

**AL — FATEH**

**THE PALESTINE NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT**

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## I INTRODUCTION

"For twenty years our people have been waiting for a just solution of the Palestine Problem," wrote a graduate student at the American University of Beirut in a letter to his parents. "All that we got was charity and humiliation while others continue to live in our homes. I refuse to remain a 'refugee'. I have decided to join the freedom fighters and I ask for your blessings."

Meanwhile, in a refugee camp near Amman, Jordan, the mother of a freedom fighter who died in action on occupied Palestinian soil says: "I am proud that he did not die in this camp. The foreign press comes here and takes our pictures standing in queues to obtain food rations. They publish these photographs giving the impression that we are a 'nation of beggars'. This is no life. I am proud of having sent my second son to replace the first; and I am already preparing my eight-year-old boy for the day when he can fight for liberation too."

Thousands of Palestinians have since joined the ranks of the Palestinian freedom fighters

They are carrying on an armed revolution aimed at establishing just peace in the Holy Land. Most of them are young. Their overwhelming majority is below 30 years of age and they represent Palestinians from all walks of life, including university graduates and camp refugees. Their will to sacrifice stems from a deep sense of patriotism, injustice and humiliation. They breathe the same national aspirations and they are haunted with nostalgia for their wrested homes and homeland.

For twenty years the Zionist propaganda machinery succeeded in concealing from world public opinion the plight of these dislodged people. But Palestinians still have undiminished faith in the future and they know that the pathway to that future is the liberation of their homeland.

It is in this belief that they chose to recapture the initiative in order to liberate Palestine, to vindicate the supreme sacrifices of their past generations and to realize the hopes and visions of living Palestinians.

The Palestinian revolution is now in full sway.

## II HISTORY OF THE PALESTINE PROBLEM

The Palestine problem is the result of the forcible dispossession of the Arab Palestinian population, their expulsion from their country, and the implantation of an alien sovereignty on their soil to make room for the ingathering in Palestine of world Jewry.

The first seeds of organized political Zionism took root in the late nineteenth century in Europe in environments saturated with anti-Semitism and colonial spirit. In August, 1897, the First Zionist Congress was convened at Basle, Switzerland. The ultimate goal of Zionism as a political and racial movement based on political exploitation of religion was outlined at the Congress in these words: "The aim of Zionism is to create for the Jewish people a home (state) in Palestine secured by public law." The steps to be taken in contemplation of the fulfilment of this aim were (1) the promotion of Jewish colonization of Palestine, (2) the establishment of an organization to bind world Jewry by means of institutions in each country containing Jews, (3) the strengthening of Jewish national sentiment and (4) the acquisition of government consent to the attainment of the aim of Zionism.

The interests of the Arab population of Palestine were thus excluded by the Zionist movement since its inception. Its ultimate objective was "to give the country without a people to the people without a country."

The methods employed to accomplish this objective were oppression, terror and deceit, which led the British Historian Arnold Toynbee to state in a lecture at McGill University in Montreal, Canada, that the Zionist treatment of the Arabs was as morally indefensible as the Nazi crimes.

Nathan Chofshi, one of the original Zionist pioneers in Palestine, wrote the following to the editor of the Jewish Newsletter in February 1949:

"If you really wanted to know what happened, we old Jewish settlers in Palestine who witnessed the fight could tell you how and in what manner we, Jews, forced the Arabs to leave cities and villages. Some of them were driven out by force of arms; others were made to leave by deceit, lying and false promises. It is enough to cite the cities of Jaffa, Lydda, Ramleh, Beer Sheba, and Acre from among humbler others.

"Here we have people who lived on its own land for 1,300 years. We came and turned the native Arabs into tragic refugees. And still we dare to slander and malign them, to besmirch their name. Instead of being deeply ashamed of what we did and of trying to undo some of the evil we committed by helping those unfortunate refugees, we justify our terrible acts and even attempt to glorify them."

A noted Jewish thinker, Professor Erich Fromm, has this to add:

"It is often said that the Arabs fled, that they left the country voluntarily, and that they, therefore bear the responsibility for losing their property and their land. But in public international law the principle holds true that no citizen loses his property or his rights of citizenship, and the citizenship right is de facto a right to which the Arabs in Palestine have much more legitimacy than the Jews.

Suppose the Arabs fled, Professor Fromm goes on, "since when is that punishable by confiscation of property and by being barred from returning to the land on which a people's forefathers have lived for generations?" Professor Fromm adds: "The claim of the Jews to the land of Israel cannot be a realistic political claim. If all nations would suddenly claim territories in which their forefathers have lived two thousand years ago, this world would be a mad house."

The Zionists went about planning their campaigns to vacate Palestine of its people by employing terror, massacres, and deceit.

The pro-Zionist author Arthur Koestler described the April 9, 1948 events at Deir Yassin as the "blood bath that was the psychological decisive factor in the Arabs' spectacular exodus."

