLP partisans brought with them the ideologies they had developed within the Arab Nationalists Movement. They believed that Zionism could not be defeated without a "national democratic revolution" that challenged the class interests of economic elites and the political interests of Arab governments (particularly Jordan), since both were local beneficiaries of imperialism (Hawatmeh 1973, 85). A modernist orientation with political, economic, and socializing aspects structured party ideology and practices. For the leftist guerrillas active in the Jordan civil war, modernity included a commitment to rationality, socialism, heavy industrialization, agrarian reform, and an organized political strategy, as opposed to feudalism, sectarianism, tribalism, and fatalism. Such an orientation would "avoid the errors of the past," particularly the military defeats that led to the colonization of Arab lands by the Zionist movement and later the State of Israel (Franjieh 1972, 76; Kadi 1969, 153). The radical socialist orientation of many of the post-1967 leftist guerrillas was constituted in relation to the worldwide revolutionary movements (and postcolonial states) of the 1950s and 1960s. Their concerns with modernity, however, were similar to those expressed by Arab organic and traditional intellectuals in their critiques and analyses immediately following the 1948 defeat (Hasso 2000).

3. In 1973, a general amnesty was declared for people involved in the 1970–71 war, allowing many activists (of Palestinian and Transjordanian origin) to return to Jordan.

On the ground in Jordan, DFLP partisans incorporated Marxist-Leninist, Maoist, Guevaran, and other liberation ideologies and took lessons from the Vietnamese, Cuban, and Chinese revolutionary experiences, among others.[4] Much of the DFLP's early political education, according to a leftist French intellectual who lived with the PRM in Jordan between 1969 and 1970, was designed to encourage "rational and scientific thought," in addition to "greater ideological homogeneity" (Chaliand 1972, 91). DFLP mobilizing narratives often focused on creating class consciousness:

> We have learned that the liberation of Palestine is the Palestinians' own business. And the poor are the ones most able to fight for their own interests. The problem is to understand why we want to use arms: not to kill the Jews, but to liberate ourselves from all the foreign and national classes who are the cause of our poverty. Our struggle is both a national and a social [read: class] struggle. You have been stripped of everything. Why? Not by the will of God, but because of exploitation by the rich and by the Arab governments who represent them. . . . The government protects the wealthy classes and is always ready to knock you on the head if you protest. . . . It has been happening since 1948, and it happened before that. So when you fight, you are not only fighting Zionism but also to liberate yourselves. (Chaliand 1972, 112)

The early DFLP leaders and cadres were greatly impacted by European New Left ideologies, and the party attracted "dozens, perhaps hundreds, of European youths who flocked to its camps" in Jordan (Y.

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4. In Jordan in 1969, according to Gerard Chaliand, DFLP partisans read and discussed *The Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels; *The State and Revolution* and *What Is to Be Done?* by V. I. Lenin; *Wage-Labour and Capital* by Marx; *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific* by Engels; "Democracy and Dictatorship" by Rosa Luxemburg; *On Protracted War* by Mao Tse-tung; *Peoples War, Peoples Army: The Viet Cong Insurrection Manual for Underdeveloped Countries* by Võ Nguyên Giáp (Giáp was a Vietnamese military general who fought the United States and U.S.-sponsored forces in Vietnam and has a number of writings on "people's war"); and *Guerrilla Warfare* by Ernesto Che Guevara (1972, 91). Lucine Taminian believes that DFLP partisans were also influenced "by a branch of the Iraqi communist party which in the late 1960s launched guerrilla warfare in southern Iraq and had to flee to Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria when the movement was defeated; most of them joined the PDFLP" (2002).

Sayigh 1997, 231). A number of DFLP partisans in Jordan also reported being shaped by the anti-Soviet and anti-Maoist "third path" orientations of New Left ideologies during studies and political work in European universities (al-Nimri 2000).

Jamil al-Nimri, a former partisan of Jordanian origin who was a high school student in the late 1960s, remembered a difference between the focus of the party's core activists and the competitive militia logic of building a guerrilla movement in Jordan:

> There was a distance between the theoretical and cultural level of the party leaders and the system that was applied [in militia work]. . . . And the DFLP was not different from other organizations in this respect . . . because the effort was to . . . build a militia with the most numbers. . . . Of course, they worked on raising awareness, etcetera, but the process was very difficult and the lecture that we used to present was complicated—Marxist thought is not easy. So there was a problem . . . between the atmosphere at the base, a militia atmosphere like the rest of the organizations, including a little bit of corruption, and between the leadership atmosphere, which was a very appealing environment. (al-Nimri 2000)

Fateh, PFLP, and DFLP Perspectives on the Civil War

Interviews conducted with Fateh, PFLP, and DFLP leaders in early 1972, following a period of systematic evaluation and assessment of the civil war experience, indicate that the Palestinian resistance viewed Jordan as a natural base from which to attack Israel, particularly given its large proportion of Palestinian refugees. Allowing Palestinians to fight to regain their land was seen as part of the obligations of Arab masses and states. By mid-1969, the DFLP was insistently calling for "resolving the duality of power in Jordan" between the PRM and the Jordanian government, on the recognition that the regime was making the resistance movement rather than Israel its target, and began developing "elected people's councils" to prepare for this (Hawatmeh 1973, 91–92; Y. Sayigh 1997, 248).

Nayef Hawatmeh believed that the period between February and July 1970 would have been the most feasible for directly battling the

regime for power, but this idea was rejected by Fateh (1973, 94). During the emergency session of the PNC on 27–28 August 1970, both the PFLP and DFLP "formally advanced proposals . . . calling for the overthrow of the royal regime," and even Fateh reportedly "created a secret apparatus" to work toward this end while urging the "synthetic groups [PFLP and DFLP] to stay out of Jordanian politics" (Abu-Odeh 1999, 179, 188). According to Hawatmeh, who attended this meeting, the central committee of the PNC agreed to "organize the revolutionary process so that it would lead to the establishment of nationalist rule in Jordan" (1973, 92). After September 1970, leftist forces argued that the PRM in Jordan should go underground and "intensify the struggle for establishing a national democratic regime in the country," but "all these appeals found no response among the Fateh leadership" (94). The conflict was exacerbated by competition *(muzayada)* between the DFLP and PFLP (Y. Sayigh 1997, 244).

By the end of the civil war in 1971, all the leaders believed, in the words of Fateh's Khaled al-Hassan, that there was a fundamental contradiction "between the submissive nature of the regime and the militant nature of the Palestinian revolution, between the regime's will to surrender and the resistance's will to struggle" (1973, 39). According to the PFLP's George Habash, the PRM should have treated the regime as a colonial creation with goals similar to Israel's (1973, 69, 70). Habash believed that the PRM was duped, imagining "that the Jordanian regime could be friendly or neutral—because it did not obstruct the revolution after the June War, because of its own deceitful slogans, and because of the Arabic name it bears" (70). For Hawatmeh, it was impossible to avoid a conflict with the Hashemite regime, given its long collaboration with Zionism and Israel, colonial roots, imperial alliances, expansionism, and need to maintain hegemony at any cost (1973, 86–88). Rather than the PRM threatening the Hashemites, Fateh's Abu Iyad similarly believed "that the Jordanian regime had no wish to coexist with us. . . . It is the only reactionary Arab regime built on solid foundations and dedicated to certain principles. Its supremely ingenious tactic was to bide its time while we made our mistakes; then, in September [1970] and later, it struck the fatal blow" (Khalaf 1973, 49).

There were differences in the leaders' assessments of the relationship of the PRM to Jordanian opposition movements. Al-Hassan argued that the PRM could not plant a Jordanian opposition movement, which had already been defeated by the regime, and existing opposition figures had no base of support (1973, 32–33). For Habash, in contrast, the PRM "behaved as if it were a substitute for the Jordanian national movement, [but had] neither [a] program nor directives to fulfill the duties of that role" (1973, 71). The guerrilla leaders acknowledged that the PRM had made a significant mistake in not developing a position in relation to non-Palestinian Jordanians, thus allowing the king to manipulate Jordanian-origin and Palestinian-origin differences as a means to attack the PRM and consolidate his own position (Habash, 71; Khalaf 1973, 52; al-Hassan 1973, 29–32). Hawatmeh, probably because he was a Jordanian leftist, had the most articulated position regarding the relationship among the PRM, the Jordanian people, and Jordanian opposition organizations, criticizing what he called Fateh's "isolationism" and "parochialism" with respect to Jordanians:

> They rushed in the direction of the "total Palestinianization" of the cadres of the movement and of its mass, labor and professional organizations, by creating a chain of purely Palestinian labor and professional unions in Jordan which fostered the growth of parochial attitudes among the Transjordanians. . . . Secondly, the resistance on the whole turned its back on the causes of nationalism and democracy in Transjordan, while the Transjordanian masses were enduring oppression, class exploitation and the betrayal of their national interests by the reactionary regime. (1973, 97)

Fateh's Abu Iyad noted similar problems, arguing that the anger of Jordanian soldiers against Palestinian fighters was real: "We saw their ferocity in September; they wanted to kill the fedayeen because they believed the fedayeen were infidels, unbelievers, criminals." In retrospect, he believed that the PRM should have made clear that the enemy was not the people of Jordan, but "the ruling family, a group of individuals, and the powerful forces of the establishment" (Khalaf 1973, 50–51).[5]

5. Ironically, however, the PRM's application of this lesson in the Lebanon phase that followed the expulsion of the PRM from Jordan produced no better results for it. In

The "infidel" and "unbeliever" accusations were related to irreverence among leftist Palestinian guerrillas. For example, the DFLP reportedly broadcast "Marxist slogans from a minaret to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Lenin's birth," which the "Hashemite regime could, and did, exploit to the full" (Hirst 1977, 306; see also Massad 2001, 211).

Gender, Sexuality, and DFLP Women in the Civil War

Gender and sexuality were sources of conflict between a socially conservative society and the PRM, particularly some of its leftist cadres, issues that were manipulated by the regime in its battle for hearts and minds in Jordan. For example, sensibilities were offended by reports of sexual liaisons between DFLP men and women guerrillas (Hirst 1977, 306). The regime also delegitimated men guerrillas by accusing them of homosexual relations and discursively queering and feminizing them (Massad 2001, 208–10). Not surprisingly, the gender environment in Jordan after the civil war became more conservative, with a backlash against "what had been viewed as the greater social freedom exercised by resistance members—both men and women," but the response was especially concerned with controlling women's sexuality (Brand 1998, 124).

Despite the fact that women have not been systematically included—indeed, it appears that they have been actively excluded—in the organizational and military histories of Palestinian resistance organizations, they were active as guerrillas in the early period in Jordan, particularly in the PFLP and DFLP, which were, in comparison to Fateh and the Ba'th branches, committed to the inclusion of women in all sectors of the resistance. Several of the Palestinian militant groups set up separate offices for women in Jordan (Brand 1988, 199). For example, in 1969, DFLP women partisans in Jordan created an organization specifi-

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Lebanon, Palestinian activists involved themselves in Maronite-dominated national politics, allied with sympathetic forces on the Left, and became advocates and even major service providers (of health care, for example) for "have-nots." The seeming permanence and statelike strength of their presence, however, combined with the death and destruction produced by extensive and deliberate Israeli attacks on civilians (for the purpose of reducing local support for the PLO) eventually produced great resentment among Lebanese citizens and organizations (Khalidi 1986, 20–21, 22, 32).

cally for the political education, mobilization, and recruitment of women, because "gradually we started seeing specific needs, a women's movement that might be separate from the young men's organization, due to the special concerns of women, their family situations. . . . There were mobilizing tasks related to women since men could not go into houses and politically educate or enlighten women" (Jamal 2000). According to Haifa Jamal, this work was also driven by the goal of mobilizing women to be confrontational rather than "slapping their cheeks" in mourning following the 1967 defeat. The organization also established two-month-long military training courses for boys and girls. In 2000, I interviewed a former woman partisan who as a twelve year old learned to use weapons and explosives in one of these camps and continued to have a bullet lodged in her body.

In September and October 1970, "differences developed between those [in the party] who wanted to pull out with the Syrian forces [who had entered Jordan in the north in support of the PRM] and those who wanted to remain" (Nowfal 2000). Especially in northern Jordan, some activists, reportedly including the woman guerrilla leader Khuzama Rasheed, wanted to remain and escalate the war against the Jordanian state. Rasheed was elected as the first woman member of the DFLP Political Office at its founding conference in August 1970, making the DFLP "the first political group in the ranks of the Palestinian resistance movement to include women in its Political Office."[6] Rasheed remained following the withdrawal of most DFLP forces in October 1970 and led the party structure in the north of Jordan, including "the fighters, the militias, the organization, finances, and communication."[7] According to a male partisan active at the time, "When [DFLP] leaders left to Damascus . . . [Khuzama] suffered, it seems, a political shock from

6. According to Nayef Hawatmeh (2000), Maha Bustani was the first woman to enter the central committee of a Palestinian political party with the establishment of the first DFLP Central Committee in August 1970. Hawatmeh did not mention Rasheed.

7. Although I tried to arrange a meeting through intermediaries, Khuzama Rasheed was unwilling to be interviewed during a field trip to Jordan in summer 2000.

men (laughs slightly). . . . She left the DFLP . . . and she never re-
turned. . . . And even until now, there has not been one decision taken
to punish her or such . . . no, she chose this for political reasons and the
general demoralization that occurred" (al-Zabri 2000). This "shock"
was apparently over the decision of the highest-ranking men partisans
to leave the Jordan battleground for Syria without consulting her. Ac-
cording to a woman who was familiar with the events of that period,
Rasheed returned to party headquarters to find only lower party cadres.

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Divergent Protest Histories
in the Democratic Front for the
Liberation of Palestine, 1969–1987

THE JORDAN CIVIL WAR precipitated an organizational identity
crisis that refocused the direction of the Democratic Front for the Lib-
eration of Palestine in the following few years. Many partisans who were
active in the Jordan theater noted that the period between late 1970
and late 1971 was one of "chaos and ideological and political flounder-
ing" for the DFLP. Following partisans' final withdrawal from Jordan in
the late summer of 1971, they created a secret military organization that
operated from Syria to attack Jordanian interests, although the DFLP
denied involvement at that time. The organization's operations in-
cluded a failed hijack of a Jordanian plane by an Iraqi national who was
later executed in Jordan and attacks on Jordanian phosphate trucks
traveling through Syria to Beirut. This period lasted between six
months and a year and was motivated by an "extremist position" that
had developed among cadres in response to the "September defeat and
the massacres that occurred" at the hands of Jordanian military forces
(Nowfal 2000).

After the Jordan civil war, the DFLP was more regionally frag-
mented, and different trajectories, dynamics, and organizational identi-
ties developed in fields where partisans established or reestablished a
Democratic Front presence. Branch subservience to the central party
was generally expected, since branch leaders were represented in the

central party apparatuses, particularly the Central Committee. The smaller and more powerful Political Office (or Politburo), however, met more regularly than the Central Committee and was dominated by central party rather than branch leaders. Despite this formally structured hierarchical relationship, branch dynamics largely developed in relation to conditions in each political field. Organizational dispersal was ideologically and strategically centrifugal: it produced tensions between branches and the central party about focus, direction, and leadership, especially since the DFLP Political Office often made decisions without branch participation.

Despite a range of differences between party apparatuses, two similarities that stood out were their pragmatic orientations and openness to women at all levels. The latter was an important aspect of a self-consciously modernist party orientation. The central party and the branches were also marked by an intellectualism that often blunted the romance of militant violence, which was usually reigned back in favor of working within existing civil society and movement structures, grassroots mobilization, or institution building. These strategies made the party relatively inclusive of women in all political fields, since in comparison to men, much higher social risk is attached to their militant activity. My research in different fields of DFLP activity indicates, however, that the relative focus of party apparatuses on mass mobilization or militarism depended far more on the field conditions in particular countries at given historical moments than it did on formal ideology.

In the Occupied Territories, there was an early recognition that mass-based grassroots mobilization fundamentally meant mobilizing *women*. Moreover, the Occupied Territories DF branch was much more independent of the central party, allowing for local pluralism and locally defined mobilization and innovation. The Occupied Territories branch was also more active in producing and debating its own programs and publications. Relatedly, its "democratic" and mass-based organizations were more successful at formulating agendas that could mobilize nonpartisans, although doing so occasionally produced tensions with central party officers based outside the territories.

Within the Jordan branch, in contrast, one is struck by the extent

to which the state limited and shaped branch possibilities, as well as how the related national identity question—a Jordanian versus Palestinian focus—structured so much of branch history and strategy. At a minimum, the latter factor provided the idiom for the branch's fragmentation in the 1990s. Although counterfactual arguments are difficult to substantiate, the more militarized (civil war) prebranch experiences of leading partisans in Jordan seemed to make the branch less successful in its mass-based mobilization efforts. Put another way, the organizing successes of the Occupied Territories DF branch may at least partly be attributed to the activism of its leading cadres in grassroots efforts in the 1970s.

The DFLP Central Party—from Revolution to Institutionalization

After the civil war, the DFLP began to distinguish between "central" and branch or regional structures and turned its attention to establishing a military and organizational presence in Lebanon, where it had between two hundred and five hundred guerrillas by mid-1972 (Y. Sayigh 1997, 291). By 1972, central party leaders were less willing to question the legitimacy of the Fateh-dominated PLO through separate communiqués, less resistant toward establishing ties with states the organization had previously accused of being undemocratic (the Soviet Union), more focused on the Occupied Palestinian Territories as opposed to struggle against conservative Arab states, and very concerned about unintentionally contributing to a "solution" that replaced Israeli control over the Occupied Territories with Jordanian rule as suggested by King Hussein in his 15 March 1972 proposal.

The October 1973 Arab-Israeli War solidified this shift.[1] Before the war, all PLO factions had "rejected negotiations with Israel on the basis of [UN Security Council Resolution] 242 because the resolution's ac-

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1. In 1973, the DFLP established relations with the USSR and consolidated them in November 1974, when a delegation visited Moscow. The organization considered "Soviet support crucial to secure Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories and obtain the establishment of a Palestinian national authority" (Y. Sayigh 1997, 342).

knowledgment of the right of all states in the area to peace and security was considered antithetical to the achievement of a 'secular, democratic, nonsectarian state' in all of Palestine." Soon after the war, the DFLP was "giving serious consideration to the idea of a mini-Palestinian state" in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (O'Neill 1978, 215). Moreover, DFLP partisans increasingly focused on mass-based organizing (Y. Sayigh 1997, 348).

On 24 February 1974, to mark the fifth anniversary of the party, Nayef Hawatmeh indeed called for establishing a "transitional Palestinian national authority" in any territory liberated from Israeli occupation and using that territory to liberate the remainder of historic Palestine (IDP 1977a, 410–11). Hawatmeh stressed the importance of pragmatism:

> Yes, we are Arabs but we are, at the same time, Palestinians.[2] . . . [The] point of view of [the "Palestinian opportunistic forces, both of the Right and of the Left"] can be stated as follows: How can we create a national authority on our Palestinian territories in the shadow of the present balance of power? The other alternative to this logic is to surrender to imperialist solutions and offer our occupied Palestinian territories again to the regime of King Hussein. (IDP 1977a, 410–11)[3]

The DFLP criticized the U.S.-sponsored Camp David process and in May 1978 openly allied with the parties rejecting it. Hawatmeh also "attacked the autocratic style of leadership in Fateh and its monopoly on PLO decision-making, and decried what he described as the division of the Palestinian movement into 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable' groups." He suggested instead that a supervisory collective leadership

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2. Hawatmeh is of Jordanian origin, however, indicating some of the complicated identity politics at work given his leadership of a Palestine liberation movement.

3. In June 1974, the PNC obliquely adopted the "transitional" idea by committing to "struggle by every means, the foremost of which is armed struggle, to liberate Palestinian land and to establish the people's national, independent and fighting sovereignty on every part of Palestinian land to be liberated" (IDP 1977a, 449). In March 1977, the PNC affirmed a "commitment to a Palestinian state on the territories occupied by Israel in 1967" (IDP 1979, 349). During the January 1979 PNC meeting, most PLO factions adopted this program to avoid a Camp David-type solution.

(including representatives of all guerrilla groups, independents, and some senior PLO officials) be imposed on the PLO to deprive Fateh of its monopoly on power. On 24 May, the DFLP signed a joint memorandum with the rejectionist groups criticizing Fateh leaders for being tempted by the Camp David framework and condemned some of its policies in Lebanon (Y. Sayigh 1997, 433–34).

In June 1982, Israel invaded Lebanon and forced the exodus of the PLO's political and military leadership from Beirut to Tunis. An interlude of unity was followed by a split in Fateh in 1983 (not resolved until 1987) over the September 1982 Reagan initiative, which called for "self-government" in the West Bank and Gaza Strip "in association with Jordan" (Gerner 1991, 140; Sahliyeh 1986, 147). Soon after the PLO exodus from Beirut, the PFLP and DFLP increasingly cooperated with each other and for a two-year period were even unified, partly in order to increase leftist authority against PLO adoption of the Reagan initiative and partly to undermine the anti-Fateh mutinous PLO factions supported by Syria.[4]

The October 1983 joint DFLP-PFLP program indicated a marked change, possibly as a result of the alliance, in DFLP pragmatism with respect to Israel and to some extent contradicted the 1975 Transitional Program. The joint program noted "the impossibility of coexistence between the Palestinian people and the Arab nation [on one side] and Zionism [on the other]." It also criticized the "meetings [of Fateh mem-

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4. Increased DFLP-PFLP cooperation is indicated by the jointly issued *Communiqué on the Developments on Palestinian and Arab Levels* of 6 June 1983. The communiqué called for maintaining a united front with regard to the Reagan initiative and any plans that "would lead to the liquidation of the Palestinian national rights and to the destruction of the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people." It also called for "democratic reforms within . . . the PLO organs and institutions" and "restricting the role of the bureaucratic groups that have bourgeois aspirations [presumably Fateh]" (PFLP-DFLP 1983, 224–25). On 16 October 1983, the joint command of the two parties issued a program, *Comprehensive Reforms within the PLO in the Political, Organizational, Military, and Financial Fields*, criticizing corruption, bureaucratization, and undemocratic decision making and condemning Arafat's "readiness to go along with American imperialism" (DFLP-PFLP 1984, 207–12).

bers] that have taken place with forces declaring their acceptance of Zionism . . . [and] the readiness to concede the Zionist entity's right to exist" (DFLP-PFLP 1984, 208). The DFLP had previously sanctioned Palestinian dialogue with Israeli and Jewish (albeit anti-Zionist) leftists and had indirectly conceded Israeli national rights in its "transitional" two-state solution.

On 27 March 1984, the PFLP, DFLP, Palestine Liberation Front, and Palestinian Communist Party formed a "democratic alliance" within the PLO to distinguish their position from the view of the Syrian-backed factions. The DFLP-PFLP alliance fell apart when the PFLP joined the mutinous factions (led by Abu Musa) in March 1985. Despite its challenges to Fateh, by the mid-1970s the DFLP viewed itself as a consensus builder and Fateh's loyal opposition within the PLO.

Militarism versus Mass Mobilization

As indicated earlier, the DFLP has had an ambivalent relationship to militarism in its history. On the one hand, its focus on social revolution and intellectual analysis has predisposed it away from militarism as a primary means toward an end. On the other hand, militarism clearly enjoys pride of place in Palestinian revolutionary history, and any organization that shies away from it, as the Palestinian communists have historically done, leaves itself vulnerable to obscurity. This is especially so in the highly militarized periods and locations of the Palestinian-Israeli-Arab conflict. Not insignificantly, militarism has been a defining factor in the success of political Zionism, and Israel has long had the third or fourth most powerful military, and arguably one of the most effective armies, in the world. To eschew militarism in such a context can delegitimate, even feminize, an organization, since antimilitarism can so easily be associated with weakness. This helps explain why more than one man partisan rejected in a defensive manner questions I raised about the extent of the DFLP commitment to military action in its history.

One of the key military events in DFLP history is the 15 May 1974 attack by three guerrillas in the northern Israeli town of Ma'alot. After reportedly earlier killing two Arab women and three other occupants of

an apartment in Ma'alot, the guerrillas took about ninety high school children (military cadets) and teachers who were camping in a school building hostage in return for the Israeli release of twenty-six (reportedly one for each year of Israel's existence) political prisoners, including two Israeli Jews working with the resistance and Archbishop Hilarion Cappucci (Hirst 1977, 329–30; ArabicNews.com 1999). According to Hawatmeh, during negotiations between the DFLP and Israel that were mediated by France, Romania, and the Red Cross, "Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Dayan was preparing plans for the attack," and "it was only when the Israeli soldiers tried to storm the building that victims were killed from both sides" (Arabicnews.com 1999). This view was confirmed by David Hirst:

> The terrorists would release their hostages upon receipt of a code-word, transmitted from Damascus, indicating that twenty-six prisoners had arrived in the Syrian capital. The codeword never reached them. The Israeli government's apparent readiness, for once, to bow to terrorist blackmail was no more than an outward show of compassion to impress an anguished public. It planned to storm the school all along, and shortly before night fell the assault force went in; twenty children and three terrorists died in the carnage, and some seventy were wounded. (1977, 330)

This operation was designed to "deflect the accusations of treason and reinforce our political line" following the DFLP's "transitional state" proposal, according to Mamdouh Nowfal, illustrating the extent to which militarism is linked with an uncompromising commitment to Palestinian liberation. Indeed, the operation increased the number of DFLP recruits and led to more military and other resources from Arab countries, although the organization's total military strength "did not exceed 800–900 by 1975, with some 250 reservists" (Y. Sayigh 1997, 341).

The DFLP October 1975 Political Program formally codified the idea of a national "transitional (or interim) program" (al-baramij al-marhali aw al-intiqali) with three goals: "the right of our people to return, to self-determination, and to independence in a national state established on all Palestinian lands from which the Israeli occupation has

been forced to withdraw" (IDP 1977b, 479). This program, according to the DFLP Central Committee, had to account for "variation in [Palestinian] class makeup and the differences in the conditions for carrying on the struggle among its various regional concentrations." It also aimed to mobilize "the regional concentrations of our people on the basis of their respective immediate and concrete interests" (476). Thus, the party took a distinctly pragmatic redirection at this point and articulated a recognition of the class and regional divisions and constraints specific to each state and field of mobilization.

A very important aspect of the program was that it moved significant DFLP organizational attention to the Occupied Territories. Two of the six points operationalizing the DFLP's Transitional Program in the Occupied Territories were particularly important because they focused on organizing "the working class against exploitation and discrimination" and guaranteeing "the right of women, students, teachers, youth, and other groups in the population, to establish their own independent mass and professional organizations" (IDP 1977b, 479).

The DFLP's framework of the working class versus the bourgeoisie had softened by 1975 to include the latter two groups in a united front, since exile, statelessness, and political discrimination hindered all Palestinians' "coherent national existence." The party maintained, however, that "the working class, in its democratic revolutionary alliance with poor peasants, destitute refugees, and all other laboring people, is the only class qualified to lead the national-democratic revolution to a decisive victory over its opponents" (IDP 1977b, 477).

By autumn 1977, the DFLP central party resolved to apply its new strategy through the building of a "Leninist" locally led party branch in the Occupied Territories. In order to improve the possibilities for mass mobilization in the territories, the party branch separated the military apparatus from "the civilian party body" (Y. Sayigh 1997, 474–75). Grassroots mobilization became the primary focus in the Occupied Territories. Indeed, Fateh followers accounted for "twice as many armed attacks as members of the leftist groups," and by 1981, the DFLP's 'Abd-Rabbo acknowledged that there was no "real way out for armed action in the occupied territories" unless it became a "mass phenome-

non" (471). It was women DF partisans who appeared to be the most cognizant of these realities and active in mass mobilization in the Occupied Territories.

The DFLP remained militarily active in Lebanon and in cross-border activity into Israel (Y. Sayigh 1997, 403, 443). Indeed, guerrilla work appeared to be the most marked type of DFLP activity in the Lebanon field from the late 1970s through the late 1980s, with its forces reaching twelve hundred to sixteen hundred in "full-time combat strength" by 1980 and eighteen hundred by mid-1982, with a reserve force of eight hundred (487). Moreover, in the late 1970s in Lebanon, the DF branch exhibited a "marked authoritarian tendency," whereby defectors were actively pursued for reabsorption into the ranks and violators of party discipline, or "democratic centralism," were punished (488). DFLP volunteers who traveled to Lebanon from all over the world to train and fight in the militias confirmed the existence of authoritarianism and also of opportunism and a less dynamic party that had acclimated to its political field:

> The DFLP in Lebanon, we discovered, was building a bureaucratic, authoritarian pattern. . . . [A]fter 1976, we began to go back to [Lebanon to] volunteer, [and] some people were shocked and they left the DFLP, or they returned with much less enthusiasm for the party because the idealistic picture about the DFLP and struggle was shattered. . . . From 1976 until 1978 and beyond, the political or theoretical line of the DFLP began to change or to crystallize. They became closer to Syria. . . . And the New Left was dying. . . . So in practice, the DFLP began to build relations with the communist parties and the USSR. . . . What was more dangerous and worse, for me, was that they also began to accommodate their work methods, understandings, and internal relations to the Soviet pattern. And this pattern is bureaucratic, salary oriented, rigid, and inflexible. . . . It treated the higher bodies and their decisions as sacred. . . . In the face of this, the educated people who were more sensitive to this were somewhat marginalized. (al-Nimri 2000)

National Identity and Jewishness

Partly because Hawatmeh was of Jordanian origin, the DFLP was always concerned with what it called "particularist and chauvinist tendencies."

Among them were Fateh's early definitions of who can legally be considered a Palestinian and therefore eligible for inclusion in the Palestine National Council and (eventually) Palestinian citizenship. According to a DFLP spokesperson: "What determines Palestinian national identity is affiliation and commitment to the cause of the revolution, not racial (Ottoman Palestinian parents) or geographical origin" (IDP 1974, 487).

From its inception, the DFLP also differentiated itself from both Fateh and the PFLP by establishing dialogue with politically progressive Jews in Israel and abroad, including Matzpen, the Israeli socialist group (IDP 1972, 806–7).[5] The DFLP "traditionally stressed its willingness to open a dialogue with any Jew that would recognize Palestinian national rights, including the rights of return, self-determination, and the formation of an independent Palestinian state" (Sahliyeh 1986, 105), proving "itself to be an early trail-blazer" (Cobban 1984, 154).

In September 1969, the DFLP submitted a draft resolution to the sixth session of the PNC calling for a democratic, secular state "opposed to colonialism, imperialism, and the forces of Arab and Palestinian reaction" in all of historic Palestine where Arabs and Jews could coexist and "enjoy equal national rights and responsibilities" (IDP 1972, 777). This resolution, which was debated in the June 1970 PNC meeting, differed from Fateh's formulation of the previous year by emphasizing the democratic nature of a Palestinian state and the right of Jews born in Israel after its creation in 1948 to remain in a Palestinian state that acknowledged their religious rights, culture, and sense of nationhood.[6] On 3 November 1969, Nayef Hawatmeh elaborated on this position by downplaying Jewish nationality and affirming Jewish religious and cultural identity, "with special emphasis on the post-1948 generation that was born and raised in the land of Palestine. We believe that this generation fully has the right to live side by side and enjoy full equality in

5. In the early 1980s, DFLP women in the Occupied Territories were among the first to establish relations with Israeli women's peace groups (Kamal, in Najjar 1992, 147).

6. PNC delegates agreed to incorporate the nondiscrimination clause into the resolution. The "democratic state" component was adopted at the 1971 PNC meeting.

rights and responsibilities with the Palestinian people under the auspices of a state that rejects class or national subjugation in any shape or form" (806).

"Regionalism" in the Identity and Politics of the Democratic Front Organization in Jordan, 1973–1987

The Democratic Front branch established in Jordan, called the Democratic Front Organization in Jordan, or Majd, had to take into account the realities produced by the civil war. Significantly, its name did not include "for the Liberation of Palestine," and the branch developed a dual focus on Palestine and democratization in Jordan, although many Jordanian-origin partisans believed that the Palestine question remained the predominant focus. The concurrent focus on Jordanian and Palestinian politics produced tensions between the branch, the Jordan state, and central party apparatuses.

The Jordanian Communist Party (JCP) was the most significant political competitor in the post-1973 period from the perspective of DF partisans. Though the JCP was allowed to establish societies and organizations in Jordan, it did not focus on the Palestine question. The PFLP was not interested in mobilization in Jordan or transforming Jordanian politics following the civil war; it focused on the liberation of Palestine. The DF branch, in contrast, was interested both in the Palestine question and Jordanian politics. In addition, its women partisans were comparatively more active and prepared to mobilize within a couple of years of the civil war despite martial-law conditions (Gosheh 2000). Partisan women were particularly prominent as organizers in labor unions and women's organizations.

Political parties were illegal, political work had to be conducted in secret, and party elections were impossible during the Maja period (Abu 'Ilbeh 2000). Given partisans' involvement in the 1970–71 civil war, only four to five DFLP cadres were actively engaged in "the building period of Majd" in 1973–74. Activists and their relatives were regularly denied permission to leave the country (through confiscation of passports), denied permission to work, denied access to the many resources requiring security clearance, and fired from their jobs, producing a terror that made recruitment very difficult (Abu 'Ilbeh 2000).

Activists were frequently watched, followed by security services, and subject to interrogation, although only men were tortured or imprisoned by the state. The use of movement names was common to the extent that cell members frequently did not know the real names of their supervisors; this secrecy also reduced the possibilities for mass mobilization. According to a leading woman partisan, "This oppression complicated our lives—nothing could happen easily, to move or meet with people. . . . Therefore, we started working underground . . . and this was a difficult situation. And for women this is also difficult, because when she leaves, she needs permission from her husband and her father and her brother's permission, from the whole family."

In late 1973, party leaders in Damascus divided DF partisans' work in Jordan so that one framework focused on political organizing in relation to Palestine (the Occupied Territories Committee [OTC]) and another focused on Jordan. This division was based on the DFLP's understanding

> of the specificity of Jordan. . . . The Palestinian people in Jordan, whether a refugee or an immigrant, have complete political rights, at least theoretically and in the constitution. At the same time, September [1970] and what it gave birth to in terms of galvanizing regionalism in Jordan—the DFLP was one of the first among the forces that understood the danger of the continuation of such a development. And it worked toward realizing and building an organization in Jordan that would be part of the Jordanian national movement. . . . [C]alling for democratic national governance was a step forward from the previous focus on overthrowing the system. (Amer 2000)

Conditions in Jordan anticipated many of the issues that later emerged dramatically in the DFLP and other Palestinian organizations as to the nature of the relationship between branches and central parties. One of the Jordan branch founders, Palestinian Ali Amer, wrote a letter to the DFLP in Damascus in late 1973 titled "A Work Plan for the Student Organization" (at the University of Jordan) that he believes impacted how the branch was formulated. The student partisans, he said, "received a lengthy response" (fourteen pages) from Abu Leila, the essence of which was:

> "Yes, but. . . ," "Yes, but. . . ," "This is a positive step, but . . ." My letter was one or two pages, but it was presented as a theoretical com-

ment that was addressing a number of issues that would lead to a DFLP organization in Jordan realizing its own identity. Was it part of the Palestinian national movement? Or was it part of the Jordanian national movement? And in the end, what were its priorities? . . . Was it the issue of a national authority [in Palestine]? . . . Or was the priority working among the ranks of the Jordanian national movement toward democratic development in Jordan? (Amer 2000)

In 1974, following the 1973 general amnesty allowing exiled political activists to return, Majd in Jordan was established as a "sister of the DFLP." Palestinians 'Abla Abu 'Ilbeh and Ali Amer played key roles in the building of Majd and remained its most important leaders through September 1977. Their work focused on "reconnecting with comrades who would leave prison and widening a new party structure" (Amer 2000).[7] Programmatically, Majd treated Palestinians in Jordan as "totally incorporated into the national democratic struggle in Jordan, on the one hand, and at the same time they are distinct in that they had to work toward the right of return to their homeland, Palestine" (Abu 'Ilbeh 2000). Rather than calling for revolution in Jordan or liberation of the Occupied Territories, Majd's slogan was Toward a National Democratic Jordan. The still bitter memories of the 1970–71 civil war and the high proportion of 1948 and 1967 refugees, in the measured words of Abu 'Ilbeh, "determined a specific struggle program [that included] both the Palestinian and the Jordanian sectors of the society" (2000).

