

*Price paid  
for entry into  
diplomatic arena*

activities on the West Bank and in Gaza. The events in Jordan in 1970-1971, creating as they did schisms, disarray and recriminations within the PLO itself, were followed by spectacular acts of terror and adventurist violence ("political shock tactics", in the words of one Organization representative, "to thwart implementation of a settlement over the revolution's head") in Europe and the Middle East. With the rise of the PLO into a position of power and prestige after the Rabat Conference and the UN debate on Palestine, the Palestinian movement seems to have entered a phase of *political struggle*, consolidating its diplomatic triumphs and eschewing terror. The transformation of the PLO's platform into one that envisages short-range aims and its concerted efforts to be integrated into the diplomatic arena have not been arrived at without a price. The Marxist faction in the Organization (the so-called "rejection front") has officially pulled out of the Executive Committee and disavowed any connection with Arafat's present manoeuvres, thereby weakening the political and tactical resources of the movement and polarizing the Palestinians themselves. They accuse Arafat of having become "a 'groupie' of the Egyptian and other conservative or reactionary Arab regimes", of having made contacts with "imperialist elements" and, above all of truncating the historical process by accepting "a puppet state" on the West Bank and in Gaza as a terminus of the Palestinian struggle.

The "rejection front", headed by George Habbash, leader of the PFLP, is adopting the position that the moderate faction of the PLO, now in ascendancy, will fail (as the Arab governments will fail) to extract concessions from Israel. Discredited by the masses and the PNC, Arafat's "acceptance front" will lose con-

trol to Habbash's group: Beyond setting the political tone and asserting the direction of the national struggle, there is the pervasive role that the Palestine Liberation Organization plays in the socio-cultural life of the average Palestinian. Apart from being answerable to the Palestine National Council, whose members are drawn from the diaspora and under occupation, the PLO influences, and is in turn influenced by, various popular organizations such as the Palestinian Workers Union, the General Union of Palestinian Women and the innumerable societies of writers, students, teachers, professors and artists. Along with that, the PLO is responsible for the Palestine National Fund, the Red Crescent, the Palestine Research Centre (a Palestinian "think tank" studying problems from the economy to the postage stamps of a possible separate state), the Institute for Palestine Studies and various national councils and committees that oversee the social and political work of Palestinians.

It has always been self-deluding and self-defeating for analysts in the West to question the claim of the PLO as representative of the Palestinians or to give credence, at any time, to the notion that King Hussein of Jordan — a traditional enemy of the Palestinians — could have negotiated the Palestine problem on behalf of its people.

To continue clinging to the proposition that the PLO will somehow go away or to the fiction that the Palestinian problem will somehow be solved in the context of a "refugee" issue will be to offer another contribution to that body of active mythology with which the Palestinian people are already shrouded. It will be to plant the seed for further conflict in an area that has seen sustained conflict for the last 60 years.

### **The PLO chameleons**

So much for smiling Yasser Arafat's olive branch . . . .

The terrorists who shot their way into Tel Aviv to murder civilians with bullets and bombs were not from any of the breakaway factions of Palestinian guerrillas who reject the Arafat claim to leadership. They were Arafat men, members of Al Fatah, the strongest of the PLO guerrilla organizations, still Mr. Arafat's personal power base and still under his personal command.

Mr. Arafat is nothing if not flexible. Last fall, during his campaign to persuade the United Nations that he had become a peaceloving statesman, his killer squads did not hesitate to shoot PLO militants who rejected the switch

from terror to diplomacy. But now that he has failed, in spite of UN recognition, to transfer a series of terrorist raids across the Lebanese border into a war of "national liberation", he has not hesitated to swing back openly to massive terror against civilians by guerrillas with whom he is directly identified . . . .

Meanwhile smiling delegates of the PLO relish their new status as observers at the United Nations, admitted at last to the world club. These delegates, we are told, are not terrorists; they are diplomats. But, to the PLO, diplomacy is merely the continuation of terrorism by other means. (From an editorial in *The Globe and Mail*, March 7, 1975, following a terrorist raid on Tel Aviv.)