On that day, the Zionist terrorist organization, Irgun Zvai Leumi, killed 250 men, women and children and mutilated their bodies. As part of the systematic Zionist plan for the complete evacuation of the Palestinians so that they may be replaced by Jewish settlers, blood baths continued in occupied Palestine after 1948 -- Ikrit (1951), al-Tira (1953), Abu Ghosh (1953), Kafr Kassem (1956), etc.....

These were the conditions that forced the Palestinians to leave their homeland.

Despite extensive immigration helped by the British Mandate, Palestinian Arabs of the Christian and Moslem faiths, who in 1922 formed 91 per cent of the total population of Palestine and owned 98 per cent of its land, still constituted 69 per cent of the population and owned 94 per cent of the land at the date of their exodus. Their unyielding resistance and their costly sacrifices over three decades had failed to avert the national catastrophe.

The United Nations vote for the partition of Palestine gave the Zionists 48 per cent of Palestine although they did not own more than 6 per cent of it. Dr. Millar Burrows in his book "Palestine Is Our Business" says: "The vote for partition in the U.N. Assembly on November 29, 1947, was forced through by our Government with a shameless resort to the time-worn methods of power politics."

With terror and aggression, Zionists managed to occupy 80 per cent of Palestine in 1948. The rest, together with Egypt's Sinai Desert and Syria's Golan heights, was occupied in June 1967.

For over twenty years, the Palestinians have been the victims of world indifference. Numerous resolutions calling for the restoration of the Palestinian rights have been adopted by the United Nations but remain unimplemented while the Israeli usurpers continue to occupy more and more territories.

For over twenty years, most of the Palestinians have been living in a diaspora of shabby tents, misery and the humiliation of a meagre dole. While the rights of all Africans, Asians and others have been recognised, theirs are forgotten and disregarded. For, alone among these oppressed peoples, the Palestinians have lost not only political control over their country but its physical occupation as well.

Under such conditions, the only pathway left for the Palestinians is armed revolution. The Palestinians have taken up arms for liberation after losing faith in the recovery of their homeland through world conscience and international public opinion.

### III THE EMERGENCE OF AL-FATEH

The sufferings, frustrations and sacrifices of the Palestinian people over the years have given rise to a new popular-based dynamic movement: the Palestine National Liberation Movement which is more commonly known by its Arabic initials: "Fateh".

Al-Fateh movement was started in 1956 by young Palestinians during the temporary occupation of the Gaza Strip by Israeli forces.

The military operations of al-Fateh are carried out by its military wing, al-Assifa.

The first military operation of al-Assifa was carried out on December 30, 1964. The first communique was released on January 1, 1965, two and a half years before the June war.

With old rusty weapons and against heavy odds, al-Assifa freedom fighters embarked on the revolution with all the determination and persistence of a long-oppressed people.

During the past four years, Palestinians have sacrificed scores of martyrs on the battlefield. During the same period, many more have died in refugee camps from bitter cold, poor nourishment and disease. As the revolution embarks on its fifth year of struggle, the fruits of its sacrifices have started to ripen.

### IV AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Al-Fateh aims at the establishment of a unitary, democratic, non-sectarian Palestine State, without hegemony, in which all individuals and groups will have equal rights and obligations, irrespective of race, color or creed. It seeks the recognition of the unconditional right of the Palestinians to return to their homeland, Palestine, whenever they wish and to recuperate their land and property wherever it is located in Palestine. It also seeks the constitutional regulation of immigration of non-Palestinians into Palestine.



Meanwhile, al-Fateh is doing its best to change the patterns of the Palestinian society. Concomitant with the necessities of the mobilization of Palestinians, among other things, it is aware of the requisites to attend to the social and human needs of the Palestinian refugees. It has set up medical care, educational and vocational training centers for them.

Its youth movement, Ashbal Fateh, is intended to provide Palestinian youth with the proper education and training as to be of service to the revolution.

Al-Fateh also supports and patronizes the families of its freedom fighters who die in action or are imprisoned. Rehabilitation and the moulding of better Palestinian citizens are among its primary goals.

## V THE POSITION OF AL-FATEH

Al-Fateh has a definite stand vis-a-vis the "State of Israel", the Arab countries, the two superpowers and the United Nations.

### a) The "State of Israel"

Like the people of Palestine, al-Fateh has not and will never bestow undeserved legitimacy upon the Zionist settler-state of Israel. This state remains a usurper addicted to violence, bent on territorial expansion to occupy all of the so-called "Eretz Israel," and fundamentally motivated by principles of racial and religious self-segregation, exclusiveness and supremacy. Inasmuch as Nazism sought a "final solution" to the Jewish problem in Germany, Zionism has sought a "final solution" to the Arab problem in Palestine. Both concepts have sought to eliminate the unwanted human element by the "Master Race" and the "Chosen People".

While al-Fateh is fighting the constitutional existence of the Zionist State of Israel, it is also fighting to create the new Palestine of tomorrow -- a democratic non-sectarian Palestine where Jews, Moslems and Christians will work, worship and live peacefully together while enjoying equal rights and obligations. This is no utopia because people of all three faiths had lived peacefully together in the Holy Land until the process of Zionist colonization of Palestine was improvised. The Arabs of Palestine accorded a hospitable welcome to Jewish refugees fleeing persecution in Christian Europe and to Armenian refugees fleeing persecution in Moslem Turkey.