With its carefully formulated Jordan focus, Majd had some difficulty recruiting Palestinians in Jordan because the new organization's program was not "unadulterately Palestinian":

You had to convince the Palestinian to come to an organization and to struggle on behalf of Jordan so that Jordan would serve—so that

7. In 1977, Amer left Jordan illegally to attend a DFLP Central Committee meeting in Beirut. Upon his return in September, he was arrested and imprisoned for about three years: "It was a period of imprisonment that was more difficult than al-Jafr [he was imprisoned in al-Jafr prison from September 1970 through 1973]. Most of it was in the intelligence agency cells, under interrogation, and most of it was in isolation; and they tortured me in various unusual ways" (2000).

later, this struggle will serve Palestine. . . . The most important period was after the Rabat decisions in 1974 and recognition of the PLO by the Arab states, after the PLO adopted a transitional program, after the United Nation's recognition of the PLO, Arafat's speech at the UN, and large world recognition of the PLO. So there was a feeling that a national Palestinian identity was being created, and each Palestinian . . . wanted to announce with all pride that "we are Palestinian," especially after September 1970. They felt that there was discrimination against them, and there was, indeed, discrimination and pressure. (Hourani 2000)

There were also early tensions in Majd about Jordanian identity for some Jordanian partisans. These partisans had a strong desire to articulate an identity and establish a movement focused on democratization and an anti-Hashemite progressive Jordanian nationalism. These concerns were linked to the establishment of *The New Jordan* (*Al-urdun al-jadeed*), a weekly magazine first published in July 1984. The central party, in turn, strongly opposed this nationalist direction, indicating the extent to which the Jordan focus of the DF branch was strategic for DFLP Political Office members. *The New Jordan* was the brainchild of and largely written by partisan Hani Hourani, who was later joined by Hussein Abu Rumman and others:

From early on, I noticed something: that we, especially after the 1974 success in crystallizing a Palestinian identity—this created for us Jordanians a problem. Okay, at first we struggled with the Palestinians on the basis that we wanted to create a progressive political organization in Jordan. . . . Then there [developed] a clear Palestinian national identity that said, "We want a Palestinian state." So where should we [Jordanians] go? What is our country? What are our feelings? What is our request? We were not supporters of the Jordanian state, but we are not Palestinians. So, honestly, a response emerged from us, to say that we are the Jordanian nationalist movement . . . to improve and show our identity as Jordanians. The discussion of this issue, at that time, was not allowed [in the DFLP]. It was very dangerous. . . . We wanted an independent party, not an organization that follows the DFLP. We wanted to create a cooperative and coordinating relationship . . . between the two organizations. . . . [This desire] emerged with strength after the PLO left Beirut [in 1982]. . . . *The*

New Jordan was a protest production of the [exiled] Jordanian leadership in the DFLP and their desire for the emergence of a Jordanian identity. . . . It was a type of alternative to party independence, or a step toward party independence. . . .

They did not want the name. Maybe they were more against the title [of the magazine] than they were against King Hussein. . . . They wanted the name "Jordan Tomorrow," or something like a magazine for youth. . . . At that time the person in charge of us was Abu Leila, who told me it was a silly name. We told him it's good and we want it. . . . [H]e said first produce three issues at once to demonstrate that you can. . . . We produced more than three issues. . . . When the first issue came out, it was a shock for the leadership of the DFLP because on the one hand, they could be proud of it. But at the same time, they felt it was a big project that would strengthen us. . . . We tried to produce it as a magazine without indication that it is part of the DFLP. . . . But we could not. . . . So I reached a compromise to have it issued by the Organization for the Publication of *Tareeq al-sha'b* (*The People's Path*), which published the monthly newspaper of the democratic organizations of Jordan. . . . [W]e insisted that it be published in Cyprus, and to have a separate address in Cyprus, to tell the people [in Jordan] that we are not under the umbrella of the Syrians, the Palestinians, whatever. . . . The magazine continued until we returned to Jordan [in 1989]. The last issue we printed . . . had permission and entered Jordan without censorship. . . . [T]his magazine created a large popular following for us as an organization. . . . And in a number of articles I predicted that there would be a political split as a result of the economic crisis in Jordan. And I blamed the DFLP for its program, which was not concerned with Jordanians. (Hourani 2000)

Tensions about how Jordanian identity fitted into Palestinian liberation politics and why it should be trumped by Palestinianism are discussed in chapters 7 and 8 since they reemerged as important in the 1990s.

Organizing Workers and Women

Majd activists were organized in party-based cells. Cells were the base of the party in a pyramidal structure whereby one could progressively advance to becoming a local sector, regional sector, and central leadership member. These party cells included partisans from various social sectors who would organize and recruit party members and party "friends" from

within nonaffiliated or state-sponsored national women's federations, professional associations, student councils, labor unions, and charitable associations.

The period between 1980 and 1981 was one of intensive activity and building for Majd, although repression from the Jordanian security apparatus was at its peak. DFLP partisans secretly entered Jordan from a variety of countries to organize, and Majd created a leadership council that could follow up on mobilization work among women, students, and workers, among others.[8] Majd partisans, led by Ali Amer and Majida al-Masri, also worked on the March 1984 parliamentary (supplementary) election campaign, and a partisan, Ahmad al-Mukahal, was nominated to fill a seat in the north of Jordan (Amer 2000). The first issue of *The New Jordan* included an "elections file" that provided extensive commentary on election results. Even at the height of Majd's power, however, there were "hundreds, not thousands, of strugglers [formally affiliated with it]. Within organized structures there were, indeed, hundreds only. The remainder were supporters" (Hourani 2000).

The equivalent of more flexible organizations that did not require party membership were established by Majd in the early to mid-1980s. Rand, the League of Jordanian Democratic Women, was established in April 1983 and included party members and "friends" of Majd;[9] in 1985, Rashad (Rabitat al-shabab al-democrati al-urduni), the League of Jordanian Democratic Youth, was established; and the Workers Committees (al-Lijan al-'umaliyya) were created during the same period. The names and programs of these organizations were reported to have been formulated outside of Jordan (Hourani 2000). They were considered "democratic organizations" by the party in the sense that each one was supposed to incorporate Majd members from specific sectors (women,

8. Partisans such as Taysir al-Zabri, Samih Salameh, and Bassam Haddadin became part of the Majd leadership council. With the council's expansion, a smaller secretariat was created.

9. *The Program and Internal Platform of the Democratic Women's League, Rand (Mashroo' al-baramij wa al-laaiha al-dakhiliyya li-rabitat al-nisaa' al-demoqratiyaat, rand)*, which has no date, author, or publishing location.

youths, students, workers) and their "friends" (unaffiliated with the party) to build an organization that itself became a "friend" to sectoral organizations of fully committed party members.

More than one woman interviewed mentioned that Rand always had the second highest number of members after the workers' organization in the 1980s. Nevertheless, because Majd was banned from establishing charitable or social organizations, such as the JCP's Arab Women's League (whose name changed to the Arab Women's Society), even when Rand was established in 1983, it was illegal and "could not speak in its name or publish anything in its name. So it had to be part of [the also illegal] Majd" (Abu 'Ilbeh 2000).

As a former longtime woman partisan noted, the motive for sectoral organizations such as Rand was to bypass the conditions of underground political work, given its dangers:

> As a democratic organization, your program exists, but it cannot reach the ground unless it is through [popular] organizations. . . . If any member wanted to join Rand, its name was tied with the political party, which means whoever joins is joining the political party. . . . [In terms of levels of affiliation,] you have a popular organization, a democratic organization, and then a party organization. Most people join the popular organization. In this case, you didn't have a popular organization, you had a democratic organization [Rand]. From where will the person who joins this organization come? It was a bit tough. . . . In the end, Rand could not expand itself so that one-third of the members were party members and two-thirds nonparty members. . . . When I entered Rand's program, and this was the case in all the democratic organizations of Majd, the party people were the framework. . . . But having a democratic organization means it should include party members and independent members.

Similarly, according to Hourani, who lived outside during this period,

> Only the person who was very enthusiastic would come and expose himself to danger [by joining the sectoral democratic organizations]. And the majority of them were Palestinians. . . . In the end, the democratic organizations did not increase the mass base of Majd. They increased the membership, they specialized the membership. . . . And possibly, the democratic organizations made the party almost an intellectual organization more than resting on a mass base. (2000)

Nevertheless, Majd began to have a discernable impact as a serious player in the Jordan political field: "The Jordanian state, the government, began to deal with the DFLP in a different manner because the state took it as a serious opposition party concerned with Jordan as such, and its strugglers were dealt with as if they differed slightly from others" (Hourani 2000).

Majd women were at least as active as men, if not more so, in many sectors and gained high-profile leadership positions in elections within the federation of bank clerks in Jordan (six thousand to seven thousand members) and the women's federations, which were often overrepresented with Majd partisans, or "friends." A significant aspect of Majd partisans' efficacy had to do with their focus on demands related to the issues affecting a specific sector, such as labor rights, worker benefits and wages, democracy, organizational accountability, and political pluralism ('Essawi 2000; Naffaa' 2000). Many women gained leading roles as organizers within technically nonpartisan unions and associations, including Noura 'Essawi, Maysa' Naffaa', Jamalaat Abu Saraya, Safaa' al-Qusus, and Hiyam Hourani. It appears that Majd women's disproportionate success in these sectors was partly related to their organizing talents and partly owing to their relative immunity from torture and imprisonment, although the latter factor does not explain why Majd women were more active and successful than women activists from other parties in such political work, indicating a women-friendly dynamic that was specific to the DF branch in Jordan.

A former woman partisan, who married another partisan, described the 1980s as an exciting period for union organizing in Jordan, but noted that she rarely saw her young daughter "because we worked so much at that time." Her daughter was "usually either at my mother's or at my mother-in-law's house. And I would come home late, and sometimes I would not come home at all. We would eat out. There was no house. There was no life. It was all party life, including meetings and traveling to Irbid, Karak, al-Ghor, to all the banks" ('Essawi 2000).

In 1985 and 1986, the Jordanian state arrested men Majd leaders in Jordan, leaving the organization in the leadership hands of women. An alternative state response to the success of Majd women was wholesale firing. In 1986, a large group of Majd organizers, including many women who had gained significant power within the union movement, was

fired from its private and public places of employment by the Jordanian security services, which disqualified the women from continuing to run for elections in unions and associations. Even when fired teachers (partisans) were eventually allowed to return to work, most Majd bank employees were not: "Unions always hurt the boss. They want benefits and raises and to improve the conditions for workers. That is the reason they are uncomfortable with us" ('Essawi 2000).

Majd was supervised by the DFLP's Jordan Committee (based in Damascus), which was headed by longtime Political Office member and Hawatmeh ally Qais Samarrai 'Abdul-Karim (Abu Leila) and did little without DFLP Political Office knowledge and approval. From the mid-1970s through the late 1980s, the Jordan Committee "supervised the publication of the *The People's Path (Tareeq al-sha'b)*, which was the central publication of Majd at that time. And we were drawing up the specific policies of Majd and formulating the various programs: the workers' program, the women's program, the youth program" (Hourani 2000). The committee also produced other publications for the Majd sectoral organizations in Jordan.

The Occupied Territories Branch of the DFLP, 1973–1987

The Democratic Front branch experience in the Occupied Palestinian Territories was much more variegated and decentralized *within* the territories in comparison to the Jordan experience and more independent of instruction from supervising party structures outside the territories.

Three Stages of Relations Between "Inside" and "Outside"

The Occupied Territories Committee of the DFLP, which usually included six to eight members, was established by the mid-1970s in order to "supervise" and provide educational training on mass mobilization and party work for leading cadres from the territories. Although its base of operation was largely in Jordan, some of its members were in Damascus, Lebanon, or Tunis in different periods. In turn, the OTC was supervised by the Political Office in Damascus, and most of its members were in the DFLP Central Committee. The OTC had no relationship with Majd partisans in Jordan. In practical terms, it was led by Saji Salameh

Khalil out of Jordan between 1974 and 1994, although its formal "number one" remained Saleh Ra'fat, who was deported in 1976 from Jordan to Syria. The OTC was usually the most direct link between the central party and the Occupied Territories DF branch and became a very important part of the serious divisions that developed in the DFLP Political Office beginning in 1988.

'Issam 'Abdul Latif (Abu al-'Abid) was a founder of the DFLP and a (former) member of the DFLP Political Office and OTC who was largely in Damascus in the 1970s and 1980s. He characterized "the relationship between outside and inside, between the center of leadership in Damascus, Beirut, and Amman and the organization in our homeland," as undergoing "a number of stages" (2000). The first stage, between the late 1960s and the mid-1970s, was characterized by direct individual connections between regional leaders in the territories and the central structures of the DFLP outside. According to Zahira Kamal, during this period, DFLP partisans in the Occupied Territories maintained a one-to-one "thread relationship" that linked, through communication, a given activist inside Palestine with a leading cadre from the Political Office outside Palestine (2001).[10] There were usually "detailed interventions" from party leaders outside to cadres inside, since "the general situation in the homeland was one of building and formulation" ('Abdul Latif 2000). During this first stage, the party structure inside the territories was called the Organization of the Democratic Front in the Occupied Territories (Munathamat al-jabha al-democratiyya fil-araathi al-muhtalla). The conditions of secret work made it very difficult for organizers in different cities and regions in the territories to communicate or coordinate with one another.

The second stage, which began in 1975 and lasted until late 1987, completely separated DFLP military from political and social organizations in the territories (Kamal 2001). In addition, work was reorganized from "scattered, disunited organizations, to ones that can come together under the framework of a unified program . . . and unified leadership

10. 'Adel Samara, Dr. 'Azmi Sho'aibe, and Siham Barghouti were among the leading DFLP partisans in the territories in the early 1970s.

structures" ('Abdul Latif 2000). Specifically, Kamal was instructed by the party to connect partisans in the territories with each other, creating a branch hierarchy for the first time in the occupied territories. At the base of this structure was a "cell" *(khaliyya)* of activists. Cells answered to and had representatives in the "local" *(mahaliyya)* structure, which similarly sent representatives and answered to a "regional committee" *(lajnet mantiqa)*. All of these regional committees were represented in and supervised by the Central Leadership (al-Qiyada al-markaziyya). This period also saw a major shift of "decision-making power and initiative" from outside the territories to the local leadership, so that the "role of the outside was one of support" ('Abdul Latif 2000).

The party during this second stage "aimed to produce mass sector-based organizations from the various parts of society, especially for the more important sectors, such as women, workers, and youth" ('Abdul Latif 2000). Similar to the motive a few years later in the Jordan branch, these "open organizations" were seen to reduce the danger of Israeli arrest by disconnecting mobilizational work from military or formal party affiliation. They also bypassed the secrecy requirements and strict procedures of formal party membership.

'Abdul Latif stated that "one of our first initiatives was the creation of the PFWAC as a framework that would fit the women strugglers of the DFLP and those women who support the DFLP's women's program—the social program" (2000). Following this event, he said, "we created" the Workers' Unity Bloc, the Federation of Secondary Students, and other mass-based organizations. There was a striking similarity in the manner in which Jordan Committee and Occupied Territories Committee members often overcredited themselves when describing the work of partisans in the respective field branches. To anticipate issues addressed in chapter 5, DFLP women who formed the first mass-based DFLP organization in the territories noted strong resistance from OTC members outside and many men and a few women inside the territories to the formation of a separate women's organization.

The third stage in branch-central party relations began with the late 1987 intifada and is discussed in more detail in chapter 8. Briefly, this was a period of major interventions in the DF branch and its rela-

tively independent women's organization, the PFWAC, by leading partisans in the DFLP Political Office, who themselves were in disagreement ('Abdul Latif 2000).

There were debates between inside and outside about "the relative independence of the DFLP organization" in the territories as far back as the early 1970s, and by the late 1970s, differences were such among Political Office members *outside the territories* that the situation almost

> reached a point of splitting . . . when we called for giving the DFLP organization in the Occupied Territories an independent name. We won with a very small margin [in the DFLP Political Office], and we created something called the Palestinian Federation of Democratic People [Itihad al-sha'b al-democrati al-filastini], which lasted from 1978 until 1979. Then the balance of power was regained in the DFLP's central decision-making bodies, so it backed out of this project. What I mean is that the directions of both our political orientations and organizational structures—the needs of renewal in each environment given the specific conditions of each Palestinian grouping, and the general overall policies of the DFLP—these were a source of conflict throughout the history of the DFLP. And I could talk about this for long hours. ('Abdul Latif 2000)

The Democratic Front Mass-Based Frameworks

For the DFLP, the Camp David bilateral Egyptian-Israeli peace process required organizing and mobilizing the population "from base to apex" and unifying nationalist forces in the territories so that "the widest possible mass base will take part in the organized and unremitting struggle under the banner of the political programme of the PLO" (IDP 1981, 283). Every party activist in the territories was required to organize in a particular sector. Many of the best organizers worked concurrently in more than one sector or were transferred into sectors that needed reinforcement.

In 1978, DFLP branch partisans created the first party-affiliated sectoral "frameworks" (*utur*), the largest and most influential of which were the Workers Unity Bloc and the Women's Work Committees, later renamed the Palestinian Federation of Women's Action Committees. The origins and history of the WWCs/PFWAC are the focus of

chapter 5. Although the WUB's bargaining power on Israeli factory floors and construction sites was extremely limited, migrant workers were unionized in their villages and towns in the territories, where the WUB provided or coordinated the provision of low-cost or free services such as health care, individual legal aid, lectures on workers' rights, educational courses, athletic events, and cultural events (Hiltermann 1991, 88). The WUB also organized for collective bargaining rights and better workplace conditions for those individuals employed in the West Bank, (Hiltermann 1991, 71). In 1986, the WUB created its own General Federation of Trade Unions because the original communist-run GFTU denied representation to WUB-organized union branches (74). Amneh Rimawi, a DFLP partisan from the Nablus area, was elected deputy to 'Azmi Sandouqa, the federation's general secretary, making her the first woman to serve at the leadership level of the Palestinian labor movement in the territories (113).

The DF branch focus on grassroots mobilization as opposed to "patronage and charismatic appeal," traditional strengths of Fateh, increased pressure on other leftist organizations to boost their legitimacy through mass-based organizing (Hiltermann 1991, 71). The success of the DF mass-based organizations can to some extent be explained by a pragmatic political program that focused on the "interests" of particular sectors, rather than on ideological conversions:

> The people who joined the [democratic organizations] did not have to be Marxist-Leninist and such. . . . The mass-based frameworks were built on this goal, that . . . the proportion of party members to non-party members . . . be one-to-five or two-to-five. And the view was that the party selects from the mass-based organizations the most active and most productive and makes them party members. Of course, this was built on the Leninist heritage, the idea of a vanguard, which is the political leadership. . . . [E]ven among the party people, not all of them know what Marxism is or other such things. This did not create major problems. . . . And this continues to be my opinion. . . . [L]eftist parties [should not] require these ideological conversions. (Hilal 1995)

This point was also emphasized by Amal Wahdan, a former DF labor and youth organizer in the territories:

If you want to get close to the people, if you want your grassroots organizations to grow, you cannot encourage them with the Marxist-Leninist things. This is trash. . . . You wouldn't be able to have a group of ten people following you. . . . Although the leaders were having this trend of being Marxist-Leninist, it wasn't meant to be imposed on the people. Especially during the practical experience [of the late 1970s and 1980s], this trend was strengthened, that we have to try to . . . impose our ideas and ideology in a way that people can accept us, . . .by introducing solutions to their daily problems. (1995)

Comparing Branch Histories

The Occupied Territories branch innovated according to field conditions and was more independent of the Occupied Territories Committee in comparison to the Jordan branch's relationship to the Jordan Committee. The mass-based organizations in the territories also developed identities and decentralized structures that were to some degree distinct from those of the party branch. This specialization and concomitant expansion of the ranks strengthened the branch in relation to the central party outside and encouraged within-branch pluralism. The Occupied Territories branch and its mass-based frameworks were more flexible in their membership requirements in comparison to the Jordan branch. The distinctions between formal party and mass-based structures, party members and "friends," were more firmly established in the Occupied Territories branch, facilitating broad-based participation.

Ali Amer, a longtime DFLP activist whose experience was largely in Jordan but who was living in the Occupied Territories when interviewed, highlighted the political field differences that impacted DF branch work:

In Jordan, there were difficulties that were not minimal as a result of the impact of the government. Here in Palestine, it was clear that the enemy was the occupation. Over there, it is true that the government's methods worked against people, but the forces of regionalism existed, in addition to the fact that the level of hostility toward the Jordanian government did not reach the level of hostility toward the Israeli occupation. . . . [P]olitical realism required working in different ways in different places. The system there [in Jordan] impacted wide sectors in the society, and [what people were told was that] . . .

the political parties played a role in destroying Jordanian society. . . . Also, the [Jordanian] government in the 1970s period played a role in funding and opening spaces for the Islamist movement, for the Muslim Brotherhood, to spread. It had economic and social institutions. It had influence in the mosques. All of this plays a role in limiting wide sectors of the population against democratic work, against the democratic forces, who might be considered communists, or leftists, or unbelievers, etcetera. . . . In comparison to here, the Islamist movement in that period . . . was reconciled with the occupation. And because of this people were very much distrustful of the movement. (2000)

The Jordanian state reinforced communal tensions and systematically ensured that high costs were attached to any opposition to the state, facilitating political quietism. The Israeli state, in contrast, was a distinct occupying power that threatened the social survival of Palestinians. Palestinians increasingly responded with wider levels of grassroots mobilization in the 1970s and 1980s under the auspices of national-secular organizations, which had high popular legitimacy. Branch gender dynamics and outcomes are examined more deeply in the following two chapters.

5

The "Masses" Are Women

*The Palestinian Federation of Women's Action
Committees in the Occupied Territories, 1978–1987*

THE URGENCY OF WIDE-RANGING political mobilization was clearly recognized by many activists, especially leftists, in the Occupied Territories during the 1970s and 1980s.[1] More unusual was the PFWAC mobilizing strategy that both negotiated with and challenged the gender order, articulating an agenda of nationalist and feminist consciousness raising and empowerment independently of central party apparatuses outside the territories.

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1. Regarding the title of this chapter, note that in Arabic the Palestinian Federation of Women's Action Committees in the Occupied Territories, Itihad lijan al-'amal al-nisaa'i al-filastini fi al-dhifa al-gharbiyya wa qitaa' ghaza, should be translated as the Federation of Palestinian Women's Action Committees (FPWAC), but I use the more common English acronym. Sometimes the PFWAC name included "in the West Bank and Gaza Strip," and other times the name ended with "in the Occupied Territories" (fi al-manatiq al-muhtala). Until 1986, the organization was named the Women's Work Committees in the Occupied Territories (Lijan al-'amal al-nisaa'i fi al-manatiq al-muh-talla), after which the word *union* was added (Itihad lijan al-'amal al-nisaa'i al-filastini), and the official English translation became the Palestinian Union of Women's Work Committees. The English translation was changed in 1988 to the Palestinian Federation of Women's *Action* Committees in the Occupied Territories, as a result of name confusions with the Palestinian Communist Party-affiliated Union of Working Women's Committees. In 1989, the organization replaced "in the Occupied Territories" with "in the State of Palestine" (fi dawlat filastin).

65

The PFWAC strategy was structured by field conditions, the extensive grassroots organizing experiences of its cadres and leaders, and the willingness of partisans to continually assess and shift direction as necessary. The PFWAC's formation, decisions, and strategies were occasionally contested, particularly by members of the "supervisory" Occupied Territories Committee outside. The move toward a more feminist and independent orientation produced tensions with some partisan men and women within the territories and outside, who criticized (and overstated) the WWCs and later PFWAC's "separatism." This charge was partly because of a Marxist-nationalist orientation that, though welcoming of women's involvement, subordinated the gender question to the presumably more important issues of national and class liberation. Maybe more important, many partisans worried about the practical implications of so many core women leaders focusing their energy on building a women's organization (albeit affiliated with the party) rather than building the membership of the party directly.

Origins and Early Years: The Women's Work Committees

> These women who were present were of the best and most active women in all the political parties and organizations. I am one of those people who was sacrificing my time, my home, my children, my husband because I was convinced of this program. And I wanted to work! It reached the point of conflict between me and my in-laws in the beginning of my work. . . . When I began, I convinced a lot of women to join me. And I swear, I am saying this with all truth and honesty, us, as the Federation of Women's Action Committees . . . we were the most aware women in the Gaza Strip! When I would come speak to you, I had a willingness, in my ways and methods, to convince you in a big way.
>
> —Nawal Zaqout, interview, December 1995

The Women's Work Committees in the Occupied Territories were established in the West Bank in March 1978. DF women began organizing in the Gaza Strip in 1982 and created the first WWC in Shati' refugee camp in 1983 (Palestinian Women's Work Committees [PWWC] 1985, 20); other strong Gaza chapters were created in the refugee camps of Jabalyya and Breij, the village of 'Abbassan, and Gaza

City. By 1985 there were enough base committees to establish a federated structure in the Gaza Strip.[2]

Before the establishment of the WWCs in 1978, DFLP women were instructed by the party leaders outside the territories to join the Voluntary Work Committees, expand their membership base, and then recruit women directly into the DFLP (al-Labadi 1993, 49), indicating that party building was always a focus and concern of partisans. The women themselves did not want to create a separate women's organization because they did not want to isolate themselves (Barghouti 1995). A number of conditions, however, compelled the creation of such an organization. The DFLP women wanted to "involve more women . . . especially from the poorer sections of society" (al-Labadi 1993, 49). Though many young women became involved in the VWCs in the 1970s, the families of others restricted them from participating in this gender-mixed work, thus limiting membership to university and urban secondary school students. Women's membership was also limited because some men resented women's involvement in the mostly physical labor of the VWCs. Fadwa al-Labadi recalled one man VWC volunteer who told women who were building walls and roads in a Hebron village in the summer of 1975 that they were "biologically . . . unable to do this work; your real work is not here, you should only prepare food for the men. And look at your hands; they have become rough, and the sun has burnt your skin; no man will agree to marry you" (al-Labadi 1993, 37).

When DFLP branch women explained the difficulties of mobilizing women into the VWCs, the party leadership outside instructed them to join the boards of the existing charitable women's organizations, whose work was less socially risky for women, and use these organizations as a base from which to expand DFLP branch membership. The charitable associations were also less politically threatening to the Israeli authorities, who usually licensed them to run their projects. The charitable women's organizations, however, resisted the new involvement of DFLP

2. Gaza delegates coordinated and regularly met with the Executive Office in the West Bank until the December 1987 intifada made travel and communication very difficult.

branch women because they feared the consequences of the "group's political content" (al-Labadi 1993, 50). Though some of the women running the charitable organizations had "progressive understandings," branch partisans found that "the structure of the associations' leadership, their work programs, their services to women, their views about women, differed. We had problems . . . in entering as a group and attempting to change these programs. We found closed doors in front of us" (Barghouti 1995). The charitable organization leaders likely realized the partisan motivations of the new members, as well as the likelihood that their organizations would be transformed.

Women partisans had other incentives to look for new venues of participation for a politically educated and eager generation of women. With the exception of the DFLP branch, women were in general not incorporated into the *leadership* structures of the parties and movements that developed in the territories. Based on their 1970s organizing experiences, branch women noticed that participation in nationalist work increased respect for women and believed that involvement in charitable women's associations would not mobilize significant numbers of women. DFLP women were also affected by the 1975 Women's Conference in Mexico: "We saw that there was a lively international women's movement, women demanding their rights, making conferences, using particular slogans about women—these applied to our situation here" (Barghouti 1995).

DFLP women met and decided to hold a seminar on International Women's Day, 8 March 1978, to organize women in work that was different from the labor of the charitable women's associations.[3] The seminar, publicized in an open letter published in newspapers (Barghouti interview, in Najjar 1992, 127), was attended by twenty to twenty-five educated women of a number of political persuasions (including PFLP and independent women) and proposed creating what became the

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3. This group appears to have comprised five or six women. The only women I am sure were in this meeting are Zahira Kamal, Fadwa al-Labadi, and Siham Barghouti. Other women I consider DFLP "founding mothers" of the WWCs and later the PFWAC (who may or may not have attended this premeeting) are Kamilah Kurdi, Amal Ju'beh, and Sama Liftawi 'Aweidhah.

Women's Work Committees (Barghouti 1995). The WWCs began as female-only VWCs and were at first called the Voluntary Women's Work (VWW) Group (Majmoo'at al-'amal al-nisaai al-tatawu'i), a separation that was seen as necessary in order to mobilize women whose families restricted their political involvement. The first two VWWs were in Ramallah and Jerusalem and did not have "any clear political program," but held "meetings and discuss[ed] political issues and the role of women in the national struggle" (al-Labadi 1993, 50). The VWWs organized nationalist demonstrations and public cleaning projects and volunteered in nursing homes and handicapped children's centers. From these VWW groups, "slowly, slowly, a group of women who did not care went and got involved in the mixed voluntary work on the streets. And others stayed with the women. I remember that I used to work with both sides. Incrementally, we developed . . . and we became the Women's Work Committees" (al-Labadi 1995a).

A number of DFLP men opposed the creation of this female-only organization and "accused us of separatism; their justification was that mixed organizations are the best for women's emancipation" (al-Labadi 1993, 50). The men also worried that the new WWCs would siphon the energies of DFLP women away from the party. To check this flow, there was a decision in the party, supported primarily by men but by some women as well, to refocus the DFLP branch women's energies on organizing women workers. This redirection was also motivated by DFLP competition with the Palestinian communists, who were strong among women factory workers ('Aweidhah 1995). Although some DFLP women did shift their energies into union organizing, many found such work limited by social customs that restricted women from mixing with men and the low proportion of women involved in the "production process." Consistent with traditional Marxist perspectives, women's work enclaves in most of the world, such as "education, nursing, and office tasks," were not viewed as "productive" work or having the revolutionary potential of factory work (Hiltermann 1991, 156).[4] A number of other mechanisms isolated the primarily single village women who

4. See, for example, excerpts from an interview with DFLP woman unionist Amneh Rimawi (Hiltermann 1991, 156–57).

worked in West Bank factories from union activities, according to a study conducted by WWC women in Ramallah:

> It was apparent how much the bosses organized the workplaces so that women did not relate to other women or to other men in other parts of the factory. . . . in addition to the fact that he [the boss] would bus them into work and bus them back home. . . . Second, of course, was their fear of abusiveness and that they would be fired after they had acquired a job. . . . The boss signed the contract with the parents, not the girls. So the girl is controlled by the boss and her parents. (Barghouti 1995)

Furthermore, the GFTU (controlled by men communists) resisted DF women's unionization efforts, which they correctly viewed as attempts to undermine communist power by building a base of alternatively affiliated workers. In order to address some of these obstacles, Ramallah WWC women organized centers in their homes "where only women unionists met" (al-Labadi 1993, 60n. 5), and hundreds of women were eventually unionized by the WUB in the 1980s. In addition to becoming members in male-dominated WUB unions, women created their own factory-based union organizations and led WUB unions as well as the DF branch trade union federation created in 1986 (Hiltermann 1991, 153–60; Rimawi 1995).

Many DF branch women were WUB as well as WWC and PFWAC activists through the 1980s, and employed women remained an important focus of the organization. Women in the WWCs, however, continued to believe that focusing exclusively on working women was limiting, especially when the majority of women were homemakers: "Both groups were oppressed and exploited . . . [but] we knew the domestic responsibilities that kept women in their homes and out of the paid workforce" (al-Labadi 1993, 52). In addition to a survey of working women, WWC women undertook a survey of homemakers. These research projects were the first such studies of women in the territories.

Afterward, the WWC Jerusalem chapter decided to refocus on "mobilizing the mass of women outside urban areas in the national struggle" (al-Labadi 1993, 52). Attrition was a significant problem, however, in the Jerusalem WWC. When women were asked (three

months after the establishment of the WWC) why they withdrew after a few meetings, they replied, " 'Your committee only focuses on politics and not on women.' Some of them mocked our activities and named the WWC for example, 'Fadwa's committee' or 'Zahira's committee.' We took this problem seriously and reappraised our agenda, and we had to think of a programme that satisfied their needs" (al-Labadi 1993, 50–51).

In order to fully evaluate the WWCs' program and address high attrition rates, at Zahira Kamal's suggestion the chapter women went in small groups "to listen to the women outside the cities, and then reassembl[ed] in order to discuss and summarise what we had heard and seen. . . . We traveled by ourselves, climbing the rocky roads of refugee camps and isolated villages. We were astonished when we saw how much women were suffering, and we discovered that the women in our society were entirely outside our experience." WWC women realized afterward that women's "burden was too great to permit immediate mobilization for political activities" (al-Labadi 1993, 52).

These findings reinforced the contention of many DF women that there was a need for a separate women's organization that addressed women's daily issues. Otherwise, the mobilization of women would be limited to students and "women intellectuals": "I do not want to enter among women who have the same ideas that I have, or for me to impose my ideas on her. I want to begin with her from a place where she decides. In the end, if the woman is present in the mosque, yes, I have to go to her. If a woman is aware of her cause, she will be her own biggest defender. . . . So for me, the most important thing was how do I reach her?" (Kamal 1995).

WWC women then reformulated the organization's program, suggesting that partisans shift from a utilitarian nationalist strategy for the mobilization of women to a deeper nationalist-feminist orientation based on field experience and evaluation. They decided to focus on "solving women's problems before involving them in the national struggle, and we started to set up informal local committees in every village and refugee camp we had visited. Our work with the mass of women proved to be a crucial step in the emergence of a consciousness that was

both feminist and political-national. This made us raise the question of struggling to achieve our rights as women, and our national rights as Palestinians at the same time" (al-Labadi 1993, 52–53).

