

FACTS AND FIGURES — No. 35

Aims of the Palestinian
Resistance Movement with
Regard to the Jews

*Quotations from Resistance leaders and
documents*

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INTRODUCTION

ISRAELI leaders and spokesmen, and their supporters abroad, have been conducting a campaign to falsify the character and aims of the Palestinian Resistance Movement. Relying on the general ignorance of Arabic, they have presented their own version of Palestinian aims, based on misquotation and omission. Moreover, trading on anti-Arab prejudice, they allege that Palestinians say one thing to foreigners, another to the home audience.

We have selected the following quotations, from Arabic, French and English sources, from hundreds of others which it would have been repetitious to include. The Palestinian Resistance Movement is not monolithic. But anyone who goes to the original documents will find a strong current of anti-racialism, and a commitment to democratic forms running through the thinking of all the main groups.

AL FATEH

From an interview with Abu Amar, al Anwar (Arabic, Beirut), 23 June, 1968

“Moslems and Christians are living side by side in the Arab countries. I believe the Jews have the same choice.

“In the past, they have lived peacefully in Arab Palestine without being subject to any racial or religious discrimination. This situation remained till the emergence of Zionism. We intend to build our country with no racial or religious discrimination.”

From Fateh Yearbook (Arabic), 1968

“Our revolution has been and will remain a humanitarian revolution that presents to the world the open Palestinian society as a substitute to the closed Zionist society. We call for an Arab Palestinian state with no traces of Zionist racism, with all its military, political and economic institutions. Then, the Jew will find his place within this progressive democratic state irrespective of religion, color or nationality.” (page 55)

From an interview with Abu Amar, Paris Match, 11 January, 1969

“The Jews are one thing and Zionism, embodied in the state of Israel, is another. Resistance to Zionism is beginning to be manifested among them. Two of our officers, now in captivity, were Palestinians who had Jewish mothers. Each week the Israeli police arrest anti-Zionist Jews. Last week there were four arrests in Nazareth.”

From an interview with Abu Amar, Arab World (English, New York), May, 1969

“The goals of Al Fatah and Arab nationalism are humanitarian in principles and method, unlike Zionism which uses Nazi-like tactics in achieving its ends. Our revolution is aimed at the liberation of man from all kinds of discrimination. We reject the techniques of brutality and murder used by Zionists. Arabs have never discriminated against the Jews; historically, many Jews found a haven in the Arab homeland when they were being persecuted by Europeans. We also sympathized with the suffering of the Jews under the Nazis, but this sympathy does not mean that we ought to pay the price for Hitler’s crimes. Why do we, as Palestinians, have to suffer terror, hunger and deportation for what someone else has done? Our aim is to bring an end to the concept of a Jewish Zionist state, a racist expansionist state. Our aim is to destroy this state, this concept—but not its people. We want a democratic Palestinian state. We will not force anyone out who is willing to live under the banner of this state as a loyal Palestinian. It does not matter whether he is Christian, Moslem, or Jew.” (page 27)

From a dialogue between Abu Eyad and Lutfi Khouli (Editor of al Tali’at), published in al Tali’at (Arabic, Cairo), June, 1969*

“Khouli: What does Al-Fateh exactly understand by ‘Palestinian democratic state’?”

“Abu Eyad: We have always believed and declared, and will continue to declare, that armed struggle is not an end in itself. It is a means for a great humanitarian aim. Since 1917 Palestine has been subjected to wars, revolutions and bloody fighting. The time has come for this land and its people to live in peace as other human beings. We carry arms in order to achieve a truly peaceful settlement of the problem, and not a false settlement

* The entire dialogue can be found in *Basic Political Documents of the Armed Palestinian Resistance Movement*, Leila S. Kadi, Palestine Research Center, Beirut, 1970.

based on the imposition of aggression and racism. Such peace cannot be achieved except within the framework of a democratic state in Palestine. What are its details? I believe that through the development of the struggle and fighting the details of such a state will be drawn up. But this is the wide strategic course which will encompass all these details.