Al-Fateh does not intend to solve the Palestine problem by creating a "Jewish one". But it also cannot see peace achieved in this area at the expense of the Palestinians.

It is in this spirit that al-Fateh looks forward to the future -- a future in which all factions of the Palestinian communities will unite in a common struggle

for justice and peace and against such "isms" as Zionism and anti-Semitism.

Al-Fateh hopes the day will come when the Jewish community in Palestine will share these views. This is not too much to hope because if the Germans were able to "see the light again" after getting rid of Nazi ideology, the people of Jewish faith in Palestine can follow suit one day and rid themselves of Zionism.

b) The Arab Countries

The Palestinian people are part of the Arab World and, as such, wish to play their role in the fulfilment of its goals and aspirations.

Al-Fateh's revolution is thus part of the Arab revolution aiming at independence, the removal of foreign hegemonies, and the active participation in the revival of the Arab World through its interaction with the other active cultures of the world at large.

The mobilization of the Palestinian people should thus be considered, not only as a tool to support the revolutionary efforts of the Arabs, but as part of the Arab World's process of awakening as well.

While this process is taking place, the Palestinian revolution of al-Fateh will not interfere in the internal affairs of the Arab countries. Simultaneously, al-Fateh expects no interference in its own affairs and considers the independence of its revolution as a sacred condition for its success.

This does not imply the isolation of the Palestinian people from the Arab World. Believing in the common Arab cause, the Palestine National Liberation Movement expects massive help and support from all Arabs and considers their cooperation as a vital necessity for its success. The Arab people everywhere are the most reliable and permanent source of support for the Palestinian revolution.

c) The Two Superpowers

The major concern of the two superpowers in world power politics is the question of nuclear deterrence and the type of peace that ensues from it. The recent emergence of "third nuclear powers" has complicated the strategic model of equilibrium. Conflicts of classical nature have gained in importance and weight insofar as they increase the dangers of confrontation between the two superpowers.

In certain areas, the superpowers tend to interpret the conflict from a strategic angle, thus giving it a color which it does not possess. Moreover, one of the superpowers would act in such a way as to create conditions that change the patterns of the conflict and erroneously relate it to questions of cold war and influence areas.



With this context, al-Fateh views with great concern the behaviour and approach methods of the two superpowers towards the Palestine problem.

Al-Fateh does not stand at the side of either of the two superpowers or their respective interests in the area. The Palestine problem is a problem created by the Zionist settler-state of Israel which has forcibly dispossessed the Palestinian population of its homeland and which forcibly continues to deny the right of Palestinians to return to their homeland which should be endowed with a democratic state in which all individuals and groups will enjoy equal rights and obligations irrespective of race, color and creed. And as long as the Zionists refuse to recognize these Palestinian rights, the Palestine and Middle East problems will remain unsolved and will continue to pose the unwarranted threat of a major confrontation between the superpowers.

d) The United Nations

The United Nations Charter recognizes the principle of self-determination of peoples. The Palestinians have been deprived not only of their inalienable right to self-determination, but also of their elemental right to exist on their own homeland. The Palestinians' right to repatriation has been recognized by the United Nations without qualification or reservation. Resolutions to that effect have been taken at the UN year after year.

The June 1967 aggression was another manifestation of the continued aggression against the Palestinian people. Al-Fateh refuses to consider the 1967 aggression as a separate and distinct phenomenon. Any solution focusing on the results of the last aggression only is thus totally and categorically unacceptable to it.

The Security Council resolution of November 22, 1967, and all further proposals explaining or modifying it are therefore inadequate and irrelevant.

## VI AL-FATEH AND THE FUTURE

The Palestine National Liberation Movement has succeeded in awakening the Palestinians and in rekindling their visions and hopes in a better future. It has forced its enemies to admit their failure to extinguish its sweeping revolution. It has won battles and is starting to shape the destiny of the Palestinians.

Its members are not haunted by emotional principles, nor are they seekers of revenge. They are freedom fighters with clearly-defined and noble goals. They are fighting today to create the "Palestine-of-Tomorrow" -- a democratic state where Christians, Jews and Moslems would work, live peacefully and enjoy equal rights without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.

For al-Fateh, the past is full of experiences. The past bears the errors of the militarists and politicians of the old generations. The past also bears the rich experience of the Palestinian resistance since 1920 against both the British Mandate and the Zionist colonization. Al Fateh reveres the legacy of the older Palestinian generation which was dislodged indeed, but not without fighting to defend its heritage.

Part of the Palestinians is now in diaspora while the other part is under Israeli occupation. But the hardships of life have taught all Palestinians to survive as organized producers and freedom fighters. Their youth is looking to the future the way it is being brought up -- the hard way. This future, colorful and full of hope, is seen only beyond the fence of a long and difficult struggle. This is exactly why al Fateh has confidence in the future.

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