Men DFLP cadres were not happy with this turn of events, and a number opposed women's suggestion that the WWCs call for a change in family law. Party men urged women to "concentrate only on class struggle and [the] national role, and . . . postpone women's issues until we get our independent state." The WWCs began with a Marxist analysis of women's oppression (al-Labadi 1993, 53). Approximately two years after their creation, however, genuine disagreement over priorities developed in an organization that continued to include PFLP, independent, and a few PCP and Fateh women. Women were split among ones who wanted to focus on women workers, others who wanted to postpone the issue of women's liberation until the establishment of a Palestinian state, and still others who believed that "the struggle for women's emancipation [was] key to national liberation" (al-Labadi 1993, 58).

These disagreements did not always parallel differences in party affiliation. Most PFLP, PCP, and a few DFLP branch women argued for the primacy of the national liberation movement and saw their WWC work as secondary to party commitments. With respect to DFLP women, though I do not have systematic data on this issue, I found differences in gender ideology between the ones who were primarily socialized in the WWCs and PFWAC and others who were not. Many of the DF women whose party work was primarily with workers, youths, or students, or all of the above, believed in what can best be described as a "pull yourself up by your bootstraps" feminism. These women, a few of whom were militarily active and most of whom struggled with their families and communities to reach positions of authority, were not convinced that changes in the gender order or a feminist movement were necessary. Instead, they believed that women could individually negotiate their liberation with their families, especially by fighting to acquire an education.

Factional competition to control the WWCs also intensified in response to the organization's dramatic success. Communist women, who had been only briefly involved in the WWCs, broke away in March

1980 and expanded the workplace-based Working Women's Committees. In March 1981, when it appeared that PFLP women would be unsuccessful in gaining the support of the majority of the membership in planned WWC elections in Ramallah, they also left and created the Union of Palestinian Women's Committees (UPWC). In addition, many DFLP men and some women pressured DF and WWC women partisans to increase recruitment directly into the party and, given their success, wanted to claim party ownership of the WWCs ('Aweidhah 1995). As a result of all these developments, by mid-1981 the WWCs were clearly aligned with the DF branch. Though most women mobilized by the WWCs did not become DF branch members, the number who did was significant enough to increase women's representation to about 45 percent of the DF branch's total membership in the territories by 1982 (al-Labadi 1993, 55).[5]

Conflict remained in the 1980s between DF women leaders of the WWCs and some of the DFLP partisans on the supervising OTC existing outside the territories. WWC feminists charted a separate course, as indicated by the following narrative, whose bitterness and overstatement ("the party coming from outside used to win all the time") were produced by later conflicts:

> There were women who were really enlightened who used to see this federation as an opportunity for a real women's movement that could work. But the decisions of the party coming from outside used to win all the time . . . to make women party members through the women's committees; that the committees should be an entrée for us [the DFLP] to become wider and better known. . . . There was a group of

5. According to data compiled and published in 1987 by the PFWAC, which came from interviews with women leaders and organizational documents, at the "end of 1985," the WWCs had 4,300 members; in March 1983, the Palestinian Communist Party-affiliated Federation of Working Women's Committees (Itihad lijan al-mara'a al-'amila) had approximately 2,000 members; in "the beginning of 1985," the Fateh-affiliated Women's Social Work Committees (Itihad lijan al-mara'a lil-'amal al-ijtima'i) had approximately 750 members; and "in 1984," the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-affiliated Union of Palestinian Women's Committees (Itihad lijan al-mara'a al-filastiniyya) had approximately 950 members (PUWWC 1987b, app. 2).

women who used to execute these orders as they were. . . . There was also another group that said: "No, we want to do this in addition to other things because we really want to lay down roots for a durable women's movement." ('Aweidhah 1995)

Founding Mothers and Leading Partisans

The DFLP initiators of the WWCs in the West Bank were a politicized group of primarily college-educated, professional women (usually teachers) of middle- to lower-middle-class backgrounds who were in their early twenties to early thirties. The Gaza WWC and DF leaders were on average five years younger than West Bank women and, although educated, usually did not have college degrees; they came from poor to lower-middle-class backgrounds and were usually unemployed when they began their WWC and DF organizing in the early 1980s.[6]

Unlike DF branch men, none of the PFWAC founding mothers were deported, although the Israeli authorities allowed some to visit deported husbands on the condition that they remain outside the country for long periods (usually three years).[7] Though DF branch women (like PFLP, communist, and Fateh women) in the West Bank and Gaza Strip were imprisoned and tortured during the 1970s, 1980s, and even the 1990s, these punishments were more likely to occur if they were involved in youth, student, and labor organizing. PFWAC and DF women were more likely to be banned from international travel and placed under town arrest. During town arrest, which sometimes lasted years,

6. Kamilah al-Kurdi, a WWC founder, was not interviewed because she was not in the Occupied Territories in late 1995. In addition, the information on Gaza DFLP women is less complete than data on West Bank women because travel, time, and communication constraints made the latter more accessible. This section addresses only DFLP women who were particularly active in the PFWAC as opposed to DFLP women whose primary work was with the youth or labor movements. For an autobiographical piece, see Kamal 1991. Significant portions of books by Strum (1992) and Gluck (1994) also focus on the PFWAC and its women cadres.

7. Long-term deportation of Palestinian women with residency status is unusual. More common is the deportation of Palestinian and other Arab women without residency status married to men with residency.

women had to remain within a certain geographical area and check in daily with Israeli military authorities.[8]

The West Bank founders usually had previous political organizational experience and affiliations. Zahira Kamal and Siham Barghouti were involved in and highly influenced by the Palestinian student movement in Cairo in the late 1960s. Kamal was also actively involved in the charitable women's associations, the VWCs, and teachers' organizations in the territories. Barghouti was involved in social and political clubs, the VWCs, charitable women's associations, and the union movement. Fadwa al-Labadi was involved in the VWCs during most of the 1970s, organized teachers when she worked as a teacher, joined the DF in 1977, and led the student movement at Bethlehem University in the late 1970s. Al-Labadi and Kamal, who were teachers and friends, nominated themselves to the previously all-male board of the two thousand-member civil servant Employees Club of Jerusalem in February 1977 and were elected (al-Labadi 1993, 41). Sama 'Aweidhah began her political career as a ten year old when she tagged along with her older sister to PFLP meetings in Jordan in the late 1960s. She joined the VWCs in the territories as a high school student in 1976, after which she joined the DF. She continued her DFLP work as a student leader at the University of Jordan, and then returned to the West Bank in order to work in the Silvana chocolate factory and organize women into labor unions as a DF partisan. Amal Ju'beh was a DF student leader at Birzeit University and later supervised DF student organizations in the West Bank before she became involved in the WWCs.

In terms of the family histories of some of these partisans, Barghouti

8. In February 1982, Siham Barghouti was imprisoned for two and one-half years for violating almost two years of town arrest by traveling to the northern West Bank town of Nablus (Najjar 1992, 129). Zahira Kamal, whose case was taken up by Amnesty International in 1984, was placed under town arrest from 1980 to 1986, during which she was restricted to the Jerusalem area and required to check in with military authorities twice a day; this period is the longest that any woman in the Occupied Territories has been town arrested. She was also imprisoned for six months without charge or trial in 1979 and "preventatively" arrested for five days in 1982 (Najjar 1992, 135, 138).

is the youngest of nine daughters in her parents' eventually successful attempt to have a boy and credits her abilities to "the strong personality of my mother" (Najjar 1992, 125). Kamal is the oldest of nine children (three daughters, two sons, and four daughters) (Najjar 1992, 139). When the sixteen year old found out that her parents had decided to spend their limited money on educating the younger boys and marrying off the three older sisters, she went on a hunger strike until allowed to register at the university. After her father died while she was studying physics in Cairo, Kamal supported her family and put her siblings through school. Fadwa al-Labadi is the oldest child of an urban mother and rural father (al-Labadi 1993, 16). She writes that she foiled all her mother's attempts to raise her as a traditional Arab girl and credits her father for her political development. Like Kamal, al-Labadi became the primary provider for her mother and younger siblings upon her father's death in the late 1960s. Sama ʿAweidhah is the youngest of three daughters born to parents expelled from western Jerusalem after 1948. She gives her father, a Fateh activist who died of a heart attack when she was eleven years old, significant credit for her political development (1997b).

Membership, Structure, and "Rearing"

> It was an experiment for girls to leave their homes, to get to know each other more. There were women who left their villages for the first time in order to come to a course, [to attend meetings in Jerusalem], or to visit another kindergarten or project, to travel. It is called "travel" here when [women] do that—internal traveling. There were girls from villages who found this impossible to do before.
>
> —Inʿam ʿObeidi, interview, November 1995

> Even during this period, we, as women leaders who are present at the level of the PFWAC, in spite of the fact that our situation is flimsy . . . we are considered of the women who are very competent and as an indicator of this, when any issue is at stake, we are sent for. . . . And this goes back to the great way we were reared.
>
> —Nawal Zaqout, interview, December 1995

Although it fell under the auspices of the DF branch, and some women considered the two organizations inseparable, PFWAC membership was

relatively flexible and did not require women to become DF branch members.

> Every Palestinian woman in the West Bank and Gaza Strip has the right to membership in the Federation as long as she . . . meets the following conditions: 1. She works to spread the aims and the program of the Federation in her own social setting and participates in expanding the Federation's membership. 2. She becomes a member of one of the Federation's basic committees and participates in its various activities. 3. She possesses a good national and social reputation where she lives and works. 4. She pays her monthly dues. (PFWAC 1988, 6–7)

The PFWAC organizational structure was well defined and relatively democratic, at least until 1988. Each PFWAC structure existed alongside a DF branch women's cell whose members were in both organizations ('Aweidhah 1995).[9] In the early years, the PFWAC's strongest presence was in the Jerusalem and Ramallah districts, which in 1983 were home to twenty-three of the organization's forty branches (PWWC 1983, 10).

The Higher Committee, which met every three months, was composed of the district secretariats, Executive Office members, and "any members appointed by the Executive Committee according to its work needs" (PFWAC 1988, 9). The fifteen to nineteen elected Executive Office members met biweekly and supervised the PFWAC. The well-attended General Conference of the Federation was the "highest legal body," annually meeting to "discuss the circumstances of the Federation," approve the program and internal platform, and make other important decisions (PFWAC 1988, 10).

Practicality, flexibility, and a focus on women's daily needs were important components of the PFWAC program and key to its success

9. Each basic unit was required to have between fifteen and thirty members, after which a new unit was formed. Each basic committee had an elected secretariat of seven to nine members. Branch offices followed up on the work of the basic committees and were established "when there is more than one . . . in one location or neighborhood" (PFWAC 1988, 8). District committees, which were "made up of the Secretaries General of the local Basic Committees," submitted regular reports to the Executive Office and the Higher Committee of the PFWAC (PFWAC 1988, 9).

(PFWAC 1988, 6). Practical solutions required listening to women and having them take responsibility for making changes. PFWAC committees were therefore usually initiated during informal meetings in which women discussed their needs. The women "must find the one woman among them who can already read, or sew well enough, or who knows how to use a knitting machine, and persuade her to teach them. Then we will provide the books, or the sewing machines or knitting machines, the cloth, the yarn. In turn, they must spread out and teach other women" (Kamal, in Morgan 1989, 277). The PFWAC attempted to empower women, rupture their isolation in their homes, and redefine their traditional work even as it taught them skills and provided services that arguably also reinforced the gendered division of labor.

When PFWAC women entered a new area, "We had to begin with the educated women, the girls who had studied. And to the extent that this woman had trust and was known in the village, to that extent she was able to group other women around her. So we used to start with women who were aware and had a specific position within the village, whether she was a teacher, or had finished her *tawjihi* exams, or she was a nurse" (Theeb 1995).[10] Because PFWAC programs were designed according to local needs, "In the north, we had a program that differed from Gaza, from Hebron. It was not that we had a program and we wanted to fulfill it; that people all over had to do the same things. No. [We wanted to know] where were the skills [in a particular area]? What were the needs?" (Kamal 1995).

Tamam 'Ali Ahmed Qanawee, an organizer from 'Arrabe village who began with the PFWAC in the early 1980s, discussed the success of this type of mobilization strategy:

> We began our work with the PFWAC, me and a woman colleague, in a Jenin area called Inshirah Jabr. . . . The first base unit we created in Jenin was in an area called Marah 'Ibr, which was mass-based work through a sewing course. From this we moved to most of the villages

10. The *tawjihi*, usually taken during the final year of secondary school, is a standardized college entrance examination for colleges and universities in the Arab world.

in the area . . . Ya'bad, 'Arrabe, Qabati, Ikferat, Zbooba, Rumana, Jadeeda, and Kfura'i. . . . I was working as a secretary at that time in an office in Jenin and volunteered with the PFWAC after work hours. (1995)

Organizers were flexible in their application of the PFWAC program. The antireligious connotations of Marxism and the security risks associated with nationalist activity obliged organizers to de-emphasize those aspects of PFWAC affiliation during early mobilization attempts despite opposition from men and some women DFLP leaders (al-Labadi 1993, 56). Another organizer noted:

> We used to learn from the people, and we would move from the point of the people. . . . When we started a committee in Hebron, we would do it in the committee offices. In another town [Doura], where they used to call us communists . . . the PFWAC established a committee in a mosque. I took with me a shaykh [Muslim preacher]. I prayed—I do not pray, of course—and after prayers and prayers, I stayed until six o'clock because it was the birthday of the prophet, the shaykh presented me and I was on the pulpit speaking about the PFWAC. I was discussing its program in a way that people could understand what I was saying. . . . I did not mobilize them with ideology like other members of the PFWAC were mobilized, the leadership was mobilized. . . . No. I used to say to them: "Who of you embroiders? Who of you knits?" I went down exactly to where people were. (Sharif 1995)

In addition to sewing courses, in the early 1980s the PFWAC began to raise money to buy sewing machines for individual women and provided raw materials for traditional embroidery and basket and rug weaving. The organization also created a biannual bazaar in Jerusalem during this period where women directly sold their products. In the mid-1980s, they organized cooperatives where women could buy, sell, or trade clothing and processed food and rented buildings for sewing, framing, rug-weaving, and food-processing projects.[11] The organization also es-

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11. Approximately five hundred women attended PFWAC-organized courses training women in such projects in 1986 (PUWWC 1987c, 15–16).

tablished preschools and larger income-generating projects,[12] and it organized lectures in villages and refugee camps addressing health and family planning issues.[13]

The establishment of PFWAC preschools and income-generating projects in the 1980s was consistent with the agenda of raising women's gender consciousness and mobilizing them for nationalist activity by creating associational possibilities outside of the family and the home. It was also a pragmatic strategy since the preschools facilitated the mobilization of working-class women into the PFWAC and the DFLP by providing needed day care to three categories of women: politically uninvolved "housewives" *(rabaat buyuut)*, employed married women with children, and politically active married women with children. PFWAC employment in the income-generating projects and preschools was also an avenue for mobilizing working-class women (and their family members) into the PFWAC because it provided needed money, it occurred in a unisex associational space that did not require supervision by men bosses (the situation that existed in most textile factories in the territories), and the work was with a politically and socially respected organization. These factors were important for the women employees themselves, their often socially conservative families, and the communities in which these projects existed (Hasso 2001, 591).

The PFWAC program required women at local levels to organize "lectures, panels and rallies which acquaint[ed] women with their positions and problems, with our people's problems, and with Arab and international women's struggles" (PFWAC 1988, 4). One of the biggest problems PFWAC cadres faced was "women's perceptions of the natural physical differences between the sexes which explain and legitimise

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12. These projects, the working-class women who worked in them, and the impact of such involvement on their lives are investigated in a previously published article (Hasso 2001).

13. In 1986, for example, the PFWAC coordinated 350 lectures on women's and children's diseases and illnesses and illness prevention. In addition, there were 80 lectures in various locales on "nutrition and the pregnant woman," and 55 showings of health-related films (PUWWC 1987c, 15).

women's inferior social positions. Usually they refused to get involved in actions which conflicted with their beliefs. . . . In other words, most of the women in our society thought that the natural role of women was limited to domestic work and child-care. This belief . . . led us to work hard to educate and induce women to change these stereotypical ideas" (al-Labadi 1993, 56).

Women were encouraged to discuss their problems as women during PFWAC meetings. Meetings were used to reframe women's problems as socially produced and to find solutions:

> We would see that the problems that existed for women were based on the fact that she did not know her situation. . . . So in the beginning, we would put her problems before her. And from those problems we presented to her, we would tell her the ways she could solve these problems by giving her various alternatives she could undertake. For example, the biggest problem women used to suffer from was illiteracy. . . . And her education was low because her world was only her children and the house, and she did not even deal with those issues with the right methods. . . . If one has not studied, he stays distant from the world and has no points of communication with the world. So we opened literacy training courses. (Theeb 1995)

DF and PFWAC women, many of whom were teachers, taught hundreds of literacy courses beginning in the late 1970s and used those courses as a forum for nationalist and gender consciousness raising.[14] The opportunity for women to engage in sex-segregated political work was also extremely important to the success of the PFWAC, as was the organization's recognition that mobilizing women required winning over their communities and families. Many women, however, concealed their involvement in mixed party work by affiliating with the PFWAC (a situation encouraged by the organization). In'am 'Obeidi, coordinator of the PFWAC preschool programs from the mid- to late

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14. In 1986, for example, 29 such courses were taught, attended by 312 students. In addition to 27 teachers, 4 directors (in coordination with educators at Birzeit University) provided training and worked on curricula and a pedagogy that "focused on things related to [women's] everyday life" (PUWWC 1987c, 15).

1980s, argued that the PFWAC developed a special reputation in this respect. When young women's families resisted their involvement with the PFWAC,

> the mother of so-and-so [*umm iflan*] would assure the relatives: "These women, my dear, are with the committees, the women's committees." And when they saw that young women were coming to their homes, this helped in terms of moving the situation of women in the villages more than if a young man came to see them. And if you say, "I was in the Women's Committee [Lajnet al-niswan] and was out late until five or six P.M.," it is easier, do you understand? . . . It does help that women are working with other women and that it is open in front of society and their parents see that they are not walking with young men. (1995)

Much of the PFWAC work on the ground negotiated with, as opposed to directly confronted, the gender order in Palestinian homes so that families, especially men, would not be threatened by women's political and other activities outside of their homes. Al-Labadi explained: "Ultimately we wanted to revolutionise women's position in our society, but we could not bring about a revolution all at once" (1993, 53). Another organizer communicated throughout the interview the extent to which she and other PFWAC activists maneuvered rather than frontally challenged patriarchal family structures: "In the beginning, women were very responsive to us, and we became very widespread. The minor problems we had were that if there were a number of meetings, a woman could not attend because she could not leave her home for long periods. Unfortunately, there were some men who were against their wives working in literacy programs . . . because this might make her late for her children, the cooking, and such. Even though we used to guide women as to how to balance these two things" (Theeb 1995).

The interviews indicate that many other activists challenged the gender order using a strategy that did not alienate a girl or woman from her family, community, or religious identity but, rather, compelled everyone to rethink their assumptions and ways of operating. According to Kamal, when a member did not show up at a meeting, PFWAC cadres visited her home to "prod her, gently, to find out why. . . . We

talk together with all the women in her family, to build support for her—and we suggest ways in which women might tactfully argue with the men" (Kamal, in Morgan 1989, 278). Similarly, Ilham Sami Hamad discussed how the PFWAC convinced families to allow daughters to travel outside their villages for meetings or teacher training:

> I never attempted to isolate the girl or the teacher from her family. I used to sit with her. I would sit with her mother. Her mother would come to visit us. There were relations and trust to the point that before the end, we were even able to send some teachers to study outside of the country on a scholarship. And these were women from villages, women whose parents were not easy to convince. . . . Many times the parents did not know what the strengths of their daughters were. This always made the parents fearful about letting their daughters go out and get involved. We used to focus on the points of strength in their daughters. (1995)

The PFWAC directly intervened with male family members only in cases where the woman asked for an intervention:

> We would make a home visit and convince him [by saying]: "This woman, it is in your interest that she is able to read and write." We would provide them with many examples. We would tell them stories that the realities of life are that a woman who is educated is better off than one who is not. And we would help a woman to create a personal program that allowed her to balance the needs of her home and the literacy course without ruining the organization that her husband got used to, you see. . . . [W]hen we entered economic work—when women began to benefit economically, the problem lightened and was not as acute as before. And then the good reputation that the PFWAC and its members gained made families more responsive to us. (Theeb 1995)

It is clear that the PFWAC was careful not to dramatically destabilize the patriarchal order by challenging it head-on. Instead, it worked to co-opt families and communities, even as it pushed women into positions of responsibility in order to empower them and raise both nationalist and feminist consciousness. In the long term, this tactic can destabilize patriarchal family structures, but much more subtly (and

maybe more effectively). Hundreds of working-class and peasant women affiliated with the PFWAC developed organizational skills and a type of standing in their villages and communities that had previously been limited to men. PFWAC women also benefited from participating in a collectivity whose power came from an organization with an embracing vision of a future that included women in an independent Palestinian state. Working-class women insisted that working with the PFWAC, the DFLP, or both had created their personalities (*kawan shakhsiyti*) or selves (*kawan thati*) (Hasso 2001).

Gender Ideology: "We Live the Bitterness of Women's Lives"

PFWAC gender ideology placed significant importance on women's attainment of equal rights with men in "public sphere" matters: political participation, formal employment, and education.[15] Employment especially, it was assumed, would give women the economic independence to alter their home environments, and political activity would expose the contradictions of their own exploitation as women in their homes. PFWAC women viewed national liberation and nationalist consciousness as prerequisites to women's complete liberation and feminist consciousness: "Palestinian women will gain their liberation in part because of their ability to take a strong position in the progressive ranks of our national movement" (PFWAC 1988, 2–3; see also PWWC 1985, 4). They believed that "national action contributes to personal liberation for women . . . [by] helping to break down the isolation and ignorance that in the past had ensured women's acquiescence in patriarchal oppression, and to break down all obstacles facing women's emancipation" (al-Labadi 1993, 9). They did not believe, however, that nationalism was a panacea for women. A feminist movement was necessary in the post-1967 period, PFWAC and DF women argued, because the "awareness of the role of women in the national struggle did not reflect a . . . parallel awareness of the necessity of liberating women from the

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15. Portions of this chapter and especially this section were previously published in Hasso 1998.

captivity of the social concepts and traditions which hindered her active participation in different aspects of life" (PUWWC 1987a, 2). The focus on women's emancipation differentiated the PFWAC from the DF branch: "As a women's movement, [we] used to realize that on the contrary, we live the bitterness of women's lives and see how much Palestinian women are suffering. And we used to really think that we want to organize women [in nationalist work] *and* we want to change the social realities that they live in" (al-Labadi 1995a).

Whereas DF branch men almost always argued for the primacy of the nationalist struggle among the trinity of oppressions (national, class, and gender), DF and PFWAC women often argued for maintaining a balance. When a PFWAC cadre writing in the annual magazine, for example, qualified her critique of the exploitation of working women by Palestinian capitalists by arguing that the struggle against the Israeli occupation should be primary (PUWWC 1986, 41), the PFWAC Executive Committee published the following response: "We in the PFWAC agree with the writer of this article that the primary contradiction for all sectors of our people, among them the Palestinian woman, is the occupation in this stage of national liberation. But this does not deny [the fact that] that the Palestinian woman in the Occupied Territories should plunge into/engage in struggle in order to advance her social situation so that she is able to play her primary role in the national struggle and social progress" (PUWWC 1986, 41).[16]

Like most of their male counterparts, PFWAC and DF branch leaders had read Marx, Lenin, Engels, Luxemburg, and Qasim Amin.[17] DF

16. The organization published an annual magazine (fifty to seventy pages, in Arabic), each of which was titled differently and whose masthead read: "A one-time publication of [the PFWAC] in the Occupied Territories [or West Bank and Gaza Strip]." This statement and the title changes were a means of avoiding Israeli censorship of Palestinian periodicals. I obtained six of these magazines: *The Woman's Voice* (PWWC 1983), *The Woman's Fight* (PWWC 1984), *The Woman's Struggle* (PWWC 1985), *The Woman's March* (PUWWC 1986), *The Woman's Path* (PUWWC 1987c), and *The Woman's Steadfastness* (PFWAC 1989).

17. Amin was the Egyptian intellectual who publicly linked the "modernization" of women (through education and unveiling) with the "advancement" of Egyptian soci-

and PFWAC women had also studied women's experiences in nationalist movements and postrevolutionary periods in other countries and the writings of Egyptian feminist Nawal al-Sa'adawi. They often stressed that although these readings were important, their analyses of the Palestinian woman question were grounded in their organizing experiences.

PFWAC women believed that the proletarianization of men had made women "the prisoners of housework" (PUWWC 1987a, 1; PWWC 1985, 14). They assumed that proletarianization would, in turn, emancipate working-class women, increasing their options and challenging the idea that "the woman was born only to be a housewife" (PWWC 1984, 3). Employed women were believed to have the most revolutionary potential because the economic necessity that had driven Palestinian women to work outside the home "pushed them into many social conflicts," compelling them to realize that "the subordination of women does not stem from a lack in terms of her makeup but . . . is a result of male monopolization of productive work. [That] is the issue that domesticated her and made her completely docile to her father, or her brother, or her husband" (Kamal, in PWWC 1984, 3).

Women's work was significant to the PFWAC in another way. Driven by the idea that women had to believe that they were as valuable as men before they would fight for equal treatment, the organization expended much energy reframing Palestinian women's paid and unpaid daily work so that the women themselves realized its social significance: "Women's economic contribution in her home is not something new. Women have always worked in this area, whether by helping her husband in the fields, or raising of chickens and livestock, or through her own provision of the things that her home needs, such as drying and preserving vegetables or through the making of cheeses and yoghurts and bread and other such things . . . except that this work is not paid a wage" (PWWC 1984, 16).

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ety in *The Liberation of Women (Tahrir al-mar'a)*. This book was first published in Arabic in 1899 and quickly became the most influential book in the early-twentieth-century Arab world. Leila Ahmed discusses and analyzes Amin's views on women and culture (1992, especially chap. 8).

Part of this project included reframing "housewifery" and increasing the self-confidence of married women who were not formally employed, thereby encouraging this group of women to participate in a politicized female collectivity:

> The woman is brains and aptitudes, and she is a mother and housewife and a worker in all the areas of life. She is essentially the mother of the people, responsible as an individual for creating a good family that can face the requirements of daily life. . . . The conviction of the housewife in herself, her abilities, and her aptitudes creates in her a social person who likes to work with other women to better the situation of the other women of her sex. (Rifqa Wadi, in PWWC 1983, 27)

Another strand of PFWAC ideology was an explicit challenge to the existing gender order and a stated commitment to its transformation, most clearly articulated in Arabic-language documents (whose audience was members and potential recruits). According to an article written in personal narrative form by the PFWAC Educational Committee of Qalqilya, for example:

> Woman in all stages of her life bears the burden of her society. She creates a problem . . . even before the mother has her baby. The [society] gives the mother psychological anxiety because she is . . . apprehensive that she will have a girl. And the hour the girl is born will be the beginning of the problem and the people will wish the mother "thank God you are well" and move on, whereas their dance of joy if the baby is a male will be worthy of the Blessed Prophet. And in the early childhood of girls—we see her as she is 7 years of age, for example, holding the broom and wearing a kitchen apron and bracing herself for the responsibilities of a family. And sometimes during her work, her brother comes yelling while asking her to fulfill one thing or the other for him. And her mother will say to her, "Go and bring this thing for your brother and give him whatever he requests." . . . When she has reached the stage of young adulthood and has become a student in school, in most cases the issue will have become routine and traditional, upheld and maintained by a vigilant father or mindful mother (if the mother was educated, do you think this child will suffer from this?). (PWWC 1985, 46)

In 1984, Ni'meh al-Hilu of the Jabalyya refugee camp published an article critiquing inheritance laws and customs limiting Muslim women's inheritance to half the amount inherited by brothers. Although such a regulation was an improvement over women's inheritance rights before Islam, she argued that "since women now participate equal to men in the social economy and they now share in furnishing the home [upon marriage] . . . their inheritance rights should be equal to men's rights, especially if she is a working woman who aids in household and family expenditures" (PWWC 1984, 32). Another article explaining and challenging the personal status laws noted that in spite of the fact that

> the Arab woman has been able to become somewhat independent from her family [in independent Arab countries], in spite of her entrance into the area of education, her active participation in economic life, her gains of equal rights with men at work, and in spite of what [national] constitutions and formal speeches provide in terms of the equality of men with women, in spite of all of this, the Arab woman continues to be the prisoner of the personal status laws that stand before her equality with men in terms of freedom of behavior. (PUWWC 1986, 39)

Even though most of the lengthy analyses of women's oppression in PFWAC Arabic-language documents are strongly feminist, they were often placed after articles discussing the local, regional, and international political situation because one of the most important founding arguments of the PFWAC was that the Palestinian *nationalist* project was as important to women as it was to men. Women partisans recognized that the Palestinian "masses" who needed to be mobilized for national liberation included girls and women. Moreover, the organization was willing to attenuate strategy in order to accomplish such mobilization, recognizing very early the importance of feminist consciousness raising and economic and social support for women. PFWAC women worked independently of central party structures in order to accomplish their national liberation-gender equality agenda. The flexible and democratic characteristics of the early organization in turn made it open to innovation and helps to explain its mobilization success. The PFWAC

was unusually successful even in comparison to the other DF sectoral organizations, according to Rana Zaqout, a former DF woman partisan who worked as a student and youth organizer at Birzeit University, in Jenin, and in the Gaza Strip: "I believe that they [high-ranking DF/PFWAC women] had roles in creating plans for the other [DF mass-based] organizations. But let me tell you, the other organizations of the DFLP did not take the stamp of the PFWAC. It is difficult to define the reason—the PFWAC was one of the most successful mass-based organizations here" (1995).

Consistent with his argument that "habitus" (as embedded in institutional, linguistic, relational, and other structures and collective practices) produces social life and individuals, Pierre Bourdieu thought that innovations must exist "in a potential state at the heart of the system of already realized possibles" (1996, 235–36). Arthur Danto raised an excellent question, however: "Can the field explain the individual who sees what one subsequently acknowledges as an opening [for new possibilities]?" (1999, 218). PFWAC history reiterates that organizing involves "autonomous experiences," or "agency," even as we recognize that individual experiences and decisions are rarely "fully autonomous" of the conditions in a particular field (Shusterman 1999, 9). The following chapter demonstrates the extent to which PFWAC women's decisions and experiences helped to produce a particular type of DF branch in the territories and examines women's status and gender ideologies in the DFLP more broadly through 1987, including in the Jordan branch.

6

Modernity, Morality, and Mobilizing Women in Democratic Front Branches, 1973–1987

WOMEN WERE MORE POWERFUL in the Democratic Front Occupied Territories branch than they were in the Jordan branch, a difference that was partly produced by the mobilization strategies employed by each branch. Many Democratic Front partisans in Jordan also seem to have internalized a degree of gender and sexual conservatism in the 1970s and 1980s, given that moral critiques were aspects of Hashemite delegitimization of Palestinian leftists during the civil war. Women's power in the Occupied Territories DF branch, in contrast, was reinforced because it symbolically demonstrated the "modernity" of the Palestinian struggle for self-determination within the international community.

"The Women's Front": The Occupied Territories Democratic Front Branch, 1977–1987

By the late 1970s, the DF branch in the territories was composed primarily of women and young people and was sometimes referred to as the "women's front" (*jabhat al-niswan*) or the "girls' party" (*hizb al-banaat*) by detractors.[1] Whereas Palestinian women and young people were in-

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1. Portions of this section were previously published in Hasso 1998.

volved in all the other political parties in the territories, young women were much more likely to lead DF branch structures. Two former party activists who were married said that the running joke among DF branch cadres in the early 1980s was who should represent the DF at high-level meetings of the major political factions in the territories, a social context where age and power are positively correlated and older men are the most powerful public-sphere actors. The DF branch usually sent a thirty-two-year-old male partisan who was soon eclipsed by the younger Zahira Kamal, the head of the Women's Work Committees and the most visible and powerful DF representative in the territories through 1990 (al-Natsheh and Theeb 1995). When the first DF branch leadership structure in the territories was created in late 1977, the Coordinating Committee included two women (Kamal and Siham Barghouti) and two men (Mohamed al-Labadi and Abu 'Inat Qsheit).[2] When the Coordinating Committee became the Central Leadership, half of it was composed of women as well, and every time it expanded this gender proportion was maintained (Labadi 1995).

Branch women often led union and student structures as well, especially when no man was qualified to undertake such a task—a situation that was apparently not unusual (al-Labadi 1995a). The more effective a woman partisan was, the more likely she was to be in charge of gender-mixed party structures, a sometimes contentious situation for men. When men were imprisoned or deported, it was not unusual that women would constitute 70 percent to 80 percent of DF branch leaders at all party levels in the territories. A PFWAC founder and member of the DF branch's Central Leadership from the late 1970s explained the ambivalence of four male DF student partisans at Bethlehem University when she (the only woman) was assigned to lead them:

> Despite the fact that my partisan-mates believed in equality between the sexes, they protested several times because their leader was a woman. Some of them had been arrested, and confessed during the in-

2. Before that time, DFLP activists throughout the West Bank and Gaza largely communicated individually to DFLP leaders outside as opposed to each other in the territories.

terrogation about their joining the party, and mentioned the names of the other members. But they avoided mentioning my name as a member or as a leader of the group because they did not like to admit that their leader was a woman. Also, they do not like women to be imprisoned because they thought that a woman was unable to endure the Israeli torture, and that she might lose her honour if she was arrested. (al-Labadi 1993, 40–41)

The party was also "feminized" at the grassroots level in the territories, largely as a result of mobilization by the WWCs and PFWAC. Indeed, the impact of the PFWAC on the DF branch was such that women often criticized my distinction, saying that by the early 1980s, "the PFWAC *was* the DFLP." Distinguishing between the DF branch and the WWCs/PFWAC was even more difficult in the Gaza Strip, according to Tahani Abu Dakka, a former DF and PFWAC leader: "Truly . . . in the Gaza Strip, the women are the ones who began the DF. . . . For example, here in 'Abbassan, not one woman knew what the name of the DF was [before the PFWAC]. It was the second party after Fateh that became known on the streets [in the southern Gaza Strip]. . . . [M]ost of the women entered [the party] because of the PFWAC. Because of its humility. Because of its attempts to serve women" (1995).

Nawal Zaqout, also from Gaza, stressed the inseparable identities of the WWCs/PFWAC and the DF branch in Gaza: "The federation was the only women's organization that had a strong presence in Gaza. They used to consider us at the level of the PFWAC and at the level of the DF. . . . Or the Democratic Front was established in Gaza by a group of women" (Abu Dakka 1995). Zahira Kamal noted resistance to higher levels of women's participation in the DFLP's Central Committee based outside the territories, despite women's influence in inside branch structures:

> The DFLP, without having a program that was detailed on the level of women, did not ban women from reaching any position. No. It gave a number of women the opportunity to be in the leadership. Inside [Palestine] this was applied more. . . . With all pride I say that I was the general secretary of the DF inside at that time. . . . But when we reach the Central Committee of the entire DFLP, there were a smaller

number of women than should have been. . . . This began to create differences when we proposed that each region elect their members to the Central Committee. (Kamal 1995)

DF branch women were only somewhat successful in their push to increase their representation on the DFLP Central Committee and even more powerful Political Office. By 1990, only three of the Political Office's fifteen members were women, one of whom was Kamal (Kamal 1995). Security difficulties and travel restrictions, however, limited the active participation of even these women in the Central Committee and Political Office, since meetings were held outside the territories during the 1970s and 1980s.