“Khouli: Within the framework of this wide strategic course will the Palestinian democratic state accept the Jews as equal citizens with the Arabs?”

“Abu Eyad: Of course we accept the Jews as equal citizens with the Arabs in everything. The meaning of the Palestinian democratic state is very clear. It only aims at eliminating the Zionist racist entity in Palestine.

“Khouli: For the sake of more clarity, will Al-Fateh guarantee in word and deed the right to citizenship in the Palestinian democratic state to the anti-Zionist Jews who will declare their agreement with Al-Fateh’s aim of establishing the new Palestinian democratic society? Is the right to citizenship guaranteed to the anti-Zionist Jews whether they have been in Palestine before or after 1948?”

“Abu Eyad: I repeat that this right will be guaranteed by Al-Fateh, as a liberation movement with humanitarian dimensions, not only to every anti-Zionist Jew but also to a Jew who has purified his soul of Zionist ideas, meaning one who has been convinced that Zionist ideas are alien to human society.”

From a series of three articles on relations between Palestinians and Jews in Fateh Bulletin, (English, Beirut)

(1 January, 1970) “A progressive liberation movement cannot be motivated by revenge and cannot suffer from the racism that characterizes the very enemy it is trying to conquer. Therefore, study of the history, suffering and achievements of the Jews took place. Jewish thinkers such as Buber, Ha-am, Magnes, Rodinson, Deutscher and Menuhin were read and reread.

Serious discussions with progressive Jews in Europe and America helped also foster a new image for the Jew at large, the Jew as Zionist and the Jew as a Palestinian citizen: a human image. No supermen, monsters or pigmies, but people who were persecuted by European racist Nazis and then manipulated by European racist Zionists into Palestine and the vacation of its people.

“Escalation of the revolution will have its consequences. Obviously, it is going to harden some Zionist Jews against the Palestinians, especially the oligarchy that stands to lose in a democratic, open Palestine. But escalation will have its shock effect. It will bring the realization that an exclusionist Israel can be a very insecure place indeed, and that it cannot last.”

(19 January, 1970) “All the Jews, Moslems and Christians living in Palestine or forcibly exiled from it will have the right to Palestinian citizenship. This guarantees the right of all exiled Palestinians to return to their land whether they have been born in Palestine or in exile and regardless of their present nationality.

“Equally, this means that all Jewish Palestinians—at the present Israelis—have the same right, provided of course that they reject Zionist racist chauvinism and fully accept to live as Palestinians in the New Palestine. The revolution therefore rejects the supposition that only Jews who lived in Palestine prior to 1948 or prior to 1914 and their descendents are acceptable.

“Jews or non-Jews for that matter would have the right to practise their religion and develop culturally and linguistically as a group, beside their individual political and cultural participation. It is quite logical for example to have both Arabic and Hebrew as official languages taught in governmental schools to all Palestinians, Jews or non-Jews.”

✓ THE POPULAR FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF PALESTINE

From an interview with George Habash, al Hadaf (Arabic, Beirut), December 20, 1969

“We are waging a democratic national liberation struggle which has a socialist orientation, aiming at putting an end to Israel’s entity as a racist, aggressive and usurper state linked with world imperialism. With the breakup of this entity, with all its attachments and characteristics, we will be faced with a situation, where, naturally, every citizen will have the right to an equitable life which is in line with the objectives of the socialist revolution and the Arab identity of the Palestinian field. . .

“...When the democratic national liberation struggle achieves its objectives, every Jew living in Palestine will enjoy equal and full rights with other citizens. With the break up of Israel as a racist aggressive entity, we have to face the situation where some Jews will choose to remain and live within the framework of a progressive socialist state, a situation which we have to face democratically. The total revolutionary presence in the Arab world will be able to face such a situation democratically. . .