Women and Modernity

The question of *why* the DF branch in the territories was particularly open to women remains. The DFLP's Marxian-Engelsian analysis of women's subordination (Hasso 2000, 503) does not explain women's power, since this ideology was shared by partisans in other leftist parties such as the PFLP and PCP and did not lead to similar results. Moreover, women did not have the same influence on DF leadership structures in the Jordan branch. Several accounts were offered as to why women became as influential and numerous as they did in the DF branch in the Occupied Territories. Partisans emphasized the party's ideological commitment to the active recruitment of women and encouragement of their leadership. Abu Leila, one of the most senior and influential members of the DFLP, believed that the party's commitment to "social" (not only "political") struggle "attracted a number of prominent and sober-minded women cadres. By *razeena*, I mean that she did not tend toward the explosive feminist battles and because of this she gained respect and acceptance from the social environment that she worked and lived in" (Abdul-Karim 2000). According to Siham Barghouti, one of the branch founders, from the 1970s DF women in the territories wanted to establish that "the reality of the occupation affects both sexes, and in the end both sexes have to fight together to confront it. We succeeded with the participation of girls. [We did this because] we were ideologized

into a view that says that the advancement of society was tied to the advancement of women" (1995).

Women's party presence from the mid-1970s through the 1980s was reinforced by the success and effectiveness of women activists at all party levels, which in turn increased the respect of DF men and, combined with the inclusion of women at leadership levels, made it a party other women wanted to join. 'Aysha 'Oda, a former DFLP leader who was imprisoned for military activity from 1969 to 1979 and then deported to Jordan until 1991, explained that successful women leaders attracted other women: "Maybe [the reputation of the DFLP as a "women's front"] was connected with the first group of women cadres. Because always, when you have a cadre of women who are advanced and progressive, it can attract other advanced and progressive women. For example, Zahira [Kamal's] presence in the leadership of the Democratic Front during this time—Zahira was able to attract some of the most important women cadres to the Democratic Front" (1995).

DF branch women were inadvertently aided by an occupying regime that viewed women's political activity as less threatening than male activity. As a result, men in the territories were more likely than women to be removed from the political scene (through deportation, imprisonment, or being in hiding), giving women relatively more political latitude and organizational staying power than men:

> We used to see that it was through these women's abilities that they reached these leadership positions and that they were truly good and able to lead. Maybe, in terms of security, it was even better. . . . Each time [men] built a good organization, it was destroyed when they were arrested. The political pressure against women was less, so women were able to perform within the DF and were able to continue and build cumulatively. But the men, every once in a while they would be convulsed as a result of arrests. (Theeb 1995)

Abu Leila, who was largely in Damascus during the 1970s and 1980s, similarly argued that worker- and youth sector-based organization in the territories was less effective than WWC/PFWAC mobilization of women because the former "were always faced with attacks" from the Israeli authorities (Abdul-Karim 2000).

In comparison to the PFWAC activists, men and women DF partisans in youth, student, and worker mass-based organizations were more likely to be treated as members of an illegal party and to be imprisoned by the Israeli occupying authorities. Nevertheless, such conditions did not produce significant representation of women in the leadership of other political parties in the territories. Nor was there a high proportion of women leaders in the Jordan branch except when the state arrested most men leaders. This is despite the fact that the Jordan state did not arrest women for political activity in the 1970s and 1980s, and a party ideology encouraging women's political leadership and participation was similarly operative in the Jordan branch.

Although men and women spoke about DF women's leadership abilities in the territories and their relative advantage in terms of arrests and deportations, men were more likely to stress the security implications, and women were more likely to stress women's leadership abilities. Some men seemed defensive or at least uncomfortable with the reputation of the DF branch as an organization in which women were powerful:

> To say that the DF was a women's party might be justified. Even though . . . I am proud of the fact that there was a wide majority of women involved in the DF, and this was positive and a reality in our heritage, but I do not think this was the issue here. Perhaps, like I said, as a result of the DF having many hits from the occupation, many times, these hits did not reach women. Women's bodies in the DF would remain mobile in all situations. To a large extent, this helped protect the structure of the DF as a whole. And it also helped the female comrades [*rafeeqaat*] to take the reigns of power in positions of leadership that were central and effective in political decision making within the party [in the territories]. (J. Zaqout 1995)

If one reason women became leaders in DF structures was that they were less likely to be arrested, then why did other Palestinian parties not adopt similar strategies, since men in those organizations were equally subject to arrest? I argue that at least two other factors facilitated the strong presence of women in the party branch in the territories. First, it was to some extent an unintended consequence of the DF branch's

commitment to mass-based mobilization (dominated by the work of the PFWAC) as opposed to military activity. Indeed, a nonmilitary grass-roots mobilization strategy is a feminized variant of political action because it is dependent on building an infrastructure of supportive and active members through socialization and engagement with everyday lives, typically women's domains. Popular support for military action in a national liberation context, on the other hand, depends more on whether a particular action is successful and does not require socialization or the building of a grassroots infrastructure. Furthermore, militarist projects by definition exclude most women because the social risk associated with such activity is usually higher for them than it is for men, since an attack on women's bodies is often seen as a violation of both honor codes and national integrity. This point to some extent also explains why male participants in military activities often exclude women or limit their participation.

Second, women's presence was facilitated by partisans' assumption that Palestinian self-determination to some extent required proof of civilizational worth and modernity to the international community in a context where women's political inclusion and leadership were seen to symbolize both. For example, former DF branch leader Mohamed Labadi's response to the question of why women became so powerful was similar to Jamal Zaqout's, except he also pointed to the importance of the international arena in which the Palestinian-Israeli conflict plays out:

> I think that the DF took the nature of Israeli policies, Israeli society, Israel's dealings with the eastern mind-set and used to consider that providing a large number of women leaders would give it the opportunity to protect the central leaders outside because imprisonments of women at leadership levels are always limited in comparison to imprisonments of men. . . . Second, it allowed the woman to confirm her worth in national organizational work. . . . [Third,] the nature of the DFLP program . . . encouraged many academic women, and those who have a level of awareness, to get involved in the ranks of the DFLP. . . . And I think that in this period, the second half of the 1970s, the DFLP found . . . that putting women in a leadership position would open for it a marginal space in international work that is wider than having male leaders. This helped. (1995)

Palestinian self-determination was increasingly seen by some partisans in the territories as requiring an international cultural battle in which women became important symbols. The high visibility and influence of DF branch women were to some extent both a consequence and a reflection of partisans' conviction that self-determination could be gained if Palestinians could prove their civilizational worthiness. It was a consequence in that the social and political projects of modernity were assumed to require the restructuring of social relations, including gender, along "nontraditional" lines, encouraging women's political participation and leadership. At the same time, women's involvement was seen to symbolize and reflect the civilized nature of Palestinian society. This feature was believed to strengthen the case for Palestinian nationalism and self-determination, since twentieth-century Zionist discourse has been significantly premised on racialized narratives that infantilized Palestinians and their leaders or assumed their inherent barbarism or backwardness or both (Hasso 2000, 506 n. 3).

The relationship between women's involvement in the nationalist project and international responses to the Palestinian quest for self-determination arose repeatedly. When I asked Barghouti, for example, if there were any positive aspects of the intifada (1987–91), she discussed the high level of women's participation, which

> gave a picture to the world . . . [that] made her civilized. [It] made people think that there must truly be something wrong and that the international community must get involved and attempt to solve this problem. So in the end, women's roles in the intifada directly affected what happened with the Palestinian cause. Because of this, we saw a lot of concern from all the medias, from all the international and national institutions, women's and nonwomen's organizations, human rights [organizations]. [They saw] how much suffering women go through, how strong and courageous women are in dealing with these problems. And if an army of these women participate in the intifada, then the situation the people live must truly be painful. (Barghouti 1995)

When I asked her why the DFLP branch in the territories mobilized women, she replied: "The goals of the DFLP were clear. A part of it was progressive, that women must participate. The increased participation

of women would lead to the view that it is a progressive party. It would raise trust in the international community. . . . In addition, if women established their rootedness, they could be in the leadership [of the party]" (Barghouti 1995). When I asked Ni'meh al-Hilu, a longtime DF and PFWAC activist from the Jabalyya refugee camp in Gaza, why she thought women became as powerful as they did in the DF branch, she also raised the relationship between "progress" and women's leadership, although her narrative was concerned with "catching up" with the rest of the world:

> We were a large number of women during that period in the party, but this does not mean that there were no men. There were men, but the belief in this party was why shouldn't women take top leadership positions? Why does she not lead a party or organization? . . . We used to look out into the world and see that there were women prime ministers, queens, [and] social affairs ministers. And the party compared women in the world and Palestinian women in terms of progress. (1995)

Tahani Abu Dakka, a former PFWAC and DF leader from the southern Gaza Strip was more critical of the symbolic deployment of women by the DF branch and the Palestinian nationalist movement more generally: "After the [1990] split [of the DFLP] occurred . . . I was surprised that they [party men] did not really think about women the way they said they did: 'We trust in women and her roles; we trust that women should be in positions of power.' No, having women—and this is in all the parties, not just the DFLP—women are like prestige for the party. She appears before the world, saying we [Palestinians] are okay in terms of women and their roles" (1995).

Many DFLP branch partisans, particularly women, were aware of the manner in which gender status, national cultural worth, and political power were related and deployed this understanding in the international arena, even as they helped redefine the politics of nationalism and feminism in the territories. This maneuver, in turn, circumscribed Palestinian feminist narratives in the international arena, making their English-language accounts far less explicitly feminist than accounts in Arabic that were targeted at local women (Hasso 1998).

Gendered Discourses and Practices of DF Men

The DF branch's openness to women raises some obvious questions: What were the operative gender ideologies among DF men in the Occupied Territories? And were the gender ideologies and actions of DFLP party men radically different from other men's?[3] Loosely using Alison M. Jaggar's (1983) conceptual framework of feminisms, most DF men interviewed were Marxist-feminists in that they believed in the value of a classless society, condemned the economic relations that made women dependent on men, and believed that wage work liberates women.[4] They also shared with liberal feminism a commitment to gender equality in the public sphere, believing that women should have equal rights to employment, pay, and educational opportunities. These Marxist and liberal frameworks rely on gendered assumptions about the social world that reify the distinction between public and private spheres, often leaving patriarchal relations within the home relatively intact and ignoring the ways in which gender (as a symbolic system and a basis for inequality) helps to constitute and is reproduced in both arenas (Hasso 2000, 503). The gendered public-private division is salient in Arab and Palestinian leftist-nationalist and feminist discourse (al-Khalili 1981, 28–33). Many Palestinian activists distinguish between the "political" as nationalism and the "social" as gender related, "distinct from and apart from 'politics' " (Fleischmann 1995, 62–63).

3. The former DF men interviewed in 1995 primarily came from middle- to lower-middle-class backgrounds. Though well read (especially because several served long prison terms), not all were college educated. Two of the eleven had earned a B.A., one a B.S., and one a Ph.D. Among the remaining seven, five had completed high school, one was studying (in 1995) to take his *tawjihi* exams, and one had not completed high school. With the exception of the Ph.D. and an engineer who was a student organizer for the DFLP abroad while earning his degree (both were outside the territories during the 1970s and 1980s), most of the men interviewed in 1995 were former laborers and union organizers, and two were journalists. The VWCs were the first source of politicization for almost all the men DF partisans interviewed who were in the Occupied Territories (and not in prison) during the 1970s.

4. In addition to reading Karl Marx and Qasim Amin, many had also studied the Old Testament, New Testament, and Qur'an in universities or prisons.

'Ali Abu Hilal, a former DF and WUB leader in the territories, illustrated the not uncommon leftist position that although class ("economic"), gender ("social"), and national ("political") struggles were intertwined, the latter was "primary" during the revolutionary period:

> I consider that there is always a relationship . . . between economic struggle and social struggle and political struggle. It is impossible to separate them. . . . Because in the end, the goal of economic and social struggle is to reach political power, to reach governance, to reach participation. . . . A real revolutionary party is the one that always . . . connects all the types of struggle together. . . . But in every stage of struggle, there might be one type of struggle that takes a more primary role than another. (1995)[5]

When I proposed to Abu Hilal that nationalist struggle cannot be successful without women's participation but national liberation can occur without liberating women, illustrating this possibility with the example of a working-class DF branch partisan who restricted his sisters' mobility and political activity, he reiterated the party's conception of the superiority of work in the public sphere over women's mere participation in family reproduction: "A woman who is an important and working individual in the society must leave her effect. Her brother and her husband could not hit her. The society would respect her more, would value her more. But when she is outside the process of production and economy, she will definitely be subject to more violence and exploitation" (Abu Hilal 1995).

The narratives of DF men often strongly distinguished between women's public-sphere liberation and their sexual or bodily freedom, the latter being viewed as superficial, individualistic, and Western. When asked to discuss the DF's reasons for mobilizing women, for example, Walid Zaqout responded that partisans

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5. Abu Hilal was deported for his nationalist and union activity in the territories in January 1986. He was a member of the DFLP Political Office and the PNC during his deportation. The Israeli authorities allowed him to return to the territories in mid-September 1991 in exchange for the DFLP's return of the body of an Israeli soldier, Samir As'ad.

believed in equality between men and women—equality in work and not in the Western understanding that focuses on superficial things, sometimes sex, or dress, or makeup, etcetera. This is not our understanding of the liberation of women. . . . The second reason is a national one, because the society needs to participate in the national political process. There is also the socioeconomic reason, that women need to lighten the burden of the family by participating in work and exiting into the streets and [public] life. (1995)

A former DF and WUB cadre, asked to discuss the DF's gender ideology, similarly distanced women's public-sphere rights from what he perceived to be Western feminist constructs, implying sexual freedom:

The [DF] program talked about the realities of women and opened the road in front of her so that she could struggle for her liberation. Now the issue of women's liberation . . . is tied with the process of struggle—not in its universal form, which is understood in a negative way, that women *tashalit* [this colloquial word is a combination of *disrobing* and *slutting*]—but that women go out to work, to apply her rights, her activities within the society, the party, [and] the nationalist movement. . . . [T]he liberation of women means the opening of doors and opportunities before her to struggle in order to reach her rights and does not mean that a woman goes out from her society, from her realities, to take a leap to the point where she leaves behind the society's customs and traditions. (Natsheh 1995)

Many DF branch men and women in the territories married each other over the years. Though I did not always interview both members of a couple, I interviewed a number of people in such relationships. Many PFWAC and DF branch women indicated that although they considered DF men to be more gender aware than non-DF men, their actions were often not radically different from their non-DF peers. A former DF and PFWAC leader from Hebron who married a WUB unionist believed that the gender attitudes of DF men were somewhat more feminist than the beliefs of other Palestinian male activists:

Right now, after evaluating the entire stage . . . I feel that the Palestinian man is an Eastern man. . . . So in the end, all of them, from the

young and the old, from Fateh to the People's Party,[6] from the DF, they all hold approximately the same views about women, her roles, and her abilities. Her abilities are limited, etcetera. . . . Nonetheless, there is a big variance . . . I can say at a minimum, between the men in the DF in both factions and those men in other factions or organizations . . . [T]here are differences in the ways they view democracy, grassroots organizing, and women.

Another cadre from the Jerusalem area who also married a WUB unionist, in contrast, believed that DF men in the territories were less feminist than other men:

> Women continue to be the housewives, working inside and outside, and her husband does not help her. And incidentally, the Democratic Front did not used to affect her men. It did not educate them in terms of women's well-being. . . . If I, for example, had married someone who was not in the Democratic Front, he might value and respect my advanced thinking more than a man who is organized in the Democratic Front. I became conscious of this and maybe women [in the PFWAC/DF] other than me perceived this with their husbands. Because essentially, when we married . . . what united us was Marxist ideas. But then we were surprised that there was a chasm between the . . . theoretical issues . . . and the practical issues.

Gendered Organizing Tensions

One of the most tangible connections between the central party and mass-based organizations in the Occupied Territories was financial, and there were some tensions in this regard. Many WUB leaders resented the allocation of significant party money to the PFWAC, partly because some WUB men envied the PFWAC's success and partly reflecting the dominant belief that mobilizing "workers" was more important than mobilizing women, especially those women not working for wages in the "productive" sphere.[7] High-ranking DFLP and PFWAC women said

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6. The People's Party is the postintifada name of the Palestinian Communist Party.

7. One former male WUB and DFLP leader interviewed referred to the PFWAC's involvement in day-care centers and preschools, one of the organization's major expenses, as "bourgeois."

that as a result, the WUB and PFWAC received approximately equal amounts of money from the party even though the PFWAC mobilized larger numbers and the work it undertook was more expensive. In response, PFWAC women became very adept at raising funds from governments, foreign nongovernmental organizations, and multilateral organizations such as the United Nations and the European Economic Community.

Until 1988, there is little evidence that the DFLP outside the territories used its command of the purse strings to control the PFWAC. In addition, the PFWAC was not in a subordinate relationship to the party branch inside the territories. In contrast, the relationships between the WUB and the DF branch, and the WUB and central party apparatuses outside, were less independent, according to former activists in both the PFWAC and the WUB. The PFWAC's independence was related to a number of factors: First, although the "movers and shakers" in the PFWAC were DFLP women and the federation was clearly associated with the party branch by the early 1980s, the PFWAC had developed a nationalist-feminist identity that was distinct from the party. Second, enough high-ranking women in the PFWAC and DF and in other DFLP organizations believed that the PFWAC should be somewhat independent of the party that such independence was made a reality; high-ranking PFWAC and DF women reported PFWAC activities to other DF branch Central Leadership members as opposed to asking for permission or approval. Third, the PFWAC's independent relationships with international funders provided the organization with a measure of independence from the party. Finally, fewer imprisonments and deportations meant that PFWAC women had more longevity in leadership positions and thus more authority in the party than WUB men (Hasso 1998, 449–51).

Another source of tension was that although the DFLP was committed to mass-based organizations that were ideologically more loosely structured than the party, this occasionally conflicted with the party's recruitment goals. One of the early points of contention between the Occupied Territories Committee and the PFWAC, for example, concerned the pace at which PFWAC women recruits were introduced to the DFLP and its Marxist-Leninist ideology:

> When we began talking to the women . . . we found that we needed a stage in order to convince them to even be members in the committee [PFWAC]. After they were members and worked in the PFWAC . . . then they would be offered to be members of the party, and then immediately you would tell them that this is a Marxist-Leninist party. Now when they hear that it is a Marxist-Leninist party or the PFWAC has connections to nationalist work—to put her in a committee today and tomorrow tell her, "Come on, we want to participate in a sit-in," she would escape the following day. . . . We used to tell them [the DFLP outside]: "This way is difficult. You are not living the realities." (al-Labadi 1995a)

Despite these differences, DFLP women believed that mobilizing women into political parties guaranteed women's incorporation into the national struggle and was a potentially radicalizing and empowering experience. At least until 1988, when the relationship between the party outside and grassroots organizations in the territories changed considerably, most DF organizers interviewed believed that party recruitment from the mass-based organizations was positive because a move from gender-segregated to gender-mixed political work indicated that a PFWAC recruit had reached a turning point in her willingness to make that transition and to confront the potential social consequences of doing so. Conflicts about *tahzeeb* (party recruitment) were primarily related to the time frame within which it occurred or the type of *ta'biyya* (mobilization) that was required.

By the mid-1980s, even the DFLP "vanguard" in the territories was more likely to be distinguished from its followers by effectiveness rather than commitment to a Marxist-Leninist ideology. In addition, membership criteria for the DF rank and file became more flexible, according to Amneh Theeb, a DF and PFWAC organizer:

> It was not necessary that each woman believed in every article [of the DFLP program] in order to be part of the Front. We had bases for being members, and we decreased the number of conditions required for a woman to be a member. Any woman could be in the Democratic Front if she believed in the liberation of the nation, if she believed in ending the occupation, if she believed in the liberation of women, if she believed in economic liberation. We began to make the issues

more simple in order to conform to the realities of women and the Palestinian people. (1995)

Fadwa al-Labadi discussed the necessity of such flexibility, especially given gender norms that made party demands from outside the territories difficult to maintain. One of these demands was that PFWAC and DF women hold party meetings for PFWAC recruits: "Practically, I felt that working on the streets was much better for them than these meetings. . . . And then sometimes they [outside] did not live the obstacles we lived. We sometimes had checkpoints that banned communication. And the party meeting was always men and women together. This was difficult! . . . [R]arely, rarely would one find a house that would accept that you [men and women] enter and sit for hours in a meeting with the door closed" (1995a). Gendered tensions in DF branch politics in the territories became more intense, and the fissures became fractures beginning in 1988.

Gender and Sexual Politics in Majd in Jordan, 1974–1987

The Majd perspective with respect to women did not dramatically differ from the outlook of DFLP gender ideologies operative in other branches. As articulated by a Jordanian man who was a former partisan, "A progressive orientation, by its nature, will assume that women are whole human beings. She is not like she is pictured by traditional thinking, an incomplete person, etcetera. The man's view of her, if it is progressive—he must deal with her as a complete person" (Ghanma 2000). Branch leader 'Abla Abu 'Ilbeh stated that although Majd's gender ideology did not differ from the beliefs of other leftist parties in Jordan, it was practiced differently. Her narrative criticized feminist discourse and demands that became prominent in 1990s Jordan:

> I believe that our views are equitable and realistic with regard to the advancement of women. It is not possible, because we think that women should be advanced—with one painful stroke, quickly, suddenly, with the stroke of a pen, with extreme ideas that shock the social reality—to accomplish anything. . . . We believe that we can accomplish our goals gradually and steadily. . . . Our female comrades in other Left organizations and parties are very obsessed with progres-

sive slogans. I also like progressive slogans myself, but this does not provide women with anything. It will not change women's mentalities. On the contrary, it might produce a negative impact and alienate women. . . . We need to create women cadres that can work among women and understand their realities, their ways of thinking and their situations, and to create on the basis of this a progressive, patient, and realistic program for the future. (Abu 'Ilbeh 2000)

As in the territories, Majd women faced specifically gendered conditions and constraints, which included a gendered division of labor that often required women to carry a triple burden (home and child care, paid employment, and political work) and gender-differentiated state sanctions that made men's political activity more risky. The latter in effect devalued women's opposition politics and left unacknowledged their "lesser" punishments from the state. For example, though women partisans were not imprisoned, they, in the words of Abu 'Ilbeh, "stayed in a bigger prison, named Jordan, because I was not allowed to travel, not allowed to work, during this whole period" (2000).[8] When I asked another high-ranking former woman partisan whether she had earlier mentioned that she was imprisoned, she responded: "No, no. The guys were lucky. They would be arrested, imprisoned, and then people would work on their issue, and we would contact Amnesty and free opinion. If he was a professional, the union was required to pay him a monthly salary. Us, all the things we did—I used to get fired from work. And my passport would be held. I would lose my salary, and the unions would not acknowledge this situation. . . . We used to pay a lot, especially socially, as women." These social dues included state harassment of unmarried women, who were often threatened that their parents would be contacted to "expose" their political activity and prison visits.[9]

Women's Power and Influence in Majd

'Abla Abu 'Ilbeh was the most continuously active woman member of the DF in Jordan between 1974 and 1987. She stressed that women's

8. Abu 'Ilbeh was fired by the state from her position as a teacher in a private school.

9. Women partisans coordinated group transportation for visits by families and friends to prisoners held in distant and isolated locales.

leadership and influence in Majd was individually accomplished, and not the result of DFLP progressivism: "Rather, it resulted from struggles on the ground, truthfully" (2000). This statement, taken in the context of the remainder of the extensive interview, includes two important but implicit critiques. First, there was some resistance to women gaining political power in the party, and thus their accomplishments in Jordan did not come easily. Second, having women in high-ranking political positions was and is sometimes what she called "décor," in the sense that it does not necessarily evidence women's inclusion, participation, and power in parties and movements.

There is evidence, however, of the DF branch's uniqueness in its socialization of partisan men and women. A former bank union organizer, a Jordanian woman of working-class background, argued that women partisans found generally supportive husbands in Majd men:

> Do not forget . . . women's situation in the country is very difficult. When you come down to it, not every woman has the strength of personality to be in her father's house and a struggler. It is not easy. I consider myself lucky with my parents. . . . Not every woman could reach this stage. If she became involved with a man who did not value her struggling role, she will also regress. It is not easy for a woman's home to be ruined for a party. . . . We [I] found a man to marry us [me] from the same party, who values and respects us [me] and does not stand in our [my] way, and even with all of this, people are not satisfied, saying, "Why does he allow her to remain in the party? . . ." What would happen then if a woman marries a man who is essentially of this mentality? . . . The DF [men] comrades were unique. They liked to marry female comrades. And it was not just any female comrade he liked to take, but he liked strong women, so that they could be together in the field. (Naffaa' 2000)

Party men, she believed, "respected women. The male comrades, especially in the first, second, and third ranks, were reared with this policy. This helped women in the DF to feel her presence as a person, as a struggler like her male comrade. . . . This makes you feel that you are dealing with respectable people who look to women not in the way that they got used to in our societies, which always hurt and wounded us" (Naffaa' 2000).

Gender was experienced and practiced in different ways in the

party branch. At the leadership level, Taysir al-Zabri, a longtime partisan who primarily worked in Jordan when not imprisoned, noted how even though many party men were committed to women's authority, they sometimes acceded to the reigning gender norms:

> When I send a woman representative of [the party] to the meetings of leadership bodies in Jordan, who do not have one woman, she will then face a problem. They will say that this party does not have men. The Islamists will have a certain point of view. The Arab nationalists [*qawmiyyeen*] have a very conservative point of view about women. The only people who will respect such participation will be the Communists, that is it. And in the end, it is not only us and the Communists in the field, so in the end, when I send a delegate, I will send a man. This man will probably stay late [at the meeting]. After the meeting is over, they will go to drink coffee or they drink whatever they want—this will differ from the woman whose husband is maybe waiting for her under the party office to take her home. You know. I am not with the point of view that deals with this issue in a contrived way that wants to will certain things, neglecting and jumping over social realities. There was participation of women in the party. For us, we did not have this problem. (2000)

Although he did not fully articulate this idea, sending a woman partisan to a male-dominated political meeting feminized the party, a negative attribute associated with weakness, lack of legitimacy, and little authority. Here one sees how politics was played according to a dominant masculinist code that reinforced both the gender constraints on women's engagement as well as men's privileges.

A former partisan who was active in a professional union pointed to some partisan resistance to women's leadership and believed that some acquiesced to her own leadership for bureaucratic reasons or to assert the "Jordanian" credentials of the party:

> The point of view of the party leaders, whether they were women or men, is that you were in the end a woman, and it would be difficult for you to enter the first door. . . . Even my nomination for the union, it did not come from convictions that I was accomplished and I can represent the party in this position. Instead, they were compelled to do this because they did not have a man who could fulfill the necessary

conditions for being nominated for the union. And this was confirmed when, during the stage that followed, some of them fulfilled the required three-year membership in the union and so could be nominated. There was not a commitment to women, no. They were [also] concerned that you, as a Jordanian, be seen at the front in order to facilitate the idea that the identity of this party is Jordanian. But within the party there was very strong suffering [of women]. Some of this was based on the backwardness that is planted, the environment from which a person emerged, because Marxist thought or other ideologies were not absorbed into the self. You are convinced of them on the general level, but when you come to women's issues, all the regressive sedimentation emerges.

Women partisans stressed a number of themes when explaining their ubiquity in the Jordan branch, including the ideological commitment of the party to gender equality, support for women's leadership by some party men, the branch's targeted mobilization and training of capable and disciplined women, and the difficulty of denying leadership positions to women who established themselves as successful organizers. But the narratives also illustrated the centralized and top-down nature of the branch's development and expansion in Jordan. For example, when I asked a former partisan whether women's leadership roles in the party were purely instrumentalist since they were less likely to be arrested, she replied: "Women's roles were always equal to men in the DF. The DF liked to give positions to the activist members, the one who had energies, who was capable. . . . [Why do you think that was?] Because our leadership was very aware" (Naffaa' 2000).

I asked another longtime former woman partisan why Majd women appeared to be so active in the Jordan field. In contrast to the flexibility that was operative in the territories, her narrative demonstrated the manner in which martial law helped to structure a secretive organization whose members had to prove their allegiance to a party program. This factor likely made it more difficult to recruit women, given the sacrifices required and the dangers of undiscipline:

> The DFLP always focused on recruiting unique women or those they
> felt had the abilities—they would remain in touch with them until

they convinced them—the ones they felt had the capabilities. There were also criteria. Not anyone could be part of the organization. . . . They had to be able to make a commitment, to confront people, to challenge people, to work long hours without boredom—in the beginning of the training we would always hear those things we considered to be models of behavior: work discipline, appointment discipline, meeting discipline, discipline around complete secrecy.

This former partisan believed that in the DF branch in Jordan, some of the men leaders "believed in women's roles. If they did not, women would not have arrived at these positions." This contrasts with the territories' branch experience, where women partisans who were as powerful as their male comrades pulled other women into the organization and significantly shaped its direction.

Gendered Constraints on Women Partisans

In addition to the restrictions of martial law, women faced gender-related obstacles to their political activity from nonpartisans and social norms, although these factors were not usually successful in hindering the women interviewed. One former Majd partisan who worked within the Jordanian women's federations, a health worker whose husband was not a political activist, was constrained by overwork, restrictions from her neighborhood and in-laws, and a controlling husband:

I used to exert a lot of effort, but I really wanted to [do political work]. I did not feel tired. . . . Of course, my husband was very opposed to my political work because he considered this not to be for me, other people should do it. . . . I would say, no, this is a national issue, it is not merely for men, or for women, it is for both together. . . . In addition there was the problem of the surrounding conditions in the environment, the society, the understandings that when you leave your home and you are late—I had children I was responsible for at home, and I had no one to take care of them. I was held accountable for all of it. . . . And their father was not present. He was outside the country. . . . After that, the second condition that developed is that my husband became ill and sat at home. . . . He used to say that if I engaged in political work, did this mean he was not a nationalist? [He accused me of] trying to magnify myself in relation to him. . . . [Nevertheless,] he did not stop me.

I asked Umm Tha'ir, who had been an organizer for more than twelve years when I interviewed her in a Zarqa branch office, whether there were differences in the nature of political work between Zarqa and Amman. She volunteered some of the specific frustrations that she faced as a committed political activist and widow with children:

> Of course, there are differences in environment everywhere. In Amman, you will find bourgeois people. You will maybe find that people are more civilized. Here in Zarqa you will find the industrious people, simple people, you will also find the people who will hold you accountable for everything. Everything is counted against you. . . . For example, my husband has passed away, so sometimes you [I] confront problems from the people, from the society, "Your husband has died, be concerned with your children." But there are other people who say, "You are a struggler. . ." They raise you up. They give you a push to the front. Before you came by a little bit, today, my friend [Umm Hussam] and I were discussing this issue. That me, as a woman with a husband who has passed away, I face a lot of difficulties. To the point that I have become exhausted from the society. [Struggle for Palestine] is something in my blood that I cannot let go of. . . . Today, I despaired and I got angry—I'm not angry at people. They are—each person is the result of his environment and situation. . . . I live in an area that is twenty kilometers away from here. When I was leaving, my neighbor asked me, "Where are you going, auntie ['amti]? You have children here. Your children this, your children that." (Hasan 2000)

Some women partisans had to deal with men in other political parties and organizations who excluded them or made situations difficult. Noura 'Essawi, an organizer who was elected to the central council of the General Federation of Workers Unions in the mid-1980s, shared the following:

> You know, the meetings used to be held at night, and they were all— our workers unions here, the members are all very regressive, from the Muslim Brotherhood and other parties. . . . During the first meeting I attended, I was very displeased. There were elections and voting during that meeting. I was told that when I was not in attendance, they used indecent language. I told Yousef Hourani that I do not want to attend the meetings because they are inappropriate for me. I was younger than I am now, and all my life I dressed like this [she was

wearing jeans and a T-shirt]. So I felt myself to be dismissed—did I have to change my clothing before I went to a meeting? I used to bear the situation and was very strong. This was an opportunity for us so I had to continue attending and I did. [FH: What did Yousef Hourani say to you about this?] He said, when you are present, you make that meeting work. Because you are a woman, they stop cursing at each other. . . . And so you discipline the meeting. ('Essawi 2000)

Here was evidence that some partisan men in Jordan encouraged women to overcome gendered constraints and facilitated their leadership and authority (and may even have openly challenged the gender ideologies and practices of other men in private). 'Essawi, like other women, continued to face comments for her activity from non-Majd labor leaders about

how I dressed, my movement, even though I was known to have a husband, a home, a family, a daughter. . . . I have to tell you that women in our society, whatever level she reaches, she remains—there are limitations that restrict her. If the laws themselves do not change, it is difficult for people to accept the situation of a woman. If she was out late at night, they ask, "Why was she late?" If she went home alone, if her male colleague brought her home, they ask, "Why?" There were some of these problems and talk, but I was confident and very enthusiastic. ('Essawi 2000)

'Essawi also noted the internalized social pressures that restricted her mobility and made it much more likely that men partisans would travel out of the country:

I had an opportunity to travel to Moscow for a labor-related event. No one could travel except me and one other person (a man) in the nine-member administrative body. I had a passport, and all the rest of them were not allowed to travel. . . . But I could not travel. Why? Because I have my daughter, my husband, my family would not accept my traveling, even though my husband told me to go. I found it difficult to go. It would have been my first trip out of the country, with a person I did not know, and to attend meetings in a country I did not know. If it were now, I would go. But at that time, I was not able to have this independence, which comes with experience and knowledge, gradually. I really wanted to travel and I could not. ('Essawi 2000)

Morality Regimes and Constructions of "Easy" Women

A woman partisan who was an organizer and activist at the University of Jordan in the late 1970s and early 1980s believed that Majd women faced strict gendered and sexualized conditions in comparison to JCP women. Her narrative indicates that political secrecy requirements and conservative social morality codes sometimes worked together in a manner that allowed partisan men to control women's embodied gender or sexual expression. In such a calculus, even public cigarette smoking by partisan women was coded as moral laxity. According to this former activist:

> We were very strict, even on the level of morals. Our male comrades were very strict in the Democratic Front in terms of morals. [How?] They did not allow girls to smoke anywhere. Smoking was not allowed. Makeup was not allowed. If a girl came and she had makeup on, she would not be allowed to enter because this would affect the reputation of the Democratic Front. We did not smoke anywhere. It was not allowed in public places. In terms of dress—it always had to be very reserved clothing. For a girl to laugh in a loud voice, for example, she would find a hundred guys to reprimand her. . . . Our male comrades were very protective about the reputation of the girls of the Front in the university. This was the opposite of the Communist Party, possibly. They [JCP women] were very open on every level, even sexually. . . . It is true that I wore full *shar'i* dress, and they used to comment about it to me, but it was my convictions. . . . [B]ut even our regular women comrades were not allowed to wear anything they wanted to. They were not allowed to smoke, to laugh loudly, relations were not open. I know that so-and-so [*flan*] from the DFLP, when I would say to him, "comrade," he would get angry with me. . . . He would deny that he was a comrade. . . . The work was very secretive, and like I said, morally, they focused a lot on the issue of morals. . . . I remember that once I was standing with one of my male comrades. One of the female comrades came, and she was wearing makeup. He was very upset with her, and he sent her back home. She lived very far away from the university. He sent her back home and told her, "Go wash your face." And she did just that.

Maysa' Naffaa', a union organizer, remarked on the sexualized difficulties DF branch women faced from some men. Her narrative indicates

that the gender disciplining described above may have been motivated by partisan men's awareness of a discourse in Jordan that constructed Majd women as sexually available:

> Unfortunately, when we [women] struggled, people from other parties used to, or the weak ones in our own party, the sick ones, the young unaware comrades who do not understand, they used to see us like women who sell themselves, as not respected [mish muhtarima]. Even other parties used to believe this. Even workers in the banks where we went to recruit members, they used to think you were easy and not respected. But of course when they got to know us, they would see the opposite. . . . He would think, "Oh, OK, tomorrow I will go out with this one." Or he will be her friend, especially if she smoked. That is it, she becomes prey for him. But when he's shocked in the reality of how we deal with things, he realizes that his view of us is wrong. . . . They used to consider us—[to say that] the DFLP brings women to exploit them [sexually]. We used to be accused of this. And unfortunately, the sick personalities in other parties used to think that women in our party were there in order to find men. There were many accusations, but they did not affect us at all. . . . Each one of those women is worth twenty men. (2000)

Explaining Gender Differences
in Democratic Front Branches

Although women were powerful in both branches of the Democratic Front, they became more powerful in the Occupied Territories. Israel was less likely to imprison women in the territories, and Jordan did not imprison them for political activity, making it less risky for women to lead in both branches. High-risk political activity by girls and women in both places was equally socially costly. Both branches shared a gender-egalitarian ideology, and women in both had mixed assessments of the gender beliefs and practices of party men.

In terms of differences, though both branches developed women's organizations, the PFWAC in the territories and Rand in Jordan, the latter was less flexible in its membership and program and more dangerous to join. It largely mobilized within existing urban-based labor unions and women's federations, whose existence was always precarious

given state penetration and regulation. This factor limited the impact of Majd and Rand on communities and families and restricted partisans' reach to employed women or women involved in largely urban organizations that were always vulnerable to state intervention. Rand remained under the auspices of Majd, rather than developing a grassroots-driven identity and strategy. As a result, it did not reach the strength or influence of the PFWAC on the ground or in relation to the party branch. A large part of this outcome had to do with martial law in Jordan and compact, rather than porous, state control over most parts of society, including any type of independent politics.

In addition to being relatively independent of the DF branch in the territories, or, rather, having great influence on the branch at the highest leadership levels, the PFWAC was comparatively more flexible and decentralized in membership and structure. It developed a program and strategy in interaction with the everyday lives of the women mobilized. Women's involvement in the PFWAC and the party branch was also facilitated by the establishment of nurseries, preschools, and income-generating projects. The impressive level of women's involvement in this mass-based organization, in turn, increased women's influence in the DF party branch in the territories.

At leadership levels, women branch partisans in the Occupied Territories manipulated an international gendered cultural-political logic that undermined the Palestinian quest for self-determination on the basis of the (imagined and discursively produced) degraded social status of its women. In addition, the lack of a state, foreign occupation, and the prevalence of internationalist (human rights, feminist, UN protocol) discourses made for more fluidity and openings for women's political engagement. Jordan women and men partisans, in contrast, were impacted by a nationally bound and state-reinforced patriarchal gender logic and social organization in which few rewards were attached to women's political leadership and engagement.

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From Intifada to Fragmentation, 1988–2000s

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Political Transformations in
the Occupied Territories and Jordan

THE INTIFADA THAT BEGAN IN DECEMBER 1987 in the Occupied Territories was a turning point for Palestinian and Jordanian politics. The uprising initially relied on civil disobedience—refusal to pay taxes, merchant strikes, noncompliance with a myriad of military orders, demonstrations, and writing political graffiti under the cover of night. The Israeli occupation authorities attempted to quell it through collective military violence, arrests, and restrictions on Palestinian migrant labor (Johnson, O'Brien, and Hiltermann 1989, 35; Schiff and Ya'ari 1989, 158; Kimmerling and Migdal 1993, 266–67).

The uprising quickly brought the contradictions of a disparate national movement to the fore, as "outside" attempts to wrest power from "inside" nationalist forces became apparent, with externally based PLO leaders increasingly gaining the upper hand. As it continued, gendered exclusions occurred in politics at all levels in the Occupied Territories, although this fact was not particularly clear at first given the underground nature of the resistance. As mass-based and nonviolent popular resistance organizations were increasingly weakened by a repressive Israeli state, women and girls lost significant ground on the streets and in national agenda setting.

The trends of "outside" ascendancy and male political dominance continued in the largely state-focused politics that developed with the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority in 1994. The

1990s were also marked by a shift in the focus of women's and feminist organizations from mass mobilization to pressuring Palestinian statist structures for inclusion and women's rights. These circumstances shed light on the fragmentation of the Occupied Territories Democratic Front branch, as well as the disempowerment of women in the two factions that emerged following the split.

A long shared border, a large Palestinian refugee population, and the historic political, cultural, economic, and marital connections between the Occupied West Bank and Jordan guarantee that any major change in the territories reverberates in Jordan. The Palestinian intifada led to the mid-1988 decision by King Hussein to withdraw Hashemite claims on the West Bank. This discursive redrawing of borders contributed to increased Palestinian- and Jordanian-origin communal tensions in Jordan as a Palestinian state in the Occupied Territories appeared likely, while Palestinian-origin citizens constituted a majority of the kingdom's population. A short but widespread popular uprising against state structural adjustment policies in 1989, predominantly undertaken by Jordanian-origin citizens, precipitated the end of martial law and limited political liberalization in Jordan, including the reinstitution of parliamentary elections, press freedoms, and conditional legalization of political parties. Communal tensions in Jordan intensified through the 1990s, partly in response to proposals that emerged from Israeli-Palestinian negotiations (or rumors of such) to permanently settle Palestinian refugees in Jordan. These developments are crucial to understanding the Jordan DF branch splits that occurred in the 1990s.

Contours of the Palestinian Intifada

The uprising required new organizational forms that were addressed with the creation of neighborhood- and village-based popular committees, which heavily involved women (Giacaman and Johnson 1989, 166–67; Nassar and Heacock 1990; Jarbawi 1990, 297). Although these committees were not affiliated with party factions, the "most organized villages seemed to be those where at least two, and often all four, of the major organizations have a presence, in just about every case going back several years before the uprising" (Stork 1989, 73). The committees

took a gendered form, as women predominated in alternative schooling and home economy committees, as opposed to, for example, the guard committees that would eventually become the basis for the strike forces (Hammami 1991, 75).

On 18 August 1988, Israeli defense minister Yitzhak Rabin made affiliation, assistance, or contact with the popular committees punishable by ten years in prison. In response, their activities were "suspended, reduced, or more carefully hidden from view" (Nassar and Heacock 1990, 203). The banning of the committees was particularly marginalizing for women, given their level of involvement (Hammami 1991, 75–76; Kuttab 1991). Jamil Hilal argues that the disintegration of the popular committees also occurred because there was increased factional competition to control them (1993, 54).

The Unified National Leadership of the Uprising

Gaza Islamist forces, and then Gaza communists, issued statements to the population regarding the uprising a few days after it began. The first communiqué in the West Bank was issued unilaterally by Fateh under the name of the "Palestinian Nationalist Forces" on 8 January, followed by a document authored by DF branch leaders Mohamed Labadi (an electrician) and Nasir al-Ju'ba (a bookstore owner) two days later (Y. Sayigh 1997, 615). With Jamal Zaqout (also a DF partisan), these men initiated the Unified National Leadership of the Uprising (UNLU), which began issuing numbered directives *(bayanaat)* to Palestinians in the territories.[1]

Through mid-1989, the UNLU was a fifteen-member organization with representation from Fateh, the DF, PFLP, PCP, and (in Gaza) Islamic Jihad (Nassar and Heacock 1990, 192, 194), and released ninety communiqués by December 1992. Factional representatives, who were rotated for security reasons, were often arrested, deported, or imprisoned and then replaced. By mid-1991, sixty-nine UNLU leaders had been deported (Kimmerling and Migdal 1993, 265; Schiff and Ya'ari

1. See Lockman and Beinin 1989, 327–83; Nassar and Heacock 1990; Schiff and Ya'ari 1989, 192–93; and Urban 1994 for texts or analyses of the communiqués or both.

1989, 213). Although strategies were jointly coordinated by factions through the UNLU, this factor "never blunted" their disagreements, including the number of strike days to call for, how quickly to escalate into a massive civil disobedience campaign, and whether to carry out violent activities, such as burning forests or destroying factory machines in Israel (Nassar and Heacock 1990, 196).

Although during the first year the leaflets usually referred to the UNLU as "the struggle arm of the PLO" in the territories, and often stressed that the organization was not acting apart from the PLO outside, the partisans' presence on the ground in extremely dynamic circumstances also distanced them from their colleagues outside. By 30 April 1988 (Communiqué no. 15), there was a shift from "inside" to "outside" influence, with significantly more references to the PLO, the Palestine National Council, and Yasir Arafat in UNLU communiqués that followed, and more space was devoted to U.S. diplomatic plans, political moves by Arab states, and UN resolutions (Urban 1994, 75–76). This shift was facilitated by Israeli restrictions on the writing and printing of communiqués, which produced an increased dependence on the PLO abroad, whose leaders, in turn, controlled the content of communiqués as they were "read over the PLO Radio (at dictation pace so that members of the popular committees could copy them down)" (Schiff and Ya'ari 1989, 216).

Gender in the UNLU Communiqués

The UNLU communiqués generally either avoided women and gender issues or reinforced an image of the intifada as a male endeavor supported by women, indicating that at least in the early months of 1988, women were more powerful in neighborhoods than in the UNLU. Although women activists were able to influence a shift to more women-inclusive language, they were much less involved than men in communiqué writing (al-Labadi 1995b, 1995c). UNLU Communiqué no. 1, reportedly written by Fateh men and signed onto by the other factions post facto (Schiff and Ya'ari 1989, 207), is a textbook case of masculinist nationalist rhetoric with its appeals to "brother workers," "brother business owners and grocers," "brother taxi drivers," "brother doctors and pharmacists," and "brother members of the popular com-

mittees" (Lockman and Beinin 1989, 328–29). Communiqué no. 2, reportedly written by DF men and then signed onto by the other factions (Schiff and Ya'ari 1989, 195), continued this pattern, calling to action the "grandsons of al-Qassam," "brothers and comrades of Abu Sharar, Khalid Nazzal and Kanafani," and the "sons of Jabalya, Balata, 'Askar, al-Maghazi, al-Burayj, Qalandiya, al-Am'ari, Rafah, Khan Yunis, al-Shati', Tulkarem, and all the camps, towns, and villages of Palestine" (Lockman and Beinin 1989, 329).[2] The language was slightly more gender inclusive at the end of Communiqué no. 2: "O people of martyrs, O most illustrious of revolutionaries, lion cubs [boy scouts], youth and students, workers, *fellahin* [peasants], women, the elderly, clergy, and imams of the mosques, O our whole people! We will burn the ground under the feet of the occupiers" (Mishal and Aharoni 1994, 58).

The DF orientation toward the working class as the vanguard stands out by the third communiqué, but the laborers are clearly men: "O masses of the Palestinian working class: Yes, the dark-skinned, steel-hard arms have succeeded in bringing the wheel of production in the Zionist factories and projects to a standstill through their large and effective participation in the general strike" (Lockman and Beinin 1989, 332).

After the first few communiqués, terms like *sons*, *grandsons*, and *brothers* were used less frequently, replaced with *people* (*sha'b*) or *masses* (*jamaheer*). For example, Communiqué no. 12 (2 April 1988) addressed: "O militant people, O people of al-Qassam and 'Abd al-Qadir al-Husayni.[3] O people of struggle and sacrifice. . . . O people of Palestine" (Lockman and Beinin 1989, 341).

The end of Communiqué no. 6 singled out women and commended traits traditionally associated with femininity: "O masses of the valiant

2. 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam was a Muslim preacher and al-Azhar graduate who emigrated to Haifa following France's occupation of Syria; he was a leader of Palestinian resistance against the British occupation and was killed by British forces in 1935. Majid Abu Sharar, Khalid Nazzal, and Ghassan Kanafani were male activists affiliated with Fateh, the DFLP, and the PFLP, respectively, and were assassinated by Israeli commandos in Rome, Greece, and Beirut, respectively (Mishal and Aharoni 1994, 55).

3. 'Abd al-Qadir al-Husseini was a Palestinian resistance commander killed by Jewish forces in April 1948. His son, the late Faisal Husseini, at that time led Fateh in the Occupied Territories.

PLO, great glory and esteem to the woman for her devotion and generosity to her people, as well as to the mothers, fathers, girls, and children—the flowers [girl scouts] and the lion cubs and all the selfless generations" (Mishal and Aharoni 1994, 71). Communiqué no. 9 (22 February 1988) called for the celebration of International Women's Day on 8 March "by having Palestinian women go to the streets in tumultuous demonstrations announcing their rejection of the occupation and setting the most splendid examples of how to confront the Zionist enemy" (Lockman and Beinin 1989, 340). Communiqué no. 12 referred to women as progenitors and self-sacrificing mothers, condemning the high number of miscarriages owing to tear gas and appealing to Palestinian women as "mothers of the martyrs, detainees, and wounded, O all mothers of Palestine. The rulers of the Zionist entity think that mass arrests and night raids will break our spirit and weaken our faith, but they do not know that our people is accustomed to self-sacrifice for the sake of the homeland" (Mishal and Aharoni 1994, 78).

The Gendered Signification of Bodies, Space, and Moral Belonging

New or intensified Israeli policies designed to break resistance, especially school closures, curfews, and road closures, and the increased possibilities for injury, disfigurement, or death led to the disproportionate restriction of girls' mobility (Abdulhadi 1994, 52; Najjar 1992, 60). Combined with increased poverty and the lowering of the dower, these conditions also encouraged higher rates of early marriage for girls (Moors 1995, 124). By the end of the first year, "the intifada went from mass-based collective work on the streets to individual confrontations in which boys and men were primarily involved" (Barghouti 1995).

As the intifada continued, a "culture of women's modesty" (sutrat al-nisaa') that expected all women to dress modestly increasingly took hold in Gaza (Hammami 1991, 18; Hammami 1990, 26). The UNLU responded to this Hamas-sponsored campaign nationally when two Gaza women activists were chased by young men for wearing their head scarves too loosely (Hammami 1990, 26–27).[4] By February 1990, the

4. Hamas, named so four months into the uprising, was originally established in Gaza in the late 1970s as the Islamic Association and for years was funded by the Israeli

"hijab campaign" in Gaza was renewed (with graffiti signed by both Fateh and Hamas appearing in March) and included a push to force women to wear the *gilbab* robe as well (Hammami 1990, 28; Jad 1995, 241). The first public feminist response to attacks came in December 1990, when the Women's Studies Committee of the Bisan Center held a conference in Jerusalem challenging the "new repressive conditions on women" imposed by "political fundamentalism" and sanctioned by "conservative national forces" (Giacaman and Johnson 1994, 24; Bisan Center for Research and Development 1991). However, attacks and restrictions on women and girls also came from men in secular nationalist organizations.

Women were threatened and killed in other manifestations of a masculinized street politics. As the popular committees were made dangerous to join in August 1988, nationalist and Islamist "strike forces" *(quwaat al-dhariba)*, dominated by teenage boys and young men, became more powerful. These forces were affiliated with specific factions and were responsible for, among other things, pursuing Palestinians who collaborated with the Israeli authorities. Collaborators not successfully pressured to quit were increasingly killed by strike forces as Israeli repression intensified and resistance activities became more dispersed and individualized.[5] By 1991, many of these groups were bands of young men unaccountable to their party leadership, the weakened popular committees, and the communities in which they roamed—and they increasingly targeted girls and women.[6]

Approximately 80 percent of the more than one hundred Palestinian women accused of collaboration and killed by Palestinian strike

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authorities as a competing "apolitical" force to the secular nationalist movement. Hamas called for a "return" to "traditional" morality (Hammami 1990, 25).

5. There were 70 such killings between December 1987 and July 1989 (Schiff and Ya'ari 1989, 257). In comparison, 170 Palestinians were killed by other Palestinians, usually on suspicion of collaboration, between January and December 1991 (Amnesty International 1992).

6. While I was a visiting researcher with the Palestinian human rights organization al-Haq in 1991–92, a number of families in the northern West Bank filed affidavits describing threats of violence from these young men that forced parents to give away in marriage their thirteen-, fourteen-, and fifteen-year-old daughters.

forces (mostly Fateh Hawks) between 1988 and the end of 1993 were labeled "moral collaborators" (Hammami 1994, 185). "Moral collaborators" included people accused of adultery, homosexuality, prostitution, or other sexual "corruption"; involvement in drug and alcohol sale or use; or distribution of pornography. People in these categories were seen by Palestinians to be prone to Israeli blackmail and exploitation (Be'er and 'Abdel-Jawad 1994, 89, 90–91; Hammami 1994, 183–85). Most of these accusations were "based only on rumor and unverified information" (Be'er and 'Abdel-Jawad 1994, 90, 92). I found no evidence of DF-affiliated strike forces or killing of women collaborators attributed to the DF branch, which can be credited to its woman-friendly history as well as partisan commitment to mass mobilization rather than violence.[7]

The threat of being accused of moral collaboration to some extent controlled all girls and women for a period, legitimating the restriction of their mobility and political activity, as well as their harassment, terrorization, and, occasionally, murder. The UNLU did not act quickly or firmly to defend women and girls from these campaigns, since it included factions involved in the killings and leftist authority within it was increasingly weakened as a result of imprisonment, deportation, and disagreements. The PFWAC and other women's committees also did not actively challenge these attacks, for reasons that become clearer in the following chapter.

Jordan Responds to the Intifada

The Palestinian uprising was widely supported in Jordan, and committees developed to raise money for Palestinian needs (Abu-Odeh 1999, 224). Three months into the uprising, the UNLU issued Communiqué no. 10 (11 March 1988), which defined alignment with the Jordanian

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7. Be'er and 'Abdel-Jawad (1994) published affidavits from women accused of moral collaboration, interviews with strike-force members (Fateh-affiliated Hawks and Black Panthers, Hamas-affiliated 'Izzal-din al-qassam Brigades, Islamic Jihad-affiliated Muslim Sword, and PFLP-affiliated Red Eagles), strike-force circulars, and positions taken by the leaders of Fateh and Hamas on collaborator killings.

authorities in the West Bank as collaboration and urged West Bank deputies in the Jordan parliament to resign their seats (Abu-Odeh 1999, 225; Mishal and Aharoni 1994, 170). According to Adnan Abu-Odeh, a Palestinian former adviser to King Hussein (and later to his son, King Abdullah II): "The king described the communique as a 'horrible sign of ingratitude' and soon came to realize that his strategy of substituting a partnership with the Palestinians in the occupied territories for one with the PLO had fallen apart" (1999, 225).

Transjordanian exclusivist nationalists, in contrast, believed that "Jordan would be safer without the West Bank and without the Palestinians" (Abu-Odeh 1999, 225). The king began considering severing Jordanian authority over the West Bank in March 1988 and in late April gave a series of talks in which he stressed Jordan's support for the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of Palestinians and called for an end to the Israeli occupation and an international peace conference that included the PLO to resolve the conflict (Massad 2001, 260). On 30 July the king dissolved the parliament, and on 31 July he announced administrative and juridical disengagement from the West Bank (Abu-Odeh 1999, 226; Massad 2001, 262). In this announcement, Hussein warned against the dual threats of exclusivist Transjordanian nationalism and the "Palestinianization" of Jordan within its newly iterated boundaries:

> It is to be understood in all clarity, and without any ambiguity or equivocations, that our measures regarding the West Bank concern only the occupied Palestinian territory and its people. They naturally do not relate in any way to the Jordanian citizens of Palestinian origin in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. They all have the full rights of citizenship and all its obligations, the same as any other citizen irrespective of his origin. . . . Jordan is not Palestine; and the independent Palestinian state will be established on the occupied Palestinian land after its liberation, God willing. There, the Palestinian identity will be embodied, and there the Palestinian struggle shall come to fruition. (Abu-Odeh 1999, 227)

The regime at the same time encouraged chauvinistic tendencies through a variety of means to undermine the possibility of Palestinian

political ascendance, or alliances between Jordanians and Palestinians against Hashemite rule.

Local, PLO, and International Responses

In June 1988, PLO spokesman Bassam Abu Sharif proposed "direct talks between the PLO and Israel, an internationally supervised referendum in the occupied territories, a transitional period before a Palestinian state would be established, and the deployment of a United Nations buffer force on the Palestinian side of the border with Israel" (Lesch 1989, 102). By August, this proposal, combined with Hussein's relinquishing of juridical claims over the West Bank and increased self-confidence among the uprising leadership, pushed UNLU members to demand international recognition of a Palestinian state based on UN Resolution 181 (the 1947 Partition Plan). This maneuver was "a bold plan designed to force the hand of the PLO" outside (103–4). The Israeli authorities arrested one of the plan's authors, the highest-ranking Fateh official inside the territories, the late Faisal al-Husseini.

The plan was adopted by the PLO on 15 November 1988, during the nineteenth PNC meeting in Algiers. On 14 December 1988, the U.S. government officially recognized the PLO, and in 1989, Secretary of State James Baker proposed a plan that called for resolving the conflict without establishing an independent Palestinian state. Zahira Kamal, head of the PFWAC and leader of the DFLP branch, was part of a Palestinian delegation that met in May 1989 with a U.S. State Department representative in Jerusalem to discuss the Palestinian plan (Najjar 1992, 274 n. 4). A meeting between U.S. Assistant Secretary of State John Kelly and fourteen Palestinians from the territories on 3 August also included two women, Kamal and Hanan al-'Ashrawi, a professor at Birzeit University.[8] The delegation asked the United States to recognize Palestinian national self-determination rights, seek to end the Israeli occupation, convene an international peace conference in order to resolve the conflict, and adopt "the principle of mutuality and

8. Kamal and al-'Ashrawi were also part of a small Palestinian delegation that met with Secretary Baker in April 1991.

reciprocity [between Israel and the Palestinians] in all matters pertaining to the solution of the conflict" (West Bank Palestinians 1989).

On 28 October 1991, a fourteen-member Palestinian delegation of academics and professionals from the territories met with a delegation from the Israeli government in Madrid for the first of eleven rounds of unsuccessful negotiations that continued through September 1993. Su'ad al-'Ameri, an architect, was the only woman on the delegation, and al-'Ashrawi was the delegation's highly visible spokeswoman. By autumn 1991, there were major disagreements among UNLU factions in response to the unfolding developments, preventing unified statements through the communiqués.[9] The UNLU formally ceased to exist by September 1993 (Tamari 1996).

"Autonomy" and the Ascendance of "Outside" Power and Men in the Occupied Territories

Between January and August 1993, Arafat and a team of Fateh officials secretly negotiated with a team of Israeli government officials under the sponsorship of the Norwegian government. These negotiations culminated in mutual recognition between the PLO and the Israeli government on 9 September 1993, followed by the signing of the Israeli-PLO Declaration of Principles (DOP), also known as the Oslo Accords, in Washington, D.C., on 13 September 1993. The DOP called for a phased withdrawal of Israeli military forces from major Palestinian population centers and the establishment of a Palestinian interim self-government authority, called the Palestinian National Authority, for a period not to exceed five years and "leading to a permanent settlement based on Security Council Resolution 242 and 338" (DOP 1993).

The PNA, later called the Palestinian Authority (PA), was not allowed to form an army, control borders, or exercise any authority over settlers, settlements, or East Jerusalem; rather, it was to slowly take control of Palestinian hospitals, education, municipalities, direct taxation, policing, and tourism (DOP 1993, art. 6). The agreement also preserved the status quo in terms of Palestinian land already confiscated and water

9. Communiqués were released, however, through 5 December 1992 (no. 90).

resources under the control of the Israeli water company and provided blanket amnesty for Israeli actions during twenty-seven years of occupation (Aruri 1995; Shehadeh 1994, 18–25). Palestinian reformists in the territories responded to the secret negotiations by demanding increased PLO accountability, democratic decision making, and the appointment of "professional" as opposed to factional bodies to formulate plans for implementing the accords.[10]

The intifada was formally called to an end as part of the DOP, when Arafat stated that he "encourages and calls upon the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to take part in the steps leading to the normalization of life, rejecting violence and terrorism, contributing to peace and stability and participating actively in shaping reconstruction, economic development and cooperation" (1993, 115). The intifada's spirit was broken between January and June 1991, during and in the aftermath of the Gulf War, when Palestinians were devastated by the longest curfews and regional closures since the 1967 occupation. These developments left Palestinians with little hope that the uprising would lead to a just resolution of their dispersal and occupation.

Institutionalizing Palestinian Autonomy

In April 1994, the PLO in Tunis released the constitutional Draft Basic Law for the National Authority in the Transitional Period (Aruri and Carroll 1994). On 4 May 1994, the "implementation accord" for limited self-rule in Gaza and Jericho was signed by the Israeli government and the PLO in Cairo, and on 12 July 1995, Yasir Arafat relocated from Tunis to Gaza City to head the PNA. The new governing authority did little to inspire local confidence, since Palestinians from outside the territories were favored in hiring and appointments, creating much resentment, particularly in Gaza, where the PNA was the largest public-sector employer (Roy 1994, 86).

Palestinian "self-rule" in the 1990s was fragile and fragmented. By

10. These issues were raised in November and December 1993 memoranda to Arafat that were signed by 135 Palestinian leaders and activists from the territories and the diaspora (Palestinian Figures 1994a, 1994b).

September 2000, when the al-Aqsa intifada began, numerous efforts to negotiate "final status" issues between the Israeli government and the PA failed over Israel's refusal to withdraw from occupied land and dismantle Jewish settlements, closures of Palestinian areas by Israeli occupying authorities, and lack of resolution regarding Palestinian refugee rights and the status of East Jerusalem. Moreover, in the seven years following the signing of the Oslo Accords, land confiscation and Jewish settlement expansion continued.

Feminist Activity in the 1990s

The replacement of grassroots organizing with state building remasculinized national politics in the 1990s as women lost influence in agenda setting. Despite active resistance from a number of quarters, feminist and women's organizations used new strategies to foreground and challenge gender inequality (Giacaman 1995, 55), including impacting in a feminist direction the laws and policies of the incipient Palestinian state (Hammami and Johnson 1999, 325). In contrast to the 1990s overall trend of organizational co-optation, either as part of the PNA or as party-affiliated organs, women's institutions were one of the strongest and most independent sectors in civil society (Hammami and Johnson 1999, 319).

Feminists were galvanized into action when forty "technical committees" that were established by the PLO after the Madrid conference to begin laying the groundwork for a future state included only four women among the four hundred appointees (Gluck 1995, 11). Women in factions that supported the negotiations and some independents responded by creating the Women's Affairs Technical Committee (WATC), headed by Zahira Kamal until the late 1990s, to pressure for women's inclusion. The WATC was the only technical committee that was financially independent of the incipient state structure; it was funded by a foreign donor (Giacaman and Johnson 1994, 24). Feminists who opposed the terms of the Madrid negotiations believed that their participation in the WATC legitimated the emerging national authority (Kuttab 1994). Instead, they established the Palestinian Women's Advocacy Group, called the Task Force on Women, which worked with

the WATC on a "united women's agenda" (Giacaman and Johnson 1994, 24).

The second major impetus to feminist action came with the December 1993 release of the first draft of the constitutional Basic Law, formulated by a committee of jurists appointed by Arafat after the 1993 DOP was signed. The draft was protested by women's and other groups because it indicated that pluralism, accountability, and equal protection for women would not be guaranteed. Feminists in a range of political groups eventually consolidated their opposition into one document and created the Women's Document Committee that by early 1994 became an ad hoc committee in a revitalized chapter of the General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW) in the Occupied Territories (Kamal 1995; Kuttab 1994). The central GUPW adopted the final version as the Declaration of Principles on Palestinian Women's Rights (known as the Women's Charter), which was released in July 1994 (Kuttab 1994; Ameri 1999, 41–42).

The Women's Charter stressed the "bitter experiences" that have "made Palestinian women conscious of the specificity of women's issues which are linked to the struggle for justice, democracy, equality, and development" (GUPW 1994, 137–38). It also adopted the UN Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and called for full protection of equal rights in political participation and leadership, education, work, and landownership; an end to discriminatory legislation against women; legal protection against family violence and restrictions of women's freedom; and a woman's right to grant citizenship to a non-Palestinian husband and children.

This multifactional feminist effort was not ignored by social conservatives. The PA social affairs minister, Intisar al-Wazir, appeared uninvited at a 3 August 1994 GUPW branch press conference at which the Women's Charter was to be announced and demanded to read a statement from Arafat that supported the endeavors on the Women's Charter "as long as [its] goals did not conflict with the Islamic *shari'a*," essentially opposing its most far-reaching demands (Abdulhadi 1995, 15). A number of other women were frustrated that the charter "was

written without consultation with the grassroots membership" and believed that it largely addressed the needs of the better-off, educated, and mostly secular women who drafted it (Ameri 1999, 47). In response to these criticisms, feminist-leftist women decided that the charter should be "discussed among women in all the regions" and endorsed with the collection of one million signatures (Kamal 1995).

Women's organizations were divided through the 1990s, however, over how confrontational to be with respect to Islamist and rightist pressures against women and whether to endorse the secular overriding of personal status laws. Another source of tension was generational competition: younger women wanted the veterans of the women's movement to move over (Kamal 1995). These tensions, combined with nonresolution of the "final status" issues between Israel and the PA, made it difficult for the organizations to move beyond abstractions. As of late summer 2000, the signature-gathering plan was not undertaken, and the charter had not been officially raised by the women's movement to the PA or the PLO's legislative body, the Palestine National Council. The drafters of the Basic Law refused to acknowledge the CEDAW, a commitment that would have required the Palestinian parastate to adopt laws that negated or revised the personal status laws. Later drafts presented to the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) in the territories "weakened gender equality provisions" and cited *shari'a* as "a principal source of legislation" (SIDA 1999, 15), although a number of ministry policy directives improved the situation for women in response to feminist campaigns (Welchman 2000a, 355–56).

The model parliament on women's legal rights was another important effort mounted by a coalition of gender and human rights organizations led by the Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counseling (Welchman 2000a, 361–73). The parliament occurred in a period of "virtual paralysis" in the Palestinian Legislative Council (because of conflict with Arafat) and was the culmination of workshops and a 1994 al-Haq-sponsored conference on women's rights (Hammami and Johnson 1999, 328). During the "parliament" sessions, delegates were divided among individuals who wanted to replace personal status laws with gender-equality principles developed in human rights conven-

tions, others who sought "true application" of *shari'a* principles on the assumption that they were gender-just, and still others advocating a compromise position (331–32).

In March (in Nablus) and April (in Gaza) 1998, conservative Muslim activists challenged the "laws" of the model parliament with respect to "gender rights and duties" in marriage (Hammami and Johnson 1999, 329–33; Scheindlin 1998). Whereas *shari'a* court officials challenged the standing and legal knowledge of the parliament activists (Welchman 2000a, 370), the more strident attacks delegitimated the effort and the women involved as part of a secular, Western colonizing conspiracy to weaken the Muslim moral fabric—the work of "devils, satans and demons" (Hammami and Johnson 1999, 333; Scheindlin 1998). Leftists outside the model parliament and some PA representatives were compelled to defend it, since the latter viewed the campaign as a Hamas attack on the PA's legitimacy. This, combined with solidarity statements from seven invited representatives of political factions (including Islamic Jihad) read at the final session of the parliament, gave it the "stature of a nationalist (rather than simply a women's) event" (Hammami and Johnson 1999, 334–35).

Economic Crisis, Political Liberalization, and Identity in Jordan

Jordan's rentier economy primarily relies on expatriate remittances to citizens as well as foreign grant and loan assistance made directly to the state. This situation "for years permitted a level of consumption and investment well above what the country's GDP [gross domestic product] could sustain" and limited its accountability to citizens, who paid little in taxes (Brand 1992, 168–69; Robinson 1998, 390). In the fall of 1988 the value of the Jordanian dinar fell dramatically, and in late January 1989 the state secretly negotiated an agreement with the International Monetary Fund to cut domestic social programs and subsidies and encourage exports. Subsidy reductions in April led to demonstrations in all of Jordan's major cities except Amman, during which twelve people were killed and hundreds were injured (Brand 1998, 100).

Because welfare support and subsidies "had long been staples of

Hashemite patronage to important constituencies, particularly in the southern (non-Palestinian) half of the country," the monarchy's survival was threatened by the economic changes (Robinson 1998, 391). The demonstrators called for the resignation of the government of Prime Minister Zayd al-Rifaʻi and "expansion of democratic freedoms in Jordan" (Fischbach 1999, 86), indicating that the problems were about more than subsidies. The increasingly vocal Transjordanian exclusivists viewed the austerity and privatization program as helping the Syrian- and Palestinian-dominated merchant class and hurting the Jordanian-dominated bureaucracy. This perspective is despite the fact that Transjordanians were increasingly part of the bourgeoisie and Palestinians were well represented among the urban and rural poor (Massad 2001, 266–68).

King Hussein promised parliamentary elections and replaced Rifaʻi with the more moderate Mudar Badran, who promised political reforms. He also made statements supporting foregrounding Islamic moral codes in public institutions. With this double stroke he appeased the socially conservative Islamists and the secular and leftist (all men) parliamentarians (Brand 1998, 103).

Containing Democracy

The 1988 Hashemite decision to disengage from the West Bank removed one of the major disagreements between the government and the leftist opposition, freeing the latter to focus their attention on Jordanian politics following state political liberalization in 1989 (al-Khazendar 1997, 123, 112). Political freedom has been limited, however, because, as Quintan Wiktorowicz argues, Hashemite policy since 1989 has actually been the "management of collective action": "While the most overt forms of repression have been removed, authoritarian tendencies are embedded in bureaucratic processes, procedures, and regulations, which are used to shape the content of social interactions in civil society" (2001, 3).

By September 1989 the population was engaged in parliamentary electioneering. Candidates campaigned for the end of martial law (which was suspended in December 1989), the legalization of political

parties, the end of government corruption, and support for the Palestinian intifada (Brand 1998, 101; Fischbach 1999, 86). Candidates had to run as individuals rather than on party platforms (al-Khazendar 1997, 115). Islamists won thirty-two of eighty lower-house seats (Brand 1998, 102; Robinson 1998, 392); leftists won ten to twelve seats, with PFLP and DF candidates each winning one of the two Christian seats (al-Khazendar 1997, 116); and thirty-two seats went to tribal and clan leaders (Shryock 1997, 340). Twelve women ran, but none won, although 48 percent of the voters were women (Massad 2001, 97).