“...The numerical, religious, or cultural presence of this group or that is a question which can be faced democratically and settled on the basis of scientific socialism and its principles.”

From a PFLP report, February, 1969*

“The Palestinian liberation movement is not a racial movement with aggressive intentions against the Jews. It is not directed against the Jews. Its object is to destroy the state of Israel as a military, political and economic establishment which rests on aggression, expansion and organic connection with imperialist interests in our homeland. It is against Zionism as an aggressive

* Quoted in full in *Basic Political Documents of the Armed Palestinian Resistance Movement*, Leila S. Kadi, Palestine Research Center, Beirut, 1970.

racial movement connected with imperialism, which has exploited the sufferings of the Jewish masses as a stepping stone for the promotion of its interests, and the interests of imperialism in this part of the world, which possesses rich resources and provides a bridgehead into the countries of Africa and Asia. The aim of the Palestinian liberation movement is to establish a democratic national state in Palestine in which both Arabs and Jews will live as citizens with equal rights and obligations and which will constitute an integral part of the progressive democratic Arab national presence living peacefully with all progressive forces in the world.”

POPULAR DEMOCRATIC FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF PALESTINE

*From a memo submitted by the PDFLP to the Palestine National Assembly (6th Session, September 1969) under the title “Towards a Democratic Solution to the Palestine Question”.**

“The struggle for a popular democratic solution to the Palestine question and the Israel question is based on the removal of the Zionist structure as represented by the institutions of the state (army, administration, police) and all chauvinistic Zionist political and syndicalist, unionist institutions; the establishment of a popular democratic Palestinian state in which Arabs and Jews live without discrimination—a state against all forms of class or national repression; and the right of both Arabs and Jews to develop and evolve their national culture. And in view of the bonds of history and destiny between Palestine and the Arab nation, the popular democratic state of Palestine will become an indivisible part of an Arab federalist state in the region.”

* Quoted in: PDFLP, *The Palestine Resistance Movement in Its Present Situation*, Dar al Tali'at, Beirut, 1969. p. 166

SA'IKA

From a statement by the Sa'ika representative at a Resistance colloquium, al Anwar (Arabic, Beirut), 8 March, 1970

“Where does the struggle lead to? This is a problem that we cannot leave to circumstances. The development and escalation of the revolution will force the Resistance Movement to clarify more and more its vision of the future of Palestine and the solution it offers to the Jews living there at present. . .

“I believe that when we offer those Jews an alternative to their present life, and an alternative to the constant threat of death, we can better serve our cause on the road to victory. We cannot ignore the fact that these Jews, of whom a great number were born in Palestine, do not know any other homeland. . .

“Through the victory accomplished in the June war, the Zionist racist movement wanted to carve in the mind of the Jew that Israel is a state. The Israeli government wanted to convince their people that the state is there to stay, and is capable of survival. Thus the Jew has to look for the solution within the framework of this state, and not by thinking of emigrating to the outside world.

“As for the Sa'ika organization, the idea of a unified democratic state is not a tactical slogan but a strategic one. As I have said, we cannot imagine solving the problem of these Jews without allowing them to reside either in Palestine or in any other country they might choose.”

THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION*

From the Palestine Liberation Organization Charter (July 1968)

“Article 6: Jews living in Palestine before the time of the Zionist

* The PLO is the legal entity representing the Palestinians and acknowledged by all the Arab states and several other states. Virtually all the resistance groups participate in the institutions of the PLO.

invasion are considered Palestinians.”

From a statement by a P.L.O. spokesman, reported in L'Orient (Beirut), 8 June, 1969

“The aim pursued by the P.L.O. is the creation in Palestine of a democratic Palestinian state in which Jews, Christians and Muslims will live in harmony. More, we are ready to accept that Jews who have come from the four corners of the world to live in Palestine should remain there and we will consider them as fellow citizens.