On 9 April 1990, King Hussein established a commission composed of sixty people, including four women, to formulate a national charter (al-mithaq al-watani al-urduni) to outline the parameters and goals of Jordan's political liberalization (Robinson 1998, 393; Fischbach 1999, 87; Brand 1998, 104). The charter was completed on 31 December 1990 and ratified on 9 June 1991. Although it called for the legalization of political parties, the charter emphasized that "they must be uniquely Jordanian" (Fischbach 1999, 87; Brand 1998, 104), referring to "synthetic" Palestinian parties such as the DF-affiliated branch. The charter also included an explicit clause against gender discrimination, affirmed private property rights (Robinson 1998, 393–94), and "required acceptance of the Hashemite monarchy" (Brand 1998, 104).

In April 1992, martial law was repealed, the martial law court ended, and the state of emergency that had been in effect since 1939 lifted, although the reimposition of martial law and state of emergency was "still allowed under the Jordanian constitution, and a new type of military court was in fact established" (Fischbach 1999, 89; Amnesty International 1998).

The July 1992 Law on Political Parties required them to apply for state licensing and meet criteria that included "having a minimum of 50 founding members possessing Jordanian citizenship for at least 10 years, agreeing to uphold the constitution and Jordan's independence, and having no organizational or financial links outside Jordan" (Fischbach 1999, 87). The latter criterion was not applied neutrally since the transnational Muslim Brotherhood branch registered itself as the Islamic Action Front (IAF) and was licensed in December 1992 (Brand

1998, 109). In contrast, the interior ministry at first rejected (it later reversed itself) the "applications of the Jordanian Communist Party (JCP), the Jordanian People's Democratic Party [the DF branch], and the Jordanian Arab Socialist Ba'th Party," claiming that their ideologies "violated the stipulations set forth in the political parties law" (Fischbach 1999, 87).

Article 5 of the law forbade "party members from claiming a non-Jordanian nationality or seeking foreign protection *(himaya)*." It also provided a framework for "political return," whereby Palestinian Jordanians who opted for Palestinian citizenship if a state were established would be required to vote in Palestinian elections and have only residency rights in Jordan (Robinson 1998, 395). The Law on Resistance to Communism, which had allowed imprisonment for up to fifteen years, was abolished (Amnesty International 1998).

The limits on political freedom during the "liberal" period are indicated by the 1993 Press and Publications Law, which prohibited

> news offensive to the King or royal family; unauthorized information about the armed forces; articles which show contempt for religion; articles which harm national unity, incite crime or sow hatred, discord or conflict in society; articles intended to shake confidence in the national currency; articles which insult heads of Arab, Islamic or friendly states or members of diplomatic missions; articles contrary to public morals; and articles offending the dignity of officials or other individuals. (Amnesty International 1998, 6)

The king dissolved parliament in early August 1993 and in mid-August ratified "a temporary amendment to the Electoral Law instituting the one-person, one-vote principle" (Brand 1998, 112). This change, which was strongly protested by all political parties, required a voter to choose only one candidate in a given district, even if, for example, three positions were open, in order to limit support for "ideological" (party-supported) candidates. During the 1989 elections, in contrast, "people could cast their 'first' vote for a clan member and then cast their 'second' vote on ideological grounds" (Robinson 1998, 397).

Most Transjordanians indeed voted for someone they knew in 1993, and most Palestinians voted for someone they believed would be

effective (with government connections). The new parliament as a result included an increased number of Transjordanian tribal and progovernment deputies, and Islamist deputies were reduced by 50 percent.[11] Toujan Faisal, an outspoken feminist and advocate of government transparency who frequently invoked the ire of Islamist men (Brand 1998, 145–47; al-Faisal 1995; Gallagher 1995), ran and became the first woman elected to the parliament (Massad 2001, 97; Sonbol 2003, 231–32; Evans 1997).

Despite the resistance of "antinormalization" forces, including Islamists, leftists, and Arab nationalists, on 26 October 1994 Jordan agreed to a treaty with Israel, and on 6 November it was ratified by the lower house (Brand 1998, 115). Bread riots in southern cities in August 1996 led to hundreds of detentions without charge and arrests for "insulting the sovereign" or damaging property (all received royal amnesty in November and December) (Amnesty International 1998, 5).

In the November 1997 parliamentary elections, which were boycotted by most Islamist and leftist groups because of the one-person, one-vote rule, none of the seventeen women who ran won, including Toujan Faisal (Massad 2001, 97). Faisal alleged fraud and stated that religious conservatives and the regime had actively worked to ensure her defeat (Sonbol 2003, 232; Evans 1997).[12] Another woman who ran, Wisaf Ka'abnah, representing bedouins in central Jordan, survived an assassination attempt (Massad 2001, 97–98). Samiha al-Tal, who ran for a seat in Irbid, was boycotted by her own tribe (Sonbol 2003, 231). The fierceness of these attacks indicates the threat posed by independ-

11. The Islamic Action Front was also weakened by a split in May 1993 over branch independence from the Muslim Brotherhood (Brand 1998, 113).

12. On 16 May 2002, Faisal was sentenced by a state security court to eighteen months' imprisonment with no right of appeal following her arrest in March for sending an e-mail (published on a Web site) to King Abdullah II that accused the prime minister of financial corruption (Amnesty International 2002b). She was pardoned and released on 26 June after a hunger strike, "but the pardon did not annul her alleged crime." When she applied to run in the June 2003 parliamentary elections, the election committee rejected her application on the grounds that she had previously committed a crime (Amnesty International 2003).

ent and politically engaged women to a patriarchal gender order buttressed by an undemocratic political system.[13]

Demonstrations throughout the country against U.S. bombing of Iraq turned violent in the southern city of Ma'an in February 1998 when state forces attempted to stop them, killing one and injuring many; the regime deployed the army, imposed curfew, and cut phone connections leading outside the city (Massad 2001, 273–74). In June 2001, King Abdullah II dissolved the parliament and repeatedly postponed elections, citing "turmoil in the Palestinian territories" (Keilani 2003a). Restrictions were broadened and existing freedoms contracted even further following the 11 September 2001 attacks on the United States (Amnesty International 2002a), with the king decreeing more than 160 "temporary laws" (Shaoul 2003).

The Hashemite kingdom's policies toward Islamist political groups were lenient except when they threatened Hashemite political hegemony, particularly with respect to Jordanian-Israeli and Jordanian-U.S. relations. The main foci of the most active Islamist organizations in Jordan from the late 1980s were "social" Islamicization (with gender implications) and foreign policy with regard to Israel. They avoided class-based challenges to the regime (Brand 1998, 118; al-Khazendar 1997, 164–65). By the mid-1990s Arab nationalists and leftists were weakened by their own internal disagreements as well as royal co-optation through the "offering of ministerial and other prominent posts" (Brand 1998, 119). In an irony not uncommon in Middle East politics, shared opposition to the terms of the U.S.-sponsored peace process "enhanced relations between the leftist bloc in Jordan and the Muslim

13. In February 2003, King Abdullah II approved an upper-house decision to guarantee 6 seats for women in the lower house, while at the same time the proportional value of these seats was reduced by increasing the number of parliament seats from 80 to 110 (al-Tamimi 2003). During the June 2003 parliamentary elections, the IAF won 18 seats and could rely on support from an additional 10 to 12 deputies, and proregime politicians won the majority of seats (Keilani 2003b). None of the 54 women who ran received enough votes to win a given district directly. Ironically, Hayat al-Museimi, the highest woman vote getter, and one of 6 new women lower-house deputies, ran on the platform of the IAF (Delwani 2003).

Brotherhood" (al-Khazendar 1997, 159). Similarly, in 2000, the Jordan branch of the Democratic Front, the PFLP-affiliated Popular Unity Party, and the Ba'thists usually allied with the IAF to produce statements against the Oslo process.

New and Old Questions of Identity and Belonging

Transjordanian chauvinist groups and individuals of the "Jordan for Jordanians" varieties polarized constructions of difference in response to 1990s developments in Jordan and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. They shared with the state a fear of a solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict that permanently settled (tawteen) Palestinian refugees from throughout the Arab world in Jordan. These fears were real, given Zionist attempts to elide responsibility for Palestinian displacement with the "Jordan is Palestine" argument. Most refugees are also against their permanent resettlement in Jordan, which has been suggested by the United States and the United Nations at various points (Brand 1988, 152–53), since doing so is seen as negating Israel's material and existential responsibilities for the forced dispersal of Palestinians and the appropriation of their lands and homes. Moreover, refugees have resented Hashemite attempts to subsume Palestinian identity within a Jordanian "family" while at the same time favoring Jordanian-origin citizens with state resources.

King Hussein's severing of ties with the West Bank in 1988 was a turning point. Linda Layne argues that "both the act and the rhetoric of disengagement produced a Jordanian nation that conformed more closely to the modern, Western model of nation by clarifying and confirming the Jordanian 'Self' and the Palestinian 'Other' " (1994, 26). Thus, the geographic realignment that excluded the West Bank served as a moment for the state to align and iterate national identifications and loyalties with Jordan's new boundaries. The state articulated Jordanianness and Palestinianness based on ideological commitment (rather than biologically or in terms of origin) in a manner where the former was defined to belong exclusively east of the river and the latter to the west.

This trend was exacerbated by the 1991 Gulf War, which led to an influx of two hundred thousand to three hundred thousand Palestinians

with Jordanian passports from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia (Massad 2001, 268), producing fears among some that Jordanians would be overwhelmed by Palestinians. The ascent of exclusivist nationalism was tangibly demonstrated by the emergence of a new party, al-'Ahd (the Covenant), which was founded on the principle of "Jordan for Jordanians" and won more than ten seats in the lower house of parliament in the 1993 elections (Abu-Odeh 1999, 231–32). Most party members were Transjordanian "former senior government officials or retired army officers" of middle- and upper-middle-class backgrounds (241).

The chauvinism became more rancorous and vociferous with the signing of the Oslo Accords in September 1993 and was led by Jordanian-origin Christians and Muslims. Journalist Nahid Hattar called for expelling rather than "Jordanizing" Palestinians who came after 1948, depicting them as colonizers (Massad 2001, 265–66). A number of exclusivists advocated "political return" to the Occupied Territories (voting exclusively there) for Palestinian-origin Jordanians who remain following the establishment of a Palestinian state (Abu-Odeh 1999, 230–31). In a 1997 speech, 'Abd al-Hadi al-Majali, the former army chief of staff who was reelected in the 2003 parliamentary elections (representing Karak), stated that Palestinians who came to Jordan after 1950 and their descendants should be required to apply for Jordanian citizenship to prove their loyalty (Abu-Odeh 1999, 242–43). The pugnacious 'Uwaydi al-'Abbadi, who was elected in the 1997 parliamentary elections, stated that 51 percent of the wealth earned by Palestinians in Jordan should be returned to the state and Palestinians should be sheared of political rights, including withdrawing their passports and replacing them with travel documents (Abu-Odeh 1999, 245).

The issue of "Jordanian" versus "Palestinian" was an unexpectedly important aspect of interviews I conducted in 2000 with Democratic Front activists in Jordan, as discussed in the following chapter. Questions of national identity, what it meant to be a "Jordanian" opposition in liberalized Jordan, and the relative power of "insiders" versus "outsiders" in decision making contributed to splitting the branch in the 1990s. The Occupied Territories DF branch and the PFWAC also split, but the divisions were accompanied by reversals in women's power, as occurred in the territories more generally in the 1990s.

8

Ruptures, Betrayals, and New Realities in Democratic Front Branches and the PFWAC

THE POSSIBILITY that the Arab-Israeli conflict would be resolved produced different evaluations as to who should lead the party and what direction it should take in the Occupied Territories DF branch and the Political Office of the DFLP central party. By September 1990, the territories branch and the PFWAC informally split over these issues and others. As the revolutionary mobilization politics of the intifada were replaced in the 1990s with often fruitless (for Palestinians) negotiations over the outlines and conditions of an end to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the DF-affiliated factions and women's organizations shifted to "state"-focused politics (Palestinians gained "self-rule" rather than sovereignty).

As the Jordan state rebordered itself in 1988 in response to the Palestinian intifada and began liberalizing in 1989, the balance between Jordan-focused and Palestinian-focused politics in the Jordan branch became more important. Increased clamoring for branch independence from the central party contributed to two splits, one in 1990 and the other in the mid-1990s. The "inside" versus "outside" strain was imbricated in the state's agenda to maintain Hashemite hegemony by ensuring that liberalization did not strengthen opposition to the regime or lead to a rise in Palestinian political influence.

Fragmentation and Gendered Reversals in the Occupied Territories DF Branch and the PFWAC

The intifada was a turning point for the DF branch. By the time the branch Central Leadership wrote the first report to the DFLP outside on 25 January 1988, and received the first response in early February (Labadi 1995), partisans had already helped to establish the Unified National Leadership of the Uprising and written its early communiqués. PFWAC and DF branch activists were also involved in forming the popular committees and were flooded with new recruits. The branch and central party were concurrently shaken by internal conflicts, ostensibly over the unequal distribution of power between "inside" and "outside" and whether the party should participate in negotiations with Israel. These disagreements, combined with the scramble to respond to Israeli measures, placed feminist issues on the back burner for the PFWAC. Apart from this situation, many branch and PFWAC women believe that they were systematically disempowered by party men, debilitating the PFWAC and ending women's historic branch power.

DF Branch and PFWAC Responses to the Intifada

The intifada was the revolutionary moment for which DF partisans had prepared and waited. By January 1988, branch leaders decided that instead of having parallel structures of the PFWAC, DF branch cells, the WUB, and student structures, all the mass-based committees within a given region were to work together. On a practical level, this shift was necessitated by the increased difficulties of communication and movement as a result of sealings and curfews.[1] PFWAC women increasingly focused on visits to hospitals, prisons, and martyrs' homes, as well as distribution of food, clothing, and funds.

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1. Communication and travel between Gaza and the West Bank became so difficult that the PFWAC in Gaza created the Regional Executive Office, which was codified in the PFWAC Program and Internal Platform during the late 1989 meeting of the Higher Committee in Jerusalem that was attended by a number of Gazans.

The intifada brought increased levels of Israeli surveillance and harassment of DF branch and PFWAC activists, as well as arrests and deportations. Eight of the eleven high-ranking partisan men (most were WUB leaders) interviewed in 1995 were imprisoned or deported or both for periods ranging between six months and six years, one was deported before the uprising, and the remaining two had spent most of their political careers with the DFLP outside the territories. In comparison to partisan men, the well-known DF branch and PFWAC women *leaders* from the West Bank were less likely to be arrested. Gaza-based PFWAC partisans at all levels were more likely to be imprisoned than West Bank PFWAC partisans. Indeed, during the first year of the uprising, four PFWAC women were the first women to ever be administratively imprisoned in Gaza (Vitullo 1989, 52).[2] Of the eighteen women partisans from the DF branch or PFWAC or both interviewed in 1995, one, 'Aysha 'Oda, was outside the territories, five were imprisoned during the uprising, and two were deported for three years as a condition of visiting their deported husbands.

Themes of Party Conflict

> The intifada is a movement of people; it was bigger than the tight dress that
> was present in the structure of all the political parties; and the oppression of
> the occupation was very strong.
>
> —Jamal Zaqout, interview, November 1995

Six months into the uprising, high-ranking members of the Democratic Front, outside and in the territories, seriously disagreed as to the party's direction, with some viewing the branch in the territories as one of many satellites of the Palestinian resistance movement, and others viewing it as the political "center of gravity." On 25 May, DF branch leaders sent a letter to the DFLP Political Office in Damascus asking for

2. Three of these women taught in a PFWAC-sponsored preschool in the Shati' refugee camp (one was a mother of nine children), and the fourth was Tahani Abu Dakka, of the 'Abbassan village. Abu Dakka, who was four months' pregnant when arrested, miscarried in prison, where she was denied medical attention; her lawyer was able to obtain her release several weeks later on medical grounds (Vitullo 1989, 52).

a new political program in light of the changes wrought by the intifada; a "slight majority" voted against this proposal. Dissidents argued that after the PLO expulsion from Lebanon in 1982, the DFLP central party became a self-perpetuating bureaucracy that made unrealistic demands of the territories branch and reneged on a commitment to redeploy partisans to Jordan and the territories ("Second Report" 1990, 98–99).

Calls for more "insider" representation in the DFLP PO and Central Committee remained in the realm of "calm discussion" before the uprising, and the party made efforts to accommodate the territories (Khoury 1995).[3] Given the difficulties of communication and travel, however, the influence of DF partisans from the territories in outside party structures remained largely symbolic in the 1980s.

Dissidents argued that the PO increasingly interfered in the management and budgets of the mass-based organizations, appointing their leaders and ignoring their democratic constitution (Hilal 1995), acting like feudal lords dealing with their local estates ("Second Report" 1990, 101). They believed that central party leaders had lost touch with political realities and the rank and file in the territories: "The intifada showed that the activity is inside and the leadership is inside. So what is the role of the leadership outside in this case? If it continued on the level of them giving orders and those here following them, it became difficult in terms of what was on the ground; because if I do not like the decision, I will not obey it" (Khoury 1995). In the words of a former woman DF Central Leadership member who was deported to Jordan in 1990 for three years, "I don't think that outside your land and away from your people you can actually build . . . a grassroots organization. It is hard. [For those outside] I think it was more a picturesque thing, it was not real" (Wahdan 1995).

On 25 August 1988, three of seven PO members, Yasser 'Abd-Rabbo, Saleh Ra'fat, and Mamdouh Nowfal, proposed that the DFLP generate a proposal to present at the November PNC meeting that

3. Before 1988, about ten of sixty-two Central Committee members and two of nine Political Office members were from the territories (Khoury 1997). In October 1988, the Central Committee voted to expand the PO to fifteen members in order to include more DF leaders from the territories.

called for an independent state in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem in the framework of an international conference guaranteeing mutual recognition and security and based on UN principles protecting Palestinian self-determination and refugee status. In the meantime, these PO members proposed, the DFLP should push the PNC to demand a transitional state in the Occupied Territories. The majority of PO members vetoed the proposal ("Second Report" 1990, 106–7). In October, the DFLP Central Committee (CC) held meetings in preparation for the nineteenth PNC meeting, and members agreed to focus on political mobilization (ta'bawiyya) and mass work that advanced the principles of self-determination, statehood, and a negotiating process within the framework of an international peace conference. At the PNC meeting itself, however, Nayef Hawatmeh (general secretary of the DFLP) and Yasser 'Abd-Rabbo (deputy general secretary) publicly took different positions.

As the U.S.-sponsored peace process unfolded, party dissidents, who were disproportionately represented inside, argued for participation, while the pro-Hawatmeh group, dominant outside, argued for escalating the uprising ("Second Report" 1990, 103). The Hawatmeh group accused the dissidents of reneging on the principles of the party because of "personal interests" ("First Report" 1990, 19–20) and calling for a resolution to the conflict "at any price" based on the James Baker plan. They believed that escalating the intifada strengthened the negotiating hand of Palestinians by pressuring the Israeli and U.S. governments to accept an international conference. They also wanted the PLO and the DFLP to call for an independent Palestinian state in the territories, including Arab Jerusalem, in return for recognition of Israel, normalization of relations, and security guarantees for all sides. They argued that a bilateral (PLO-Israeli) negotiating framework would never lead to this goal (30).

Dissidents, in turn, accused some DFLP leaders of being increasingly beholden to their Syrian hosts by 1988 and averse to taking positions that might cause the Syrian government to expel the DFLP CC and PO from Damascus.[4] The PO majority's refusal to push for a "transi-

4. A contentious relationship existed between the DFLP leadership and the Syrian government after 1982. Syrian-supported members helped bring the PNC to a standstill

tional state" at the nineteenth PNC, according to the dissidents, violated the DFLP's 1975 Transitional Program and left the party in the dust in a quickly changing context. Nayef Hawatmeh argues, on the contrary, that during the "political fork in the road" in Palestinian national politics, it was the dissidents who strayed from the traditional DFLP position that "depended on resolutions passed by both Palestinian National Councils and international legislation, in addition to Arab summit resolutions," and was premised on "a comprehensive political settlement between the Palestinian people and Israel based on establishing two countries whose borders are those of 4 July 1967 and the resolution of the refugee problem in accordance with UN Resolution 194, in exchange for peace between the two peoples" (2000).

Another area of disagreement was "democratic centralism." The splitting group was accused of using rumors and unfounded accusations, attacking the Leninist tradition of the party, and calling for "chaos and liberalism" under the guise of "democratic renewal" ("First Report" 1990, 82–83). The minority faction countered that democratic centralism had been used by the party "to repress opinions, impose power, negate the roles of various party structures, and control their right to discuss and present opinions" ("Second Report" 1990, 132).

The conflict was full-blown in the upper echelons of the party by early 1989, when both factions outside the territories held PO and CC meetings to which only supporters were invited. In April and May, the full PO met, and the Hawatmeh faction conceded to some issues raised by the dissidents. By summer, the Hawatmeh faction backed away from concessions and accused dissidents of threatening the unity of both the national movement and the party ("Second Report" 1990, 122–23). In October, dissidents escalated their demands during meetings of the PO and CC outside the territories, proposing that more "insiders" be part of the PO, that the PO should be based in the territories, and that the

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until April 1987, when the DFLP played an important behind-the-scenes role in reunifying the PNC after a three-year gap in meetings. In punishment, the Syrian government expelled the CC and PO from Damascus in April 1987, allowing them to return in April 1988. The DFLP could not support the peace process, the dissidents argued, because the Syrian government was excluded from it.

DFLP central party should not give orders to the branch in the territories. The dissidents also challenged how money was allocated to branches and raised the idea of a separate party.

Between 26 October and 28 October 1989, the PFWAC held an "educational course" at the Regent Hotel in East Jerusalem that was attended by PFWAC leaders and approximately seventy regional PFWAC delegates (I attended as well). During this meeting, Zahira Kamal led a "political session," during which she argued for the merits of DF and PFWAC (and her) participation in the U.S.-sponsored political negotiations. She told the shocked audience that "a just solution [to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict] is no longer possible" and that Palestinians had to work within the "current realities." Lively and often angry debate ensued. One former PFWAC member believed that this conference announced to the rank and file "the beginning of a crisis and a change of ideas" in the PFWAC and the DF branch ('Obeidi 1995). In December, Kamal published the leading article in the PFWAC annual magazine, in which she similarly advocated for participation in the latest U.S.-sponsored "Palestinian Peace Plan" (PFWAC 1989). The Hawatmeh faction attempted to use its control of the purse strings to bring the PFWAC's leaders into line: "From the middle of 1989 . . . until the beginning of 1990, it became extremely difficult [for the federation], and the debts began to mount" (Kamal 1995).

Conflict in the DFLP and PFWAC peaked in the six months following a 15 February through 3 March 1990 DFLP Central Committee congress in Algiers, widely covered in the Arab press, that polarized the party and revealed the extent of divisions to the rank and file in the region. At these meetings, the published position papers of the two factions that I relied on extensively, "The First Report" ("Al-taqrir al-awal") and "The Second Report" ("Al-taqrir al-thani"), were presented and debated. In June 1990, dissidents in the territories dissolved the executive offices of the PFWAC and the WUB to better control these organizations (R. Zaqout 1995; Rimawi 1995). They also held conferences to reformulate the leadership structures of mass-based organizations. In September, the dissidents held the "first ever" open party

conference in the territories (such meetings contravened Israeli military regulations) to unilaterally revise the DFLP Political Program and debate election procedures for a new Central Committee and Political Office.

In the following few months, meetings were held throughout the territories, and a new CC and PO were elected that included dissidents from outside the territories. Both factions continued to operate under the DFLP name, although the dissidents appended "Democratic Renewal" to it. Between February 1992 and February 1993, town meetings were held in the territories to prepare for the creation of a separate party with a different name (Khoury 1997). In February 1993, the dissidents formally created a new party called Fida, convening the founding conference in Amman. On 9 June 1995 Fida held its first party conference in the Occupied Territories.

A few of the dissidents explained their decisions to split as being motivated by a sense of imminent danger to Palestinians if they remained dispersed and without a national homeland. Siham Barghouti, a founder of the DFLP branch in the territories and a three-year deportee, explained: "As a Palestinian . . . I want to establish my identity; I want to establish my presence on a land where I can build a state in the region. The intifada and the peace process were a way to fulfill these goals, I believe" (1995). 'Issam 'Abdul Latif, a longtime exile and party activist who did not return to the territories until the early 1990s, responded similarly when I asked him about the costs of negotiating away the right of return for Palestinian refugees living outside the territories, arguing that identity establishment required compromises that would lead to the Palestinian control of some territory. He believed that from 1967 through the late 1980s,

> the essence of the Palestinian national struggle was centered on regaining the Palestinian identity, as well as preventing it from entering the fishnet, or let us say, the snare of dissolving and assimilating. The intifada and what resulted from it, from the Oslo negotiations and accord, as well as mutual recognition between the PLO and Israel, and the creation of the Palestinian National Authority, offered . . . for the first time the possibility to embody [takkarus] this Palestinian national

identity, from an emotional and political identity to an identity that becomes consolidated [*tatakkaras*] on the ground, to sovereignty on the ground. . . . So national independence is the defense, advancement, and an element of support for the nearing of an opportunity to transform the right of return to a right that can be applied and executed. It is natural that the concerns of Palestinian groupings in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, and inside vary. . . . Even within the DFLP framework, there was always discussion, which sometimes developed into struggle and differences, . . .which at its core was about how we can *wattin* [implant within the national homeland] the ideas that initiated the DFLP so that they do not remain ideas in the Palestinian diaspora. (2000)

Who's in the Political Kitchen? The Gendered Implications of Information Access

I was not deeply involved in [party decision making during the intifada] because . . . my husband was arrested many times . . . and this exhausted me . . . and made me balance between my technical work and my family work, and it did not allow me to fulfill everything in both those realms. . . . This made me more distant . . . from the kitchens of the political party. And usually, what is present in the kitchen is different from what is present in the party meetings; the cream of what is cooked in the party kitchens is what appears in these meetings.

—Amal Ju'beh, interview, October 1995

During this period, access to information was affected by gender, geographic location, and power in the party. Problems were apparent by mid- to late 1988 to the highest-ranking DFLP men partisans outside and inside, Zahira Kamal, and a few DFLP women who were CC members and outside during the intifada. Most PFWAC Executive Committee members and DF women in the Central Leadership in the territories were uninformed of the dissent until mid-1989 ('Aweidhah 1995), which was about the time that I arrived to volunteer with the PFWAC. Midlevel PFWAC activists learned of the situation during the October 1989 "educational course" (*dawra tathqeefiyya*).

Because most DF branch men leaders from the territories were deported or imprisoned during the intifada, they ironically had earlier access to better information than DF branch and PFWAC women of similar rank. The deported men's quality of information was related to

their close proximity to the evolving conflict in the CC and PO. The imprisoned men received letters from DFLP leaders outside the territories that were shared with other DF prisoners. Many of these men were actively involved in the debate by writing letters to the CC and PO that were smuggled out of prison.

Many women partisans in the territories believed that by the time party disagreements were in the open, the two factions in the PO were already committed to a split. Sama 'Aweidhah said that in the early period, "the goal was not to bring the differences into the West Bank and to attempt to resolve them outside" (1995). Rana Zaqout was more critical of this control over information: "When the differences began, the leadership tried to hide these differences for a long period from its base. . . . [It was hidden] even from leadership cadres. Practically, when the news reached us, the situation had reached dire proportions. And in the end, the DFLP lost many of its members, its best members, as a result of this" (1995).

The established channels of communication between the outside and the party branch were used to spread misinformation and exacerbate the conflict in the territories. Such communication usually occurred between members of the OTC, Deputy General Secretary 'Abd-Rabbo, and Zahira Kamal. 'Abd-Rabbo, Kamal, and most members of the OTC supported DFLP engagement in the ongoing political negotiations (Ramadan 1995). The rotating leadership of the OTC, according to one dissident, sent "all the orders to the Occupied Territories" DF Central Leadership during this period ('Aweidhah 1995). A nondissident from the territories believed that the OTC was significantly responsible for polarizing party debate and highlighted that most of its members were *dissidents* and "giving orders" to DF branch and PFWAC leaders in the territories who shared their positions on negotiations (H. 'Essawi 1995). This indicates that at least one stated source of the split, "insider" decision-making power, was specious for some of the outsiders making that claim.[5] Yasser 'Abd-Rabbo, who allied with most of the OTC members, appears to have "piggybacked" his own advocacy

5. The OTC in the 1980s was made up of 'Issam 'Abdul Latif (Abu al-'Abed), Saleh Ra'fat, 'Aysha 'Oda, and Saji Salameh Khalil. Its members did not always live in

of engagement in political negotiations onto concerns raised by DF branch leaders in the territories about "inside-outside" power distribution and political accountability. This maneuver may have been at Yasir Arafat's behest. More than one former partisan of both factions wondered aloud whether Arafat facilitated the split of the DFLP in order to weaken the party. This suspicion was reinforced by indications that 'Abd-Rabbo seemed to have little interest in building or even leading Fida, the political party established with the splitting of the DFLP, despite the fact that he was the leading advocate for the split. 'Abd-Rabbo, who has been a member of the PLO Executive Committee since 1971 and a close Arafat ally, participated in the 1991 Madrid peace talks, worked closely with Arafat in the building of the Palestinian National Authority, was with the Arafat team at the Camp David II talks in Washington, D.C., in July 2000, and remained visible at his side during the al-Aqsa intifada. Some of these suspicions were in the air early in the split, when 'Abd-Rabbo was referred to by some as "Yasser 'Abd Yasir" (Yasser the slave of Yasir).

Nondissidents outside also contributed to the fragmentation of the party. In response to a discovered "secret" Moscow meeting between 'Abd-Rabbo and Zahira Kamal, a Political Office member who asked not to be identified admitted that the nondissidents were "compelled to work with the same methods that they used against us, to communicate in nonlegal ways. So we began in Amman to send letters, not to Zahira, [but] to the women who Zahira was in charge of, telling them that there was at attempt to split the party, and this attempt is not legal, and we began to discuss the dangers of such a movement. At the same time, we exaggerated and lied in order to gain the support of the mass base of the party."

Narratives of Betrayal

> After a period, . . .I felt that maybe I had been stupid at one point, and that the split was not primarily about [political positions] as much as it was about

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the same country. 'Abd-Rabbo was usually in Tunis in the 1980s, whereas Hawatmeh was in Damascus. Khalil did not support the splitting faction in the late 1980s.

people protecting their positions. . . . And they made us split an organization that was very successful and powerful so that this one and that one could put themselves in charge.

—Tahani Abu Dakka, interview, October 1995

With hindsight, almost every former or current partisan (male or female of either faction) interviewed insisted that Yasser 'Abd-Rabbo and his allies were not interested in the democratic redistribution of power, but used the "inside-outside" issue to gain political power. Those individuals who had associated with the dissidents felt particularly betrayed:

> The issue was not an easy one after nine years; I consider myself to have worked seriously, and I did my best. . . . [B]ut in the end of 1990 in particular, I decided that is it, because I felt that the differences had begun to take a very dangerous pattern. . . . I say that these differences were not principled. . . . I think that if that were the issue . . . maybe a split would have occurred, but . . . it would not have taken the appearance it did. . . . It insulted our struggle. (R. Zaqout 1995)

Although Rana Zaqout's husband shared this sense of betrayal, he did not quit party work (he was a Fida Central Committee member when interviewed): "In the Negev prison, we had a specific position: that the differences were substantive and required discussion, but that the unity of the party was bigger than that" (W. Zaqout 1995).

Mohamed Labadi was a branch Central Leadership member and one of the leading advocates of DFLP participation in the unfolding peace process and reassessment of the DFLP program and structure. He was very active in the push for "democratic renewal" during his imprisonment (April 1988-June 1989) followed by deportation and represented the dissident wing until he quit in late 1991 (he was allowed to return to the territories in May 1994). For him, the September 1990 "democratic renewal" conference that occurred outside the territories was a revelation:

> I started to have new convictions that the political program and the organizational program proposed by the leadership of the new wing

. . . are more theoretical than they are practical; that they were not really concerned with the issues they raised. . . . They use the same organizational methods that are used by all the party organizations and that operate within the DFLP itself. . . . [T]he slogans that were proposed in the new wing of the DFLP were . . . concerned with changing a particular leadership. (Labadi 1995)

When Labadi and others attempted to push for an arena in the new wing that allowed for disagreement, they ran against two obstacles. First, most partisans outside the territories were firmly rooted in the party bureaucracy and disconnected from democratic mass-based work. They could not imagine a more pluralistic political structure. In addition:

> Many of the cadres who were unhappy with the existing reality and who had aspirations for change did not have the ability to make change because of their economic ties with the political party. And through experience I found that there is no possibility for large numbers of people to stay within a party and have an oppositional point of view to the leadership of the party. Because in the end, the leadership will turn off the faucet. (Labadi 1995)

Similarly, Jamil Hilal, a former DFLP partisan dissident allowed to return to the territories in the 1990s, argued that when Fida was established in early 1993, it was not structured with the financial and organizational accountability advocated by dissidents. In addition, its leadership defaulted on a stated commitment to "a multiplicity of ideas" in its ranks: "It turned out that under administrative excuses—that this would lead to too many meetings, etcetera—some of the leaders began to behave, make decisions, and take positions in the old way. . . . Fida changed from a party project with a program to the party of a leader ['Abd-Rabbo]. At this point, I said 'al-salaam u'aleykum' [good-bye]" (1995).[6]

A former high-ranking "outside" DFLP partisan who believed that

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6. On 10 December 1994, a memo signed by Hilal and three other Fida founders, Saleh Ra'fat, Mamdouh Nowfal, and 'Aysha 'Oda, urging the resignation of Fida's representatives to the PNA, Yasser 'Abd-Rabbo and 'Azmi al-Shu'aybi, won the support of the party's majority in the territories ("Chronology" 1995, 166).

the DFLP splitters were motivated by "individualism" and lack of discipline rather than democracy found himself, like many others, disillusioned with the DFLP (nondissident wing) for its lack of democracy and transparency. With the increased freedom of movement between countries and the ease of attending party meetings after 1991, "we realized that . . . these people who left the party, . . .despite all the problems we noticed [with them], maybe they were right. . . . And it turned out that Nayef Hawatmeh and his group came out with the wrong conclusion from the experience of the split. They decided that the best way to hold onto the organization was to return to bureaucratic, security, and spying methods. To plant in each structure a person who will send them reports. These were not acceptable methods." Like many others, this former partisan, interviewed in July 2000, criticized what he believed were the leftist and Marxist party orientations that led to the fall of the Soviet Union and socialist bloc countries. Such orientations, which relied on clear hierarchies, centralized decision making, and nondemocratic processes, were "unacceptable in the 1990s. That is it. . . . Marxist ideology, as it turned out, appeared to require that people should reexamine it [continuously], based on organizational and practical realities, not to deal with it as a religion or something sacred. Wanting a Leninist party or high levels of discipline in the classical way, like the fascist dreams—life will not accept this anymore."