“We will not lay down our arms until our rights have been restored. While waiting, only one solution is forced upon us: the intensification of the armed struggle which is costing Israel a daily toll of human lives and money, and will perhaps make it realize that peaceful co-existence between Jews and Arabs is the only way to peace in the Middle East.”

From a speech made by a PLO executive at a conference in Cyprus, September 29—October 4, 1969

“It would be less than honest to pretend that there is a solution in the sense that anybody has a neat formula which fully satisfies Palestine Arabs and Jews equally. Too much water has gone under the bridges since 1948 for this to be possible. So the search must proceed for a form of accommodation that satisfies certain optimizing conditions.

“There are four such conditions:

- 1) That the solution should satisfy the minimal national aspirations of the Palestine Arabs, who are the party dispossessed and uprooted, without causing excessive suffering to the Jewish community.
- 2) That the solution should concern itself with the fundamentals of the problem and not be side-tracked by minor or derivative issues.

- 3) That the solution, being an earnest endeavour to establish genuine peace, should be solidly grounded in justice.
- 4) Lastly, that it should have a long time-horizon.

“We, the Palestinians, submit that no solution so far suggested satisfies these conditions together, except the one which the Palestinians propose as the minimum acceptable to them. This is the setting-up of Palestine as a state in partnership, in which the Palestinian Arabs and the Jews who care to stay can live together as equal citizens, regardless of religion, colour or race. For the Palestine Jews opting for the proposal, this means identifying with Palestine, and with its Arab environment, and therefore shedding off Zionist associations and expansionist attitudes. For the Arabs, it means accepting the Jewish community and cooperating with it in democratic conditions—and this for the first time since the Balfour Declaration in 1917.

“This solution should be put to some test, and there are four touchstones to which we can subject it. First, the proposed solution would be advantageous to the Jewish community and not merely to the Palestine Arabs. For the Jews, it would at last provide both a sense of belonging and of being accepted. The purpose of Jewish immigration into and settlement in Palestine has always been the search for a refuge and a haven, but this has all along been attempted against the will of the Palestine Arabs. The result—in rejection and in violence—is too well-known to be described. Only the agreement of the Palestine Arabs will provide a genuine peaceful haven for the Jews in Palestine, not their powerful army, and not their all-powerful patrons. The democratic state in partnership is the only formula that would make the Palestine Arabs forever bury their grievances and sufferings—and their arms.

“The second touchstone for the proposal is its fairness to the Jews, apart from fairness to the Palestine Arabs. It is enough to say that the proposal would provide, a home for all the Jews in Palestine who choose to live in peace with the Arabs, although most of them have come to the land against the will of the Palestine

Arabs. Our suffering in the process has been enormous; our unity and identity as a community have been shattered, our very physical existence has been menaced. Yet we are willing to overlook all this if the Palestine Jews are willing to free themselves from colonizing Zionism and to identify with the new Palestine. This, for the first time since 1917 would enable them to interact culturally and economically with the Palestine Arabs and with the Arabs beyond.

“The third advantage of the Palestinian proposal is its durability. No other proposal will be accepted by us, and therefore no other proposal can have more than short-term durability. But is anything but a long-term solution worth working for?”

“This brings us to the fourth touchstone, realism. At first glance it would seem that if the Palestine Arabs and the other Arabs were realistic they would accept whatever Israel was willing to offer, since the June 1967 war has revealed the extent of the military gap between Israel and ourselves. But a closer look would indicate that, on the contrary, it is the Israelis who are not being realistic and whose shortsightedness and drunkenness with power will be self-damaging in the long run. For, what ought to be considered is not not the relative power of the two parties *today* but what it will be in ten or fifteen or even thirty years from now.”

Several of the documents quoted here (the Fatch Yearbook, the dialogue with Abu Eyad, the PFLP report) can be found in *Basic Political Documents of the Armed Palestinian Resistance Movement* by Leila S. Kadi, published in February 1970 by the Palestine Research Center, Beirut, Lebanon (247 pp, LL 8).

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