De-Womaning the "Women's Front" and Palestinian Politics

> It was not easy for a man to be led by a woman, no matter how old she was, [or] her skills and abilities. . . . He looks at it this way: "I am being led by a woman. Why a woman? There are no more men in the world that I have to be led by a woman?" . . . [W]e used to try to develop this side of the young men who were led by women.
>
> —Rana Zaqout, interview, November 1995

Though sharing with men a sense of betrayal about the split, most women retrospectively believed that most DFLP men of both factions systematically disempowered them *as women*. This reversal of fortune did not occur predictably or always with intended gender motives. Moreover, two or three of twenty-one women (affiliated with the

nondissidents) in the PFWAC leadership participated in destroying the PFWAC because it was the strongest of the DF mass-based organizations in the territories and most of its leadership supported the dissident faction (Hamad 1995). There were occasionally competing narratives about how and why DF branch women were usurped and the PFWAC weakened.

This process began with increased external control over the branch. Mohamed Labadi provided an assessment of the PFWAC-DFLP (outside) relationship during the intifada that was shared by PFWAC women leaders:

> If we want to speak, for history's sake—I am of the people who were completely informed, and I am not afraid to say anything—all the programs of the PFWAC and all its internal platforms, from 1988 until the end of the 1980s, were told [dictated] to the PFWAC from outside. It was written in leaflets from the leadership of the DFLP—this can be applied to all the other mass-based organizations of the DFLP. . . . And those who say that the . . . PFWAC . . . would create, write, and decide were not close to the realities. Perhaps they modified some of the program. . . . I mean, it was not possible that an Executive Office of the PFWAC would be elected that the party was not in agreement with. (1995)

Most DF/PFWAC women leaders viewed the early 1988 decision to collapse DF mass-based organizations (women's, workers', youths', and so on) into mixed regional units and redirect PFWAC women into party work as the single most disastrous event for women's power. This move was suggested by Mohamed Labadi and at the time agreed to by DF men and women in the branch Central Leadership. According to Siham Barghouti, when the intifada began, "it was thought that this was not the time to work as workers, women, or students. Now everyone should put all the efforts of these sectors together in order to disconnect from the Israeli economy and society." She insisted, however, that it was men on the OTC outside who pushed to dissolve the Executive Office of the PFWAC. Moreover, she thought the "mixed" system should not have lasted more than a year (1995). The PFWAC was particularly devastated by this melding because it had been the most independent and

powerful of the DF mass-based organizations. Because "the leaders of the federation [PFWAC] were no longer in the federation," a group of women academics, professionals, and artists with little grassroots experience was recruited in 1988 to manage the PFWAC and its existing projects ('Aweidhah 1995).

Men in the OTC placed other men in charge of the new mixed structures despite the experience and success of party women. Because most of the men branch leaders were by now imprisoned, deported, or in hiding, the men placed in charge were previously lower-ranked cadres promoted with the disfranchisement of DF branch women:

> When they chose those responsible for the new structures—they were afraid to put women in the position of responsibility so that the young men do not hesitate to join the cells. So they put very qualified women under the control of male comrades who were not as qualified. . . . I was put in a cell where the *rafiq* [comrade] who was responsible over me—it was very painful for me—was put in that position because he was a man, not because he understood more than I did. . . . [T]he male comrades who were chosen to be responsible for these cells did not give any concern to the PFWAC or women's work. ('Aweidhah 1995)

External party control over the PFWAC was solidified further in early 1989 when it was instructed to create a secretariat *(amanat al-sir)* of the PFWAC Executive Office. Sama 'Aweidhah was appointed as secretary-general, and Kamal was instructed to focus on "other issues," such as the U.S.-Palestinian talks ('Aweidhah 1995). 'Aweidhah, who later sided with the dissidents, denied my suggestion that the creation of the secretariat may have been an attempt by the dissidents to control the PFWAC, stressing that the secretariat included women of both political persuasions (1997a).[7] Nonetheless, the fact that Kamal was instructed to focus on the political negotiations indicates that the secretariat was appointed by dissidents outside. Although DF/PFWAC women reasserted the need for the PFWAC Executive Committee in

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7. 'Aweidhah admitted that news of the divisions in the party "had not yet reached us" when the secretariat was appointed (1995).

late 1989, conflict in the party soon reached crisis proportions, embroil-
ing the PFWAC.

Many PFWAC midlevel and rank-and-file affiliates blamed Kamal
and 'Aweidhah for financial problems, undemocratic interventions,
and false promises. In the words of one former DF branch partisan and
cofounder of the PFWAC Ramallah branch who quit in 1990:

> We had an Executive Committee, and they created a secretariat. . . .
> What was the secretariat? It was a group of individuals who met to-
> gether, decided everything, and then came to the Executive Commit-
> tee to inform it what they decided. . . . In 1989, there would be faxes
> or direct communication [from outside] with two women who made
> decisions for everyone. . . . We took a look and found that we were
> lost. We were in one valley, and the masses were in another. I was un-
> willing to call myself a member of the lijan with all these problems.
> (Theeb 1995)

Across factions, I found a men's narrative that asserted the "quan-
tity not quality" nature of PFWAC recruits: the women were not suffi-
ciently educated in party ideology, and the growth in PFWAC
membership was not paralleled by an increase in DF branch member-
ship (Ramadan 1995; Abu Hilal 1995; al-Natsheh 1995; W. Zaqout
1995). Abu Leila shared his similar belief that "there was always the
problem of the disproportionateness between the wide popular base of
the federation, which included thousands of members, and the leanness
of the number of women party members. . . . This was what maybe cre-
ated the later setback that the federation and DF women's work gener-
ally suffered from" ('Abdul-Karim 2000).

The makeup, ideological commitment, and quantity of the "mass
base" in the territories became particularly salient as sources of legiti-
macy and power as the party was splitting. The flexibility of PFWAC
membership was not helpful in this competitive environment. Men
DFLP leaders began insisting on higher levels of tahzeeb of the PFWAC
rank and file (making them DF party members). DF/PFWAC women
were required to report to regional men leaders on party recruitment
drives: "The rafeeq who was responsible for me used to tell me: 'Bring me
your work plan for the women's structure in Jerusalem.' I would give him
the plan. . . . He would say to me, 'I am not interested in any of this! Tell

me how many women you will make party members between now and the end of the month.' . . . I consider that this is what destroyed the PFWAC, not the split. Because if the split . . . came at a time when the PFWAC was not weakened, it would not have affected it" ('Aweidhah 1995).

Experiences in the Jordan DF branch and the PFWAC indicate that more rigid requirements would have decreased party membership and influence, contrary to the opinion of a number of men partisans. As a DF/PFWAC woman leader from Gaza put it:

> It was a basic condition [during the intifada] that all these [PFWAC] women were [to be] incorporated into the DFLP. . . . [U]ntil the end, when we became aware [and said]: "Where is our social program for Palestinian women?" There were women who began to tell us: ". . . I do not want to join anything political. I do not want to join a party or-ganization. I want to work with the women's committees. . ." In the end . . . there was no power to the PFWAC. . . , the women were like propellers. (N. Zaqout 1995)

The *tahzeeb* campaign, combined with the top-down nature of deci-sion making, was a major source of conflict at a late 1989 meeting of the PFWAC Higher Committee (the first such meeting since the uprising began), which was attended by about thirty PFWAC delegates from the territories. A Nablus representative, for example, asserted that the PFWAC should be "serious about being democratic," work plans should be made with the participation of members of the base units, "executive decisions should be limited," and PFWAC work should connect women's "social" and national issues, in keeping with "our program's understanding of these ties." A delegate from the Gaza middle camps also stressed the "disparities" in PFWAC members' abilities to become DFLP members (PFWAC 1989, 7).

Abu Leila asserted that the 'Abd-Rabbo split did not lead to a signif-icant loss of party membership in DF youth, worker, and student organi-zations in the territories ('Abdul-Karim 2000). This claim bypasses the fact that PFWAC popularity was unparalleled among DF sector organi-zations, which was to a large extent the result of its flexible membership criteria and the dialectical manner in which its program was articulated.

Most men and two women interviewed attributed women's loss of

power in the DF branch and PFWAC during this period to the chaos of the uprising, factionalism, and the overall loss of party power. Gendered dynamics, however, occurred apart from and in interaction with these issues. Across factional and inside-outside divides during this period, it appears that many men were anxious about DF women's reputation, power, and experience in the territories. Indicating the extent to which gender politics were operating independently of partisan disagreements, many men leaders in the 1990s were conflicted between wanting to increase the ranks of the DF pro-Hawatmeh branch by making PFWAC women members versus transforming the "women's front" into a "men's front." A former woman partisan articulated the problem for men of both factions: "[Rank-and-file women] did not distinguish between the women's organization and the party. . . . Now this created a problem. . . . When the split started to happen, they [the Hawatmeh faction] began to look for men to support them in the party organization. . . . Even after Fida was created, the men [in that faction] started complaining about the pressure from women in the party" (Hamad 1995).

The reversal of DF women's power and the assault on the influence of the PFWAC came into the open during the September 1990 conference in the territories establishing the "democratic renewal" group. The conference was a "major blow to women's work [because] . . . it was apparent that the . . . [PFWAC was seen as] a framework for the DFLP." During debates, men reasoned that the PFWAC was the most powerful of the branch organizations because "the DFLP financially supported [the PFWAC] more. So they took all decisions against all types of funding support of the PFWAC. Practically, this was not true. I was the financial officer of the PFWAC for a period, and I knew about our treasury; . . . the money that used to come to the PFWAC came mostly from the [foreign] funders" ('Aweidhah 1995).

Barghouti, who was on the OTC in the first three years of the intifada, similarly believed that DFLP men "felt that they [were] . . . funding the PFWAC, and so it [should be] the submissive hand of his body. . . . Maybe I saw this more when I was outside" (1995). Thus, whereas most PFWAC/DF women in the territories believed the PFWAC's success to be the result of their struggles as nationalists and feminists, most

men of both factions and a few DF (non-PFWAC) women viewed it as a party accomplishment.

Many men leaders in the "democratic renewal group" were determined not to facilitate the reemergence of women's power in the new organization. The first (appointed) Central Committee of the "renewal" party was "limited to those few men who were known in the Central Leadership" (al-Labadi 1995a). In preparatory discussions regarding inside-outside representation in leadership structures, the issue of a women's quota—called "positive discrimination"—emerged. Dissident women who had led the DF branch and PFWAC debated this issue separately and during the September 1990 conference proposed that the new party establish a quota giving women a minimum of 25 percent of leadership positions: "This proposal, which came from Zahira, was because . . . she was closest to the leadership and she knew their views and she knew they would refuse [equal representation]. So her position was let us propose something lower so that we get something" (al-Labadi 1995a; Barghouti 1995).

During public debates in the territories regarding the organization of the new party, women as well as men, particularly in Gaza, argued against a women's quota (al-Labadi 1995a). Amal Ju'beh criticized men and especially the women who opposed the quota, commenting on competition for political power within families and the necessity of a gender quota given a gendered division of family labor:

> Men feared that women would equal men in these leadership positions and in making political decisions. . . . In women, I see [being antiquota] as a regressive position. Our starting point is that historically we have been oppressed as women. . . . It benefits me to have a quota that protects, at a minimum, my presence in the leadership structures. . . . This is my right in order to be compensated for the previous stages and to give opportunities. Maybe [a man can] . . . spend twenty-four hours of his day . . . working on his political position—when he is eating he can serve his political position; when he is sleeping he can serve his political position; in his work he can serve his political position. Women, truthfully, are fractionalized and scattered, her efforts are distributed. . . . In her home, she is required to knead and clean the floors and the routine exhausting work. . . . For a number of wives,

this is in addition to children, rearing, and education. . . . [P]olitical work requires uninterrupted efforts, and needs attendance and time to discuss with so-and-so, especially in this issue of elections. . . . Men have twenty-four hours to serve this goal. . . . Even leadership women . . . [faced] pressure that we do the work because there is still competition [between spouses]. . . . When a woman is against the quota, practically she is unaware of all that is going on around her and does not know all the requirements of political work. (1995)

A Gazan Central Committee member of Fida who was involved in its women's organization, the Palestinian Women's Action Committees, discussed women's substantive lack of power in Fida in the mid-1990s:

I am one of the people who is not willing to work like I did before because I feel that no matter how much we work, we are alienated and the party is in tatters. . . . You have large numbers who are depressed. . . . I sometimes sit in leadership meetings at the level of the party . . . [and] even though I am allowed to present my ideas, [during] the hours of seriousness, when specific things are being negotiated with the [Palestinian] Authority—meetings, decision making, elections— they prefer the man to the woman. (N. Zaqout 1995)

Ni'meh al-Hilu, a former prisoner who was also on the Fida Central Committee, noted that the decline in women's influence was obvious in "all the political parties and also the Palestinian Authority" (1995), indicating the extent to which the loss of DF and PFWAC women's power was paralleled in the larger political field. At its January 2000 party conference, following years of demands by women partisans, the Fida leadership agreed to a women's quota for its Central Committee. Three women, Zahira Kamal, Siham Barghouti, and Sana 'Anabtawi, were in the fifteen-member Fida Political Office in late 2000 (Ra'fat 2000).

There was no "positive discrimination" based on gender in the Hawatmeh-affiliated DF branch in the territories or the DFLP central party (Twair 2000). Abu Leila, the leader of the DF Central Leadership, argued that quotas might increase the number of women in leadership positions, but "her actual weight in these bodies will be weaker because all will understand that she has entered as a result of a discriminatory process, and not as a result of her abilities, competence, and actual leadership strength." He noted that even without a gender quota, the DFLP

central party had proportionally more women represented on its Central Committee than the Palestinian People's Party, whose last Central Committee party elections resulted in fewer than the 20 percent women's quota they had aimed for (Abdul-Karim 2000). The DFLP central party Political Office included no women in 2000; the veteran WUB unionist Amneh Rimawi, a Central Committee member, had been nominated for the PO but lost in the previous election (Mohammad 2000).

Explaining the End of the "Women's Front"

The "women's front" reputation of the Occupied Territories branch, as well as women's political influence more generally in the territories, may have been seen as a liability by Palestinian men elites as they jockeyed for power in a state-building period. Moreover, given the move from national marginality to emerging statehood, the economic and status stakes of having political influence increased, and many partisan men believed that they, and not women, should be leading in such a context (see Juster 1994). When asked about women's loss of power, men DF-affiliated partisans stressed the influence of gender-conservative Islamist organizations in the 1990s territories, the masculinized militarism that emerged as the intifada progressed, "masculinist elements" among the Palestinians (mostly men) who entered the territories with Arafat to positions of influence, and men's desires to gain positions and establish status (Nowfal 2000). But men partisans also blamed women for the reemergence of male political dominance.

Mamdouh Nowfal is a longtime DFLP and PLO political and military leader who was in the territories when interviewed. In addition to the issues above, he complained about lethargic, even geriatric, women's organizations, although he noted that it may be possible that "women themselves have been shocked from the methods of men, even in the democratic frameworks" (Nowfal 2000). Ironically, Nowfal was older than the two generations of women who came of political age in the 1970s and 1980s and dominated the leadership of women's organizations in the territories in the 1990s.

Saleh Ra'fat argued that to explain the loss of women's power "one should not underestimate . . . the prominence of the *salafi*, religious,

conservative trend, whose ideas are shared among some in the society, which is against the liberation of women, women working, and women's participation in political life." He noted that there were strong contradictions between "what people say and what they do" and mentioned leftist men in a range of parties, including his own, who had conservative gender perspectives and even plural wives (2000).

'Issam 'Abdul Latif argued that 1990s leftist regression in terms of "social programs" and women's power in the territories were the result of "personal considerations" (hisabaat thatiyya) and "fear of confronting the fundamentalist trends in our society" (2000). Other factors were the leftist withdrawal from mass-based work, and the "NGOization" (nongovernmental organization) of Palestinian women's organizations, which had transformed their mobilization agendas: "Unfortunately, almost all the women cadres . . . transformed these mass-based organizing frameworks whose goal was to widen mass participation and mobilization into elitist bodies that are isolated from their base, and many times to bodies whose primary tasks, one can say, are to practice 'social business' (al-biznis al-ishtimaa'i), to create facades, and to transform mass organizations into missionary salons" ('Abdul Latif 2000).

Another former DFLP Central Committee and OTC partisan holding a high position in the PNA, who asked not to be identified, argued that the lack of women's political power in the 1990s "unveils the truth" about the women who led the mass-based women's organizations of the 1970s and 1980s as

> highly educated, bourgeois city people, with city concerns and problems. But this is not the larger population of women. . . . A few girls, urban—there is a type of superficial work that all the party members engage in, from men to women, a disconnection from regular people, exaggeration of the role of one person or personality. . . . The popular thrust was forgotten by the national movement, and what became known is this group of well-known political women who are far from the real concerns of a wide sector of women. . . . There are not real programs for the ranks of women in the villages and refugee camps, and there is not a true adoption of the concerns of women on the ground and in the areas that are the poorest. . . . They [urban women in NGOs] chase after the lights. But the true women's movement oc-

curred in a context where there was neither a state, nor a donor, nor anyone else to pay anything. . . . For example, their enthusiasm for the semblance of women's freedom: "It is a woman's right to travel without taking permission. . . . It is a woman's right that her family name be written in the passport. . ." The concern is for fashionable and superficial issues.

Although these men partisans had sometimes legitimate critiques of women's organizations, a major irony with gendered implications in their criticisms is that none of them were working in mass-based organizations when interviewed. Indeed, all had benefited from positions in the Palestinian Authority. Politically seasoned women, in contrast, gained little from the establishment of a parastatal authority and were actively excluded. Accusations of a lack of connection with "the masses," though an accurate assessment of many women leaders and gender-focused NGOs, is a more accurate characterization of non-women-focused ("neutral") Palestinian NGOs, as well as PNA government structures, most of which are dominated by men at leadership levels.

These narratives indicate a gendered discursive terrain whereby accusations of elitism and lack of accountability to the masses are less likely to adhere to or delegitimate men and their organizations, even when they engage in similar tasks (research and publishing, provision of services, training, and so on) and rely on similar funding sources. Accusations of a lack of accountability and elitism function to legitimate women's lesser political power in Palestinian society and low representation in governance.

Neither DF faction had fully erased women's power or negated the previous history of PFWAC and DF women in the territories. Fida and DF branch women had the highest proportional representation in their parties' central committees, at 19 percent and 19.5 percent, respectively, in comparison to 10 percent and 5 percent, respectively, on the central committees of the PFLP and Fateh (SIDA 1999, 21). In 2000, former PFWAC women activists were disproportionately represented and influential in feminist and women-focused NGOs and research centers throughout the territories. PFWAC (Hawatmeh-faction)

women were elected to lead the cross-factional GUPW chapters in the large municipalities of Bethlehem, Qalqilya, Tulkarem, and Jenin (Twair 2000), cities in the northern and southern West Bank where the PFWAC split was not as public or destructive as it was in Gaza, Jerusalem, and Ramallah.

Fragmentation and New Visions of the Nation in the Democratic Front Organization in Jordan

Political liberalization in Jordan was a boon for the DF-affiliated Majd, which was renamed Hashd. Partisans reveled in the end of martial law and liberalization. In the November 1989 parliamentary elections, forty-year-old branch leader Bassam Haddadin won one of two Christian parliamentary seats (representing Zarqa) (al-Zabri 2000). Haddadin was reelected on leftist platforms in the 1993, 1997, and 2003 elections. During the 1991 Gulf War period, Hashd's leaders believed the party had the second largest popular following in Jordan, after the Islamic Action Front (Abu Rumman 2000). The party newspaper, *Al-Ahali*, experienced the "most severe early demonstration of the regime's security sensitivities" in September 1993, when Ramadan al-Rawashidah was arrested after writing an article that charged the security services with delaying physician access to Islamist political prisoners. His release on bail was followed by the arrest of Jamil al-Nimri, the paper's editor in chief, who was charged with "contempt of court" for publishing the article (Jones 1998, 12). The Jordan DF branch split in 1990, at the same time as the split in the DFLP central party. Most partisans agreed, however, that it was the split of 1993–94 that most damaged the branch.

"Coming Out": Conflicting Party Visions

The end of secret work under martial law caught the organization by surprise. As one former partisan noted, "The state was very, very smart in how it dealt with this [political liberalization]—the transitional period was like . . . someone who is sitting down, daydreaming, and you give him a slap in the face. He does not know what to do next." Many partisans found the 1970s and 1980s to be more rewarding than the post-1989 party experiences, which they referred to as "more complicated" or "more confusing."

On 31 July 1988, the same day that King Hussein announced that he would sever legal and administrative ties with the West Bank, the Majd leadership council held a meeting in Amman. A majority considered Hussein's decision a conspiracy, and a minority argued that whatever his goals and motivations, Majd should demand the end of martial law, reinstitution of the parliament, party freedom, and democracy since the basis for the existing police state was ostensibly the Israeli occupation of the West Bank (Amer 2000). The minority position was agreed upon, and Majd made these demands publicly.

The Majd leadership also began writing a program and preparing to establish a new political party (al-Nimri 2000). In May 1989, a month after the uprisings against decreased state subsidies, Majd held a secret conference during which approximately thirty leading partisans agreed to rename the organization Hashd (Hizb al-sha'b al-democrati al-urduni), the Jordanian People's Democratic Party. During this process, some Majd/Hashd leaders were surprised to find "a passage in the internal program of the party—because [the plan to announce a political party] was happening in coordination with the DFLP leadership in Damascus— . . . that stipulated that Majd was one of the DFLP's organizations. . . . [W]e were in an atmosphere of secret work—[but] we were wary of this article. . . . We said we would deal with it through dialogue" (al-Nimri 2000). The Hashd name had been circulated in *The New Jordan (Al-urdun al-jadeed)* magazine since the mid-1980s. The name change was significant because the Organization of the Democratic Front in Jordan (Majd) was now a "party," and the new name indicated no subservience to the DFLP in Damascus. On 25 July 1989, Hashd's establishment was announced at its first national party conference in Amman, as well as in Damascus.

The DFLP leadership in Damascus, particularly Hawatmeh and Abu Leila, were against the substantive transformation of Hashd from a branch of the DFLP to an independent Jordanian political party. Hashd's program was written by Hani Hourani and its bylaws by Hussein Abu Rumman, the latter under the close supervision of Abu Leila (Qais 'Abdul-Karim), who "wanted to . . . make it as controlled as possible, [including] democratic centralism, etcetera. . . . Then we [in the branch] would be compelled to say this is too much, this is too little, this

is not possible—to struggle with them to make it a more open program" (Hourani 2000).

The shift from Majd to Hashd was understood in two ways within the DFLP central party and Hashd. According to Ali Amer, general secretary of Hashd during this period, the first perspective was that this change was "superficial," and the second considered it to be substantive:

> And this [first] type of change was advocated by a number of comrades, especially in the DFLP leadership outside, who said that of course we must deal with the new conditions, but superficially, in front of people. We would say that this was an independent national party with its leadership and program, which allies with the DFLP, but it is not an extension of the DFLP. [But] there were a number of other comrades who believed that it was about time that Hashd become a fundamental part of the Jordanian democratic national movement. And in the end, the Jordanian national movement must be independent if we wanted this political movement to take its role in impacting democracy in Jordan. (2000)

The "superficial change" position reigned. During Hashd's establishing conference in July 1989, the "DFLP [in Damascus] announced . . . that this was an independent party, politically and organizationally, in front of all" (Abu Rumman 2000). The reality, however, was that "the Political Office of the DFLP was responsible for the Political Office of Hashd, the Central Committee of the DFLP was responsible for the Hashd Central Committee, and the General Conference of the DFLP was the final conference and conclusive over Hashd conferences" (al-Zabri 2000). These developments in Jordan were occurring at the same time as the conflict in the DFLP Political Office between Hawatmeh and 'Abd-Rabbo, although Hashd partisans and DFLP Central Committee members not in Damascus were unaware of it (Amer 2000; Hourani 2000; Abu Rumman 2000).

The urgency of the party disconnecting from the DFLP was tied to the Hashemite regime's requirement that political parties be economically and administratively independent of organizations based outside of Jordan. A delegation of Hashd leaders met with King Hussein in April 1990 and

announced its commitment to the Jordanian constitution and law. . . . At that time, of course, there was a trend among us that . . . we cannot work like this. We are being two-faced. You are secretly tied to another party, it is improper, even with the Jordanian people—the Jordanian civilian, how can you invite him to a Jordanian political party, and then they find out that—that point could not remain secret. . . . It is a secret to the person outside the party, but what about after he enters the party, he will discover that this party is tied to the DFLP? (al-Nimri 2000)

Branch Autonomy and Fragmentations

Branch partisans wanted an independent party in Jordan, with a "no-strings" budget from the central party, existing in a sort of confederate structure with the DFLP central party. By 1990, the separate disagreement in the DFLP central party Political Office became increasingly heated and public. The confederacy advocates in Hashd decided to "freeze" their own conflict with the central party. The eight to ten Hashd leaders who were members of the DFLP Central Committee attended its mid-February through early March 1990 meeting in Algiers. Most of them took Hawatmeh's position, while two stood with 'Abd-Rabbo. The fact that they participated at all had embarrassing consequences for Hashd in the Jordan political field:

> Upon our return, [representatives] agreed . . . that Hashd should remain outside the ongoing differences in the DFLP. . . . In the first meeting of the Hashd Central Committee after Algeria, we were surprised by the statement that we had a crisis in the party. . . . Some of the [slogans two Hashd individuals raised] were true—[lack of] internal democracy, etcetera. . . . But the manner in which the issue was presented made it seem like there was a conspiracy [to split the party]. And I was insistent about the unity of the party. So, we resisted a split, and there was a bitter struggle. Of course, it ended with the split of Hashd [on 10 August] 1990 [when the two factions held separate conferences]. . . . The Hashd split occurred in the setting of the larger split of the DFLP, and this was a political scandal. . . . So it is true that you [Hashd] are dependent on the DFLP. (al-Nimri 2000)

The splitting bloc in Jordan, which was variously referred to as the *tajdeed* (renewal) group, the "'Abd-Rabbo trend," or "Hashd-

independent" *(Hashd-al-mustaqil)*, included Ali Amer, Hani Hourani, and Noura 'Essawi. Although Hourani had long argued for branch independence, what became most important in his decision was Hawatmeh's apparent willingness to "finish with Yasser ['Abd-Rabbo], Saleh [Ra'fat], Abu al-'Abd ['Abdul-Latif], and Mamdouh [Nowfal]," four major figures in Palestinian and DFLP history (Hourani 2000). In its first party conference in 1991, the "renewal" group changed its name to the Jordanian Democratic Party (Hizb al-democrati al-urduni); Amer and Hourani were elected to its leadership positions. Hourani quit the new party soon after and was politically independent when interviewed in the summer of 2000. The Democratic Party created women, youth, and worker organizations, but had no money and few followers. In 1992, the party consolidated with two other splitting factions (from the Jordanian Communist Party and the Palestinian Worker's Party) to create the Democratic Progressive Party (Hizb al-taqadumi al-democrati); Ali Amer was elected general secretary and was reelected at the second party conference.

Before Hashd split in August 1990, tensions were exacerbated and partisans manipulated by advocates of both trends outside Jordan. Many of the "democratic renewal" partisans in Hashd, for example, did not want the Jordanian organization to be completely independent of the central party, but 'Abd-Rabbo reportedly encouraged them to split. In response, the Hawatmeh group in the central party multiplied the Hashd budget as a bribe in order to "close the path before any change in the internal situation" (Amer 2000). Many advocates of Hashd independence from the DFLP believed that 'Abd-Rabbo's support for that position was tactical, designed to strengthen his hand in the battle with Hawatmeh.

The "independence" advocates within Hashd who did not ally with the first splitting faction were promised by the DFLP leadership in Damascus that this issue would be addressed "after the other problems were resolved." These advocates wanted partial to complete independence from the DFLP, with at most a coordinating relationship between the two leaderships. In September 1990, members of the Hashd Central Committee attended a DFLP Central Committee meeting in Damascus that was "heated and bitter" regarding this issue. One of the partisans

who attended this meeting (a Jordanian woman who did not want to be identified) was against the idea of complete separation because "thus far there had not been a Palestinian state." She argued, however, that political liberalization in Jordan required the party to have "a Jordanian program." Others, including Jordanian Bassam Haddadin, reportedly used this meeting to argue for complete separation from the DFLP and dissolving Hashd's economic and political relationship with the central party.

The more Hashd leaders in Jordan raised the issue of party independence,

> the more pugnacious they [Hawatmeh and 'Abdul-Karim] became in their resistance to the idea, until the situation ended with a type of conspiracy—where people within the party were being rallied and mobilized [by the DFLP Political Office]. When the situation gets to this level, it is no longer pure or clean, because it is dependent on accusations of being too close to the Jordanian government, of opportunism, etcetera. (al-Nimri 2000)

During Hashd's 1991 party conference, two women were elected to its Political Office, 'Abla Abu 'Ilbeh and Majida al-Masri, and about six of the twenty-seven Central Committee members elected were women (including Abu 'Ilbeh, Haifa Jamal, al-Masri, Safaa' al-Qusus, and Siham al-Khalil).[8] One of them bitterly noted that it became easier for women to be elected to the Political Office as Hashd experienced factional problems.[9]

In the 1993 parliamentary campaigns, Hawatmeh supporters even worked against Abu Rumman's nomination in the Belqaa governorate and (unsuccessfully) put up Hawatmeh's brother to run against Haddadin for the Christian Zarqa seat because Abu Rumman and Haddadin supported Hashd independence (Abu Rumman 2000). Because this po-

8. Al-Masri was originally from Nablus but primarily worked in Jordan in the 1980s and 1990s. She had returned to the Occupied Territories by 2000 and was working with the Hawatmeh faction of the DF branch.

9. In 2000, women made up about 22 percent of Hashd's Central Committee and about one-third of its Political Office.

sition represented the view of the majority on the Hashd Central Committee, in preparation for the 1994 Hashd elections, the Hawatmeh-Abu Leila alliance in the DFLP Political Office ordered Central Committee members in Damascus who were also on the Hashd Central Committee to return to Amman to turn the tide their way by participating in the elections.

Hashd independence advocates argued that a united Left was necessary in democratizing Jordan. Central party leaders

> were theoretically very responsive, but in practice they resisted this. We reached a point of negotiations with other parties, with the democratic trend within the Communist Party and with the Jordanian Democratic Popular Unity Party [Hizb al-wihda al-sha'biyya al-dimaqrati al-urduni, affiliated with the PFLP]. We discussed these issues among each other for about one month. And we reached an agreement about a formulation that would unify us. Not one party, but the idea of some type of consolidation or grouping, and we agreed to everything until we were surprised when our general secretary [Taysir al-Zabri (Abu Yazan)] hindered and refused, of course in agreement with the DFLP in Damascus, saying forget this issue. . . . From that point, we felt that no project would work. In the end, someone upstairs will decide. . . . And as a result the [second] split occurred. (al-Nimri 2000)

Hussein Abu Rumman, Jamil al-Nimri, Bassam Haddadin, and others led the second split in September 1994 by boycotting the Hashd party conference and holding a press conference at the same time in the Jerusalem Hotel in Amman. Abu Rumman announced to the press the problems in Hashd and the illegitimacy of party elections; he was "excommunicated" from Hashd within a few days (Abu Rumman 2000). At the Hashd party conference itself, Abu Yazan (al-Zabri), the Hashd general secretary, apparently failed in his attempt to establish the principle of a confederation between the DFLP and an independent Hashd. Al-Zabri, according to Jamil al-Nimri,

> was not with us on the remainder of the issues. So [central party officials] made a promise to him [of future Hashd independence] in return for his position to remain against us. And it appears that he believed that we were deviating incorrectly, so he stood against us. The split occurred and he remained [in Hashd] for another year. He again pro-

posed this issue of Hashd independence [to the central party], and they said, "That's it, leave us alone. You either leave or accept the current reality." So he quit [in 1995]. It turned out that they had lied to him. (2000)[10]

In September 1995, the independence group helped to establish a new consolidated party named the Jordanian Unionist Democratic Party (Hizb al-democrati al-wahdawi) that included the Democratic Socialist Party (Hizb al-ishtiraki al-democrati), led by 'Issa Mdanat; the Democratic Progressive Party (Hizb al-taqadumi al-democrati), led by Ali Amer; and the Arab Democratic Party, an independent nationalist *(qawmi)* trend formerly affiliated with the Iraqi Ba'thists; the group also included members of the PFLP-affiliated Popular Unity Party (Amer 2000; Abu Rumman 2000; al-Nimri 2000).[11] There was no money to establish party offices, hire organizers, or pay for newspaper advertisements, and partisans were unwilling for the new party to be beholden to any benefactor. The splitting cadres were also faced with personal financial difficulties that compelled them either to find paid political positions or to reestablish themselves in professions or business:

> No one had money and many people had been employed full-time by the party, so then the issue became how to make a living. And people had aged and they had families, so they needed to work and live.[12] The [new] party could not secure material protection to the people. Some of the people who were with us went back to the West Bank. . . . Some of them stayed with us, but gradually they distanced themselves from organized political work. They remained [committed] politically, intellectually, etcetera, but in the end their livelihood pulled them and the despair—the lack of a work agenda and the political conditions. (al-Nimri 2000)

10. When Taysir al-Zabri left Hashd in 1995, Salem al-Nahhas, a Jordanian, became the new general secretary.

11. Although Amer led the establishing conference for the Unionist Democratic Party and was asked to lead it, he announced to its preparatory committee that he wanted to return to Palestine since he had an opportunity to do so (2000).

12. When interviewed, al-Nimri worked as a columnist and editor for the independent Jordanian daily *Al-'Arab al-Yawm.*

In June 1998, the Jordanian Unionist Democratic Party was restructured and renamed the Jordanian Democratic Party of the Left (Hizb al-yasaar al-democrati al-urduni). Mousa al-Ma'aitah was elected as head, 'Issa Mdanat was named honorary president by acclamation, and Jamil al-Nimri was elected president of its sixty-eight-member National Council (Ciriaci 1998b).

Al-Nimri believed that democratization benefited conservative political forces rather than the Left:

> The two sides who did not want democracy—the Muslim Brotherhood and the state—gained the benefits and the fruits. This is a bitter result. . . . The problem is that the Left could not confront the situation with new ideas and horizons. . . . Maybe this required attempting to build a larger unified leftist and democratic movement, and leaving behind the old party methods, ideological rigidity, and being positive that you are correct. This is similar to religious understandings of the world—you own the correct truth, and you consider any opposition dangerous and initiated by bad motives. (2000)

A former partisan (a Jordanian man) believed that the DFLP would not allow Hashd's independence because it viewed its presence in Jordan as providing the DFLP leverage within the PLO, given the large proportion of Palestinians in the country (Ghanma 2000). Another former partisan (a Jordanian woman) similarly believed that Majd/Hashd was merely a bargaining chip for the DFLP in Damascus: "When the DFLP enters into politics and negotiations, they can say, 'We have a fighting arm in Jordan so we can bargain with something.' It is no more a party that represents the Jordanian people, whatever is written in *Al-Ahali* [the Hashd newspaper], whatever announcements they make, whatever program they announce." A third former partisan (also Jordanian) believed that Hashd should have been granted independence from the DFLP after 1989, although she did not support the "partialities, gossiping, [and] showing no respect for the party or members' differing views" that occurred on both sides. She also sounded the note of disrespect for Jordanians: "We suggested in those days that there be independence, this party is Jordanian and this [the DFLP in Damascus] is a Palestinian organization, and have shared structures—each party has these structures—but not to . . . treat this party as a facade for a Pales-

tinian organization. This undervalued the Jordanian people and showed hegemony over them. . . . I started to feel, actually, that we were made fools of."

Hashd lost significant support and many partisans after the second split. Even partisans who remained noted an atmosphere of malaise given the personal accusations that flew, state limitations on political liberty, economic crises, and developments in Iraq and the Occupied Territories. Partisans continued to be threatened by the state for expressing political opinions contrary to the regime line or, in the case of the Hashd newspaper, reporting on government corruption or bread riots (Lust-Okar 2001, 554).

From the mid-1990s Hashd opposed the Oslo process; protested state repression, normalization between Jordan and Israel, and a proposed U.S.-Jordan free trade agreement; challenged U.S. sanctions and bellicosity with respect to Iraq; and opposed the one-person, one-vote electoral system, given its bias toward tribally affiliated and other regime-supportive candidates (see Hashd's Web site, http://www.hashd-ahali.org.jo). After the 1997 elections, which it boycotted, Hashd was part of a coalition that unsuccessfully argued for a proportional parliamentary electoral system whereby, according to Nahhas, "each political group, coalition, or tribal group would get a percentage of parliamentary seats equal to the percentage of votes it obtained in the poll" (Ciriaci 1998a).

Alienation, Gendered Betrayals, and Desires in "Democratic" Jordan

Women former partisans were much more likely than men to discuss the destruction of relationships that accompanied movement demise, feelings of betrayal, and the impact of political work on family life and children. Women also discussed social alienation, gender-related regression, and deep regret with the relative democratization of Jordan and the changes that followed in Majd/Hashd. Their narratives speak to the impoverishment of opposition politics in Jordan during the "liberal" period, lack of resolution in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, unemployment and increased economic suffering, and the continuing influence of gender-conservative religious, tribal, and state politics. A former

woman partisan believed that the end of secret work and alienation from political parties had led some to searches for other sources of attachment and belonging:

> We used to find ourselves through these parties and groupings. . . . Now you are disconnected from your clan, your party, professional associations, women's organizations. . . . Because of this, some return to religion, the things that relax them. Or they return to the clan, if the clan accepts him and does not say, "You at one time did this." . . . Or what might happen is what happened to [another] young man [when his father died and he found no social support from his leftist party], who had a nervous breakdown and is in terrible shape.

Another former partisan, a Palestinian, discussed her own alienation, isolation, and occasional depression since the end of her political involvement, although she clearly experienced her activism and party socialization as lasting in their impact:

> The party taught us—we lived a life where we created relations with people we wanted to create relations with, who we propose relations to, who we can organize into the party. We had no basis for purely social relations. My neighbors often say to me, "Why don't you come over for visits? Come drink a cup of coffee." I go down, but I do not like sitting with them—those sittings. I feel that I am foreign in relation to them because there is nothing that brings us together. . . . My children always ask me why I do not work. . . . I tell them there is no opportunity to work. . . . Many people have suggested that I nominate myself for parliamentary elections, but I refused. If Toujan Faisal could not be successful in this country . . . Again, communism and Marxism affected our lives. I do not believe in the many superstitions, religions, and things like that around us. I do not believe any of it. . . . I went through a very difficult stage where I had no connections, and I cannot relate to people and the society very well. This gives you a psychological situation of isolation and sometimes depression. . . . It comes sometimes because I am not used to just sitting around without doing anything. Sometimes I lapse into this, but then I say, no, let me resist this. Maybe in this period none of us can do anything.

One partisan believed that the source of the problems in the Jordan branch was returning DFLP partisans who had largely worked outside

Jordan in the 1970s and 1980s and benefited from a system of party patronage: "They did not work as much as us in the country! . . . They came on their own whim, and they took over the situation as leaders. This is wrong. . . . They . . . came to an excellent material situation, better than our situations—they were paid [by the party] rent, telephone bills, health insurance, expenses—more than us who used to work here. . . . We were like the beehive here." There was an unspoken gendered dimension to this complaint, since the partisans who returned to Jordan and party authority in Hashd were all men, as were most of the former partisans who gained positions and influence in the parliament, media, or civic sphere in the liberalization period. The "beehive" of partisans displaced was disproportionately composed of women.

Similarly, two former Jordanian women partisans directly criticized party men in Jordan during the liberalization period. One contrasted their commitment, courage, and dignity under the harsh conditions of imprisonment and other repression in the 1980s with their situations in the 1990s: "After . . . you knew the individuals in . . . some prosperity, . . .with the radiance of power—the situation has changed fundamentally." Another was explicit about the rise of opportunism with the end of the police state:

> Democracy allowed the emergence of the desires within each person. It turned out that a person was not working for the interest of the party and struggle, as much as each person wanted to benefit as an individual. . . . [For those whose values changed,] you cannot hate [them]. And you cannot talk about [them]. But you cannot be with [them]. . . . You would prefer not to remain in the party. Because it becomes a situation where every person you see might have a price. (Naffaa' 2000)

A Palestinian woman former partisan discussed her sense of betrayal, shock, and anguish, the latter shared with her husband, as the branch fragmented in the 1990s:

> We thought that it was impossible for the DFLP to split. . . . The last thing we imagined is that there might be a split in the DFLP. We used to think that it was immunized against everything. It was perfect. I do not know what are the imaginings, feelings, and concerns of

the struggler—he feels that this front is ours, it gathered us—one does not imagine that it might make a mistake. I remember that there was an evening where my husband left a meeting like a crazy one—he was crying, crying, screaming—he could not imagine what was happening. . . . I felt that I was betrayed by a party to which I sacrificed my years, my youth, my children, my husband's [three-year] imprisonment—I was called in by the intelligence forces more than once. Once they came and took me from work. . . . We had no stability in our lives. We struggled with full conviction. We sacrificed to the extent that as dear as our children are, we . . . did not see them for days. . . . But in the end, it turned out to be all for nothing, for me. My husband, of course, has a completely different conviction. But for me, I lost fourteen years for nothing. . . . It was a very painful period, and I want to forget it—forget it completely. [FH: And your husband does not feel that way?] No, no, he is still convinced that this is a period that will pass and the parties will return, they will have a renaissance and undertake the role that they must. . . . I really doubt it.

The National Identity Question and "Regionalism" for Hashd

Seven of the eighteen former and continuing Majd/Hashd partisans interviewed were "Jordanian Jordanian," and six of the seven were from Christian families (originating from Karak, Zarqa, Husn, and Salt).[13] Of the eleven others, ten were Palestinians from west of the Jordan River, and one was a Syrian-origin woman married to Palestinian man (whose husband was a high-ranking Fateh partisan). At least ten of the partisans were Sunni Muslim.

The Jordanian respondents argued that communal distinctions between Jordanian and Palestinian were not important for Jordanians, particularly students, before 1970, because of a commitment to the Palestine question; a strong sense of pan-Arabism; solidarity with democratic, revolutionary, and anticolonial movements; and strong marital bonds between Palestinians and Jordanians. A Jordanian former Majd/Hashd leader who became active in the DFLP while a university

13. I suspect that Jordanian Christians were under- rather than overrepresented in the group I interviewed given the family names of other former activists whom it was suggested I interview.

student in the late 1960s, and married a Palestinian, said that Jordanian university students were mobilized into the PRM without difficulty between 1967 and 1970. Another Jordanian former partisan stated that in addition to supporting a just resolution to the Palestinian struggle, he and others believed that advocating on the Palestine question "would lead to a weakening of the political system in Jordan, and in the end, this would create a ground for a national democratic organization that opposed imperialism in Jordan" (Hourani 2000). A third former partisan active from the party's early years stressed that a certain kind of Jordanian leftist was always attracted to the DFLP and its organizations:

> From the beginning of the DFLP in Jordan . . . the classic Marxists or Communists were with the Jordanian Communist Party. The DFLP was the refuge of the [Jordanian] new leftists. . . . Of course they remained with the DFLP after [the 1970 war], and when the issue of creating the party in Jordan occurred they were the cadres of this party. . . . Majd/Hashd. . . , in comparison with the other parties, included the most Jordanians and Palestinians by a large margin. It was very rare to find Jordanians in the Palestinian parties. And in the Jordanian parties the Palestinians are few. (al-Nimri 2000)

When I asked another Jordanian former partisan how she negotiated the Jordan-Palestine issue as a Jordanian Christian in a country where many Christians view the Hashemites as protectors of their religious minority status and many Jordanians view Palestinians as a threat to their political and economic power, she responded:

> The people are intermixed with each other here. They are in a web [*naseej*]—Jordanian-Palestinian. . . . [Programmatically,] you are aiming to gain benefits for everyone in Jordan, without exception, whether Jordanian or Palestinian. . . . Our [party] program supported liberating Palestinian land, the right of return, with compensation. . . . And . . . it is not as if being a Jordanian gave one superiority. On the contrary, if a Jordanian has an interest with a specific class and had specific conditions that supported the system, he would get to specific positions. If he did not have this, whether he is Jordanian or Palestinian, he will be crushed in Jordan. (Naffaa' 2000)

Her husband, a former partisan, argued that during the 1990 divisions in the DFLP, Hashd branch independence "was exploited particularly by

the Yasser 'Abd-Rabbo people so that the split would happen. . . . So in practicality, they played on regionalism, despite the fact that there were Palestinians for independence and Palestinians for a tie [with the DFLP], and similarly, among Jordanians within the party, there were people on both sides" (Ghanma 2000).

Hani Hourani, a former partisan who was in Damascus for the most part through 1989, highlighted an issue referred to by other partisans who believed that Jordanians were often devalued and underestimated, even by leftists:

> There was an unstated point of view [within the central party], concealed, internal [batiniyya], that Jordanians cannot do anything. Jordanians do not create very organized movements. . . . A stereotype of Jordanians as followers of the king, etcetera. . . . I was against this position and . . . knew that [Jordanians] did not want to provoke the system and in the end they wanted to be on the safe side. So when the events of April 1989 occurred [the intifada in Jordan] . . . [DFLP leaders outside] said, "This is something small." And we would meet every day, and I would tell them, "This is a big fire." They would say, "No, no." . . . After that, they felt . . . that something important and Jordanian had occurred, especially when the king fired Zayd al-Rifa'i, the uprising spread to every area in Jordan, and there were demands and resistance. It appeared that there was a Jordanian people that has something that [it] wants to say; everything in the country was not support for the king. . . . At that time, the DFLP leaders in Damascus—they are smart and very pragmatic—in order to take advantage of the situation, they quickly determined that as a result of our work and struggles we must announce a political party that is not DFLP. And this was important in order to keep us [Jordanian DF partisans] happy, or even for us to remain in the party. (2000)

One former leading partisan explicitly expressed the fear that a "solution" to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict would be the *tawteen* (permanent resettlement) of Palestinian refugees from Syria and Lebanon in Jordan, an issue that was salient since the Camp David II talks were under way in Washington, D.C., as I was interviewing her:

> Jordan is excluded from these [talks], of course, and it will bear the burden of its results, whether negative or positive. . . . And, on the

contrary, we who struggled in political organizations during the days of martial law, as Jordanians, our first concern was the Palestinian issue, and we forgot the Jordanian concerns. We always gave Palestine the priority. This current stage is very transitional and very dangerous. . . . It is possible that Jordan will pay a price. . . . No more in Jordan is there this issue of national unity . . . because it ends up being about the well-being of Palestinians in Jordan, this is what national unity ends up meaning.

This former partisan criticized parliamentary delegate Hamadeh Fara'neh's position, which she characterized as arguing for Palestinian quotas in government structures in Jordan.[14] She was apparently referring to press statements in July 2000 in which Fara'neh demanded that the government of the new prime minister, 'Ali Abu al-Ragheb, "propose strategies to insure a better representation of Jordanians of Palestinian origin in the country's institutions," including Mu'ta University, the interior ministry, and military, security, and intelligence forces (Hamdan 2000a).[15] In mid-July, Fara'neh called for dissolution of the appointed upper house since it did not include enough Jordanian Palestinians (Hamdan 2000b). For this former partisan, Fara'neh's position raised the specter of the 1970–71 civil war, when "Palestinians . . . present in the Jordanian army . . . focused their guns toward their Jordanian colleagues."

Many Jordanians viewed Fara'neh's statements as evidencing a Palestinian resettlement conspiracy between Fateh and Israeli leaders. This woman partisan argued for the political Jordanization of Palestinians with the establishment of a Palestinian state (I conducted this interview two months before the eruption of the al-Aqsa intifada in the territories): "And when the right of return occurs . . . the Palestinian

14. Fara'neh is a Palestinian who was elected to represent Amman in 1997 but was not part of the 2003 parliament. He was criticized in the Jordan press for supporting the Oslo Accords and normalization with Israel, meeting with Palestinian Knesset (Israeli parliament) members, and inviting some of these Knesset deputies to Jordan.

15. According to its Web site (http://www.muta.edu.jo/), Mu'ta University, based in Karak, was "founded in 1981 by a Royal Decree as a national institution for civil and military higher education."

who does not want to go to Palestine will become a Jordanian. You need to stop speaking of quotas. . . . Because you as a Palestinian, if you want your national Palestinian identity, then you need to return to Palestine, but it is not your right to stay here and call for a quota for Palestinians when you have an existing state."

When I asked him about communal tensions in Jordan, Nayef Hawatmeh criticized calls for the political disfranchisement of Palestinians living in Jordan by Transjordanian exclusivist nationalists. More surprisingly, he also worried about Jordanian national erasure through Palestinian resettlement in Jordan and the country's possible future incorporation into a "greater Palestine":

> We proposed a view of rebuilding the Palestinian-Jordanian relations on the basis of a Palestinian state and a Jordanian state and later on by having a free voluntary choice of starting a federation, between two [sovereign] countries. . . . [Right now] there is a sovereign Jordanian state, but there is not a Palestinian state. And because the Palestinian state would be a country for any Palestinian, no matter where they are, it can express their national, cultural, and other needs, as was mentioned in the Declaration of Palestinian Independence in 1988. Likewise, we must propose to the Jordanian government from now until the establishment of the Palestinian state . . . that [it] must grant the right of the Palestinians in Jordan to express their Palestinian identity and their Palestinian personality. Since they are a part, an inseparable component of the Palestinian people. And they must be granted the Right of Return as a collective, not individually. . . . The Wadi 'Araba Accord [the 1994 Jordanian-Palestinian normalization of relations agreement], clause eight, speaks with absolute clarity about resettlement [of Palestinians] in Jordan. . . . The Jordanian government must make an effort to rebuild Jordanian-Palestinian relations using new foundations: the right of Palestinian people to self-determination, no matter where they are located. . . . This proposal clashed with Palestinian appeals that state—this is the Fateh school—that those Palestinians [in Jordan] are a strategic reserve in our hands. . . , ten or fifteen years down the road, they will become the majority in [Jordan]. Consequently, Palestine becomes the West Bank, the Gaza Strip or what becomes of it, in addition to Jordan. . . . Its name will become Palestine. This theory is like that of the king of Jordan, but completely reversed. . . . The theory of annexation . . . is

refused. One group of people cannot solve their problems at the expense of another group. (2000)

Such narratives illustrate the struggles in Jordan over economic resources and political power and related definitional battles over identity and the nation, all complicated by the continuing Arab-Israeli conflict. They also exemplify the success of Hashemite regime strategies and discourses, which are effective only if the manner in which they fundamentally structure identity, as well as social, political, and economic life, is invisible. These narratives are also cautionary tales for Palestinian organizations working in dispersed fields of action: Palestinian nationalist claims will inevitably compete with other nationalist claims. Conflict is inevitable if Palestinian and Jordanian concerns are constructed in zero-sum terms.

Conclusion

After 1971, most Palestinian central party structures were located outside the major areas of Palestinian population concentrations because of state restrictions (from Israel and Jordan, in this case). This dispersal has *always* contributed to intraparty tensions over "local" autonomy and the political and strategic directions of these organizations. Not incidentally, these centrifugal tendencies have often been structured by the respective political fields within which these organizations existed. With changes in local, regional, and international politics beginning in 1988, both the Jordan and the Occupied Palestinian Territories Democratic Front branches experienced divisions over whether the system of geographically distributed satellite branches subordinated to a central party authority continued to make sense. For both branches, state-bounded conditions trumped a transnationally organized protest model, indicating the continuing relevance of state legal power and local protest histories.

Particularly striking was the disfranchisement of women in the Occupied Territories branch, as Palestinian politics moved from mobilization to state building. The Jordan branch was divided regarding how to define the nation as Jordan instituted limited liberalization. Although

what occurred in different historical moments and fields is too complicated to summarize in a brief conclusion, one important reason for the gendered and national identity dimensions that played out as each branch fragmented is that even though such differences can be subsumed into a larger project for a period, they come to the fore when the economic, political, and other stakes increase. This situation occurred in the 1990s for partisans in Jordan and the Occupied Territories, as demobilization and state-focused institution building and opposition became the primary organizational models.

Concluding Reflections

*Gender and Women in the Democratic Front
in Lebanon, Syria, and Kuwait, 1970s–1990s*

In the early years, I tell you with the highest trust, [the DFLP] was a Palestinian organization and in the end I wanted to fight. Period. I wanted to offer something to my country.

—Samar Mahmoud, interview, July 2000

DURING FIELD RESEARCH IN 2000, I conducted interviews with men and women who had party histories in Syria and Lebanon, as well as other Democratic Front fields. One of the women partisans interviewed was Samar Mahmoud, excerpted above, the child of 1948 refugees from Jenin who was a DFLP guerrilla in Lebanon after 1982 and a lawyer in Jordan when I interviewed her. In many respects, Mahmoud differed little from Democratic Front partisans who were active in the Occupied Territories and Jordan. Her statement demonstrates that women's subjectivities are not only shaped by a gendered axis and location. Gender mattered, however, sometimes dramatically, in party politics, although how it mattered was very much related to the nature of a political field in a given period. This concluding chapter reflects on these issues in other fields of DFLP operation.

Because a significant impetus for the 2000 field research was to explore the extent to which women had power in various DF branches, I asked partisans with multiply located party histories about these issues in all their geographic fields of experience. The claims in this final

chapter are thus necessarily partial, since I did not conduct systematic field research on DFLP branches and affiliated women's organizations in Syria, Lebanon, or Kuwait. The discussion of the Lebanon Democratic Front branch experience is particularly important to recognize as a fragment, since the "herstories" of the women who are the focus of the accounts below are missing. Nevertheless, the pieces are valuable in compensation for the scant attention paid in scholarly analyses to the gendered and sexualized aspects of Palestinian resistance politics. They reveal the various ways in which militarism and sexuality are often intertwined (Enloe 2000) and point to some significant differences in DF gender and sexual dynamics in comparison to the Occupied Territories and Jordan. As such, they further fill out the comparative story and demonstrate how political fields can help to shape gender and sexual dynamics.

Shughul Niswan in Lebanon

> "War Movements, like other movements, acquire lives of their own that envelop their members with their own logic and rationale, often divorced from any consideration of what life might be like after the war ends. Women, just like men, found themselves part of a struggle that transcended their everyday lives and concerns. More than men, their participation in the war entailed greater personal sacrifices and dangers." (Lazreg 1994, 119)

Although Lazreg's statement refers to Algerian women's involvement in their struggle for independence from the French, the point is relevant to the experiences of many women in the Lebanon war of 1975–90. Democratic Front politics in Lebanon in the 1970s and 1980s were quite militarized, as was the situation for the Palestinian resistance movement in Lebanon as a whole. This point is particularly striking in comparison to the Occupied Territories branch experience, where resistance predominantly focused on mobilization through the building of mass-based, nonviolent organizations. The Lebanon DF experience also differed from the Jordan branch experience, since martial law made mass-based organizing difficult and militia work impossible in the latter case.

Mamdouh Nowfal was a longtime DFLP Political Office member and military leader who worked in Lebanon from 1973 until 1988. He stated that DFLP and Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine women in Lebanon were in the vanguard of the military struggle, particularly between 1982 and 1988. Nowfal also pointed to a more open sexual environment in Lebanon; "international relations" among leftists at the social level (particularly in universities and major cities) that were conducive to multiple gender, sexual, and political possibilities; and a party commitment to violating gender norms to the point that it sometimes produced a backlash from some sectors:

> [Conservative] women's roles were not imposed on us in the Lebanon experience. Women in Lebanon are more free than women in Jordan, or Syria, etcetera. When we went to Lebanon, we found that Palestinian women were open in their relations. Second, these women quickly responded to our work: the building of the organization, military work, political work. She got involved quickly and actively: the daughter of the refugee camp and the Palestinian woman living in cities. Women university students also worked. . . . For example, I met my wife in that context. She was studying at AUB [American University in Beirut], and we had an organization at AUB at that time. . . . We were an international organization—we had international [mixed-gender] camps, and we used to have European girls come—Swedish, Norwegian, German—all those New Left people that existed at that time. . . . This allowed for wider possibilities. We trained groups from Germany, Ireland, Iran, and Oman—we worked as an international Left. This had a role in attracting women. And we had a bit of liberation in a way that was explosive, attempting to break all traditions in relation to women and their roles. This was something that distinguished the DFLP. . . . In the refugee camps we suffered for a period because many people used to say, "My uncle (*'ami*), in the DFLP, the cadre does not distinguish between his girlfriend and his sister." Because there was a campaign against us as an open, gender-mixed Marxist organization. (Nowfal 2000)

When asked more specifically about DFLP women's military involvement in Lebanon, Nowfal answered that "we tried to accommodate women" in the military forces and noted that many opportunities for involvement were available to them. In addition to their work in

women's and popular organizations, DFLP women had a significant presence in communication apparatuses (between military units), the administration of military work (in food and equipment storehouses, maintaining archives, and registration), and services (cooking in military locations) (Nowfal 2000). All of these roles are military extensions of gendered domestic responsibilities. A few women, he added, also had "military responsibilities," or engaged in actual battles, particularly after 1982, when large numbers of men were arrested by the Israelis or forced to leave the country. One of these women, Samar Mahmoud, postponed her college studies in 1982 to fight with the DFLP militia for the following six years in Lebanon. She admitted that at that time, her choice to work with the DFLP was driven less by ideology and more by militancy and her friendships with people active in the party (her siblings were active in Fateh and the PFLP): "One wanted to carry a gun and be with the military and *fidaiyyeen*" (Mahmoud 2000).

Though women in all parties became more involved in military work in Lebanon, in addition to the less dangerous activities such as prisoner support, "at least from what I lived, DFLP women had a special prominence" in a particular kind of military work, according to a man partisan. These operations, which were referred to among men cadres as "women's work" in colloquial Arabic *(shughul niswan)*, in the pre-1982 period largely focused on having foreign women solidarity workers and Arab women with non-Arab passports transport explosives and other weapons into the occupied Palestinian territories for storage. After 1982, DFLP "women's work" in Lebanon was more likely to include sexual responsibilities.

The best-known case among DFLP partisans in Lebanon was that of "Wafaa," a Lebanese woman partisan who in April 1983 lured an Israeli soldier, Samir As'ad, from Israel to Lebanon:

> All the young men used to say we do not want this girl. She is a slut. Where have you brought her from? . . . But this girl was able to kidnap an Israeli soldier. She brought him in her car. . . . She penetrated more than twenty checkpoints, and how did she bring him? She deepened a relationship with him. And he wanted to make love to her. She told him, okay, but not here, [it has to be] in Lebanon. He did not

know Lebanon, etcetera. Of course, there are many more details to this story, of how it happened. And then she told us, "Welcome, he's downstairs."

The DFLP unsuccessfully attempted to trade As'ad, while still alive, for DFLP political prisoners in Israel. As'ad was killed while in captivity in Lebanon, reportedly "in an Israeli air raid on Rabbit Island near the northern city of Tripoli" (Reuters 1991). In September 1991, the Israelis and the DFLP agreed, through the mediation of the International Committee of the Red Cross, to a trade in which the DFLP's 'Ali Abu Hilal was allowed to reenter the territories in return for As'ad's body.

In a similar story, during the Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon, private Israeli companies began paving streets and paths for Israeli military forces. Among the workers in one of these companies was a Palestinian man from a major city in Israel "whose parents told him that his uncle's house was in the refugee camp of 'Ayn al-Hilweh." When this young man found his uncle's house in Lebanon,

> he bought them gifts and got to know his uncle's daughter. She was a member of the DFLP. She sent a letter saying I have a cousin who is flirting with me. I said, come here. She came to Biqaa' . . . and I told her, go with him. . . . She walked with him. The relationship developed. . . . I said, disclose to him. Tell him, "My cousin, I work with the DFLP, and we want to transfer weapons." He said, "No problem, but will you give me a gun?" She said yes. And this driver, a cousin who fell in love with his cousin, smuggled many loads of weapons for us through this girl. . . . This young man was arrested and the situation was revealed and I am currently searching—determined to go visit him and see what his situation is and what is the news from his family.

DFLP men and women in these cases took advantage of hegemonic symbolic and ideological systems that assume women have little violent or political intent (Aretxaga 1997, 38–39, 66–68). In the process, they constituted masculinities and femininities that both subverted and reproduced existing gender categories. A former DF man partisan related an additional story of *shughul niswan*, not necessarily requiring sexual relations, but similarly premised on and made possible by masculinist as-

sumptions that underestimated the political intentionality of women. In this case, a Lebanese woman "opened a store in Beirut selling Israeli products. But this girl transported ten loads of weapons from here [Lebanon to Israel for Palestinians]. . . . This girl, as a result of a technical mistake [in which a male comrade revealed her role under interrogation], was caught by the Lebanese Kataib forces." The woman disappeared after she was turned over to the Israelis by their Kataib allies.

DFLP women's political engagement in Lebanon was not limited to sexualized "women's work," of course. Indeed, militarism appeared to be an arena that engaged a limited number of women, particularly before the expulsion of PLO forces in 1982. The PLO did not encourage women in Lebanon to fight, although the organization and the General Union of Palestinian Women provided or arranged for girls and women to receive scout and military training (Peteet 1991, 151–52).[1]

Respondents at various points referred to many high-ranking women partisans and former partisans who were leaders in a variety of branch sectors in Lebanon since the 1970s.[2] Nadia Hijjawi (Umm Hussam), a DFLP partisan in Lebanon from 1976 through 1984 who was active in Syria through early 1989 and also had significant organizing experience in Jordan, described Lebanon as an "armed field" with battles and invasions that structured all nationalist women's activities accordingly. But their tasks were primarily to support fighters and families under siege, rather than to engage in direct military struggle. DFLP women in the Beirut refugee camps and later in southern Lebanon were active in voluntary first aid and nursing for the wounded, for example. Hijjawi also shared a story of DFLP women partisans who "took on the affairs of the home" and reared in shifts the young son of a woman parti-

1. For general discussion of Palestinian women's military activity, involvement in PLO movements, and "mass work" in Lebanon before 1982, see Peteet 1991, 149–56, 143–48, 115–19.

2. DFLP Political Office member Abu Leila, for example, noted that the recently reelected leader of the DFLP youth organization in Lebanon was a woman named Layla al-'Alee' (Abdul-Karim 2000).

san whom the Syrian authorities extensively delayed from reentering Lebanon after she attended a conference in Algeria (2000).

Palestinian women have had little choice but to be active, particularly in refugee camps, since war and the enemy soldier frequently entered their neighborhoods and homes. In turn, women's domestic labor was frequently mobilized by the movement to serve the Palestinian nationalist project (Peteet 1991, 183). The militarization of the Lebanon field produced or reinforced a number of gendered positions from which women could be nationalist actors: caretakers of the wounded and feeders of the starving; sexualized subjects whose success depended on manipulating Israeli assumptions that women embody little political or violent intent; and, even when they donned a military uniform, participants in tasks that arguably extended their domestic responsibilities.

These activities often transform, through rearticulation, definitions of appropriate femininity and motherhood and are important ways in which women insert themselves into male-dominated resistance struggles that often attempt to exclude them. Nevertheless, they often reproduce and are premised upon women's *political* invisibility, as argued by the late Begoña Aretxaga in her discussion of a Northern Irish Republican Army woman's deception of a British soldier: "Anne's . . . resistance is predicated on . . . the assumption that inasmuch as women do not belong to the public arena, when they walk the streets they are not really there. . . . [W]hat the soldiers see is precisely what they miss" (1997, 39). On their own, moreover, there is little evidence that such gendered resistance strategies during war translate into political authority and power for women in postwar periods.

The Culture Politics of DF Women in Syria and Kuwait

In comparison to the militarized field of Lebanon, in Syria, mobilizing women included "lectures, seminars, and educational meetings—the focus was on education." As this former woman activist continued, Syria, unlike Lebanon, was not a field where they "needed women to protest and to open their homes to the displaced" (Hijjawi 2000). Both the Syrian and Kuwaiti branch experiences of women partisans, probably in response to the state politics of each field and the distance of

Palestinian refugees and residents from historic Palestine, seemed particularly active in reinforcing Palestinian national identity, maintaining national heritage, and encouraging cultural survival, especially in the 1980s and 1990s.

Nihaya Mohammad is a DF partisan who was born to Palestinian refugee parents in Syria. She joined the ANM while a primary student, moved to the PFLP following its establishment in December 1967, and was part of the splitting group that joined the (P)DFLP in early 1969. She led the DF branch in Syria at various points in the 1970s and 1980s and helped to establish the party-affiliated Democratic Women's Organization in 1978. In the early 1980s, she said, the DF women's organization leaders asked themselves:

> What is activism, what are the primary problems of Palestinian women in Syria? She has the general national concern, of course. . . . But there were also attempts to focus on her specific issues. . . . The most prominent of [the activities we developed] were those that focused on the popular Palestinian heritage in all its aspects, whether embroidery—or we made something called the "Divinity Room" [Majd], which conserved the old things—meaning, a *kushan* from the old country, a key, an old artifact. We developed this into a kind of museum for popular Palestinian clothing. And then later we crowned this with something that was very affecting, which was a presentation of Palestinian clothing. . . . For each Palestinian city, we focused on its prominent characteristics, and we presented it in a theater presentation; it is recorded on a cassette that we called "Palestinian Dress in the Light of the Sun." Each city had its most prominent songs, clothing, and this was one of the most beautiful presentations we organized during that period. . . . We did this, my dear, in 1983. (Mohammad 2000)

Mohammad was among the Palestinian activists told by the Syrian government that they were not allowed to return following their attendance of the 1987 Palestine National Council meeting in Algiers. She reentered Syria without permission (she had three young children), was arrested, and was deported until she was allowed to return in April 1989. When I asked her whether the political situation in Syria was more open to Palestinian women's than men's activism, she noted the always existing "ceiling for popular and political work in Syria" in terms

of the state's relationship to the PLO and its suborganizations. The widest political latitude was provided to these organizations when they worked in Palestinian refugee camps. The DF women's organization regularly held commemoration fairs to celebrate International Women's Day and the founding of the DFLP, for example, but had to get state permission.

Mohammad also made clear that partisan women's success in mobilizing did not translate into gender-proportional leadership representation in the Syrian DF branch or in the DFLP Central Committee and Political Office, which were located in Damascus. DF women who organized in the student, youth, and labor sectors in Syria were much less likely than men to reach positions of leadership in party apparatuses (Mohammad 2000).

Ruwayda Muhammad Hasan (Umm Tha'ir), a 1967 refugee who joined the (P)DFLP in Jordan as a secondary student in 1969 and was compelled to leave after the September 1970 phase of the civil war, spent most of the remainder of her political career as an activist in Kuwait (which she was forced to leave for Jordan in 1992 following the Gulf War). She argued that in Jordan, unlike Kuwait, political organizing was more difficult because "they limited us to thinking about our survival *(luqmat al-'aysh),*" or how to acquire "the food to live." In Kuwait, in contrast, the focus was on cultural survival and providing economic assistance to Palestinian communities:

> During the . . . intifada [in the territories], we did not sleep in our homes. We had freedoms, from our husbands, our homes, family, people, [and] environment. . . . I was a member of the administrative body of the Palestinian Women's Federation. The Palestinian student who could not study, . . .[w]e would send him outside the country to study. And we would make sure he studied in private schools in Kuwait. They pressured us in Kuwait that your [Palestinian] children will not be educated in government schools. Your children must go to private schools. So we didn't want ignorance to arise among us. . . . And we even began to help other Arab people to study. . . . [E]very once in a while, we would organize a weeklong festival for the intifada. We would gather many foods and other things [primarily from Palestinian families], and we would talk about the intifada—we called

these events *tabaq al-intifada tabaq khayr* ["the plate of the uprising is a plate of bounty"]. . . . The events of Kuwait occurred, we became hungry, they kicked us out, and killed our children, we came to Jordan. (2000)

Gender Politics and Field Conditions

This chapter provides additional evidence that the political and other circumstances that were relevant in different geographic fields were important in defining DF women's political work and strategies. In addition, conflicts over women's political influence within party apparatuses existed in a number of branches, although they were sublimated until the 1990s. Finally, the mobilization strategies and forms of protest that were prominent in the different fields of DF activism shaped different *gendered subjectivities* among partisan women.

The latter is suggested by the feminist gender orientations of DF women partisans who were concurrently active in the Occupied Territories DF branch and the PFWAC, in comparison to women of similar rank whose formative partisan experiences largely occurred outside the Occupied Territories. In 2000, for example, a DF branch woman leader who had been active in Syria (in the Occupied Territories when interviewed), as well as a high-ranking woman partisan in the Jordan DF branch, expressed gender-conservative positions about, respectively, the Occupied Territories DF branch platform on personal status laws in the future Palestinian state and the feminist demands of women's organizations in Jordan. Both made variations of the argument that it was unreasonable for feminists in the Occupied Territories and Jordan to push the respective societies too far on questions of gender.

It seems to me, rather, that the extent to which gender transformation efforts are too "radical" or "conservative" cannot be determined without mobilization that allows all sectors of a society to coarticulate a vision and agenda for the future. The necessity of such a grassroots process is probably the most important lesson of the PFWAC experience in the Occupied Territories. The challenge in the present is how to invigorate such processes under the debilitating conditions of Israeli occupation, unaccountable or authoritarian state rule, or legalized dis-

franchisement of diasporic communities. Intertwined with these state-produced obstacles is the patriarchal impulse that is too often comfortable for many men activists otherwise committed to progressive and democratic societies. To what extent will they fight for the inclusion and dignity of their women comrades, fellow citizens, sisters, mothers, daughters, and friends?

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