

No words can completely describe what occurred at that time and what was growing in the minds of the people, but this is the least of what can be said of the period following 1948, regarding the Palestinian people.

How much of a factor was that personal experience on the West Bank in your decision to take up armed struggle?

As I mentioned in answering the preceding question, among the most important issues we thought of at that time was responding to the armed Zionist terror with armed Palestinian national struggle. I remember the extent of popular enthusiasm when I would contact Palestinian villages on the frontlines and ask people to join the Arab Nationalist Movement and participate in armed struggle against the occupation. Armed struggle was number one on the agenda of methods, but there were two main obstacles that kept it from expanding to the degree that it reached after 1967. These two obstacles were:

1. The continuous clashes with the Jordanian regime's patrols. The regime acted like a security guard for the Zionist enemy. It pursued and harassed our men politically, psychologically and security-wise. The Jordanian regime prevented any national political action directed against 'Israel'. It prevented the patriotic parties and forces from engaging in democratic work among the masses. Moreover, the regime arrested or executed anyone suspected of acting against the occupation. It was to the extent that anyone caught with a sharp knife outside his house, or with an empty bullet cartridge, was sentenced to as much as six months in jail and banished to the desert.

2. The lack of means for obtaining or buying weapons. The people's bad economic situation made them unable to donate money for buying arms. The intense surveillance of the Jordanian intelligence service made it difficult to get weapons.

These difficulties, and other less important factors, hindered the development of armed struggle. Yet they did not prevent the Palestinian people, or we in the Arab Nationalist Movement, from adopting armed struggle and continuing to consider it a primary option for responding to the Zionist invasion of Palestine and the resultant banishment of our people.

More than ever before, we are seeing the state of 'Israel' as an advanced aggressive base for imperialism. This is what the Zionist movement's leaders expressed and put into practice when they established their state on our land. How else could we view the participation of the state of 'Israel' alongside Britain and France, in the 1956 aggression against Egypt when Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal? Our understanding of the state of 'Israel' and its role gave our armed struggle its pan-Arab and international dimension, in addition to its Palestinian dimension. Palestinian armed struggle has become an integral part of the struggle of the Arab and international liberation movement against colonialism, imperialism and all forms of racism.

How do you judge Israeli policy in the occupied territories since 1967? To what extent have the Israelis been able to subjugate the people who live there?

The least that can be said about this policy is that it is an occupation policy. Every person must imagine how a state behaves towards a people when it is occupying their land and attempting to subordinate them by force and violence. Moreover, the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land has no match in recent human history... Successive Israeli governments have applied specific plans to uproot the Palestinian people from their land, bringing new Zionist immigrants to replace them, whereas the Palestinian people are the ones with the natural and historic right to the land of Palestine.

Before the founding of the state of 'Israel', Jews owned only 6% of the land of Palestine, despite all the methods employed by the Zionist movement to attain land... But what is the current reality and how did it come about? The March 2, 1986 edition of the *Jerusalem Post* published a detailed article on a report by the Hagana's military intelligence department, dated June 30, 1948, that was discovered in the private papers of the historian Aharon Cohen, a leading member of Mapam. The report confirmed that the Zionist organizations - Hagana, Irgun Zvai Leumi (Etzel) and Lohamei Herut Yisrael (Lehi) had staged military operations against the Palestinian Arabs that resulted

in forcing the inhabitants of more than 250 cities and villages to flee from their homes and land, from April 21, 1948, until the end of the same year. This means that one million Palestinians were forced to leave their land.

We are always hearing voices from inside the Israeli government and Knesset, calling for expelling the Palestinians... but 'Israel' will not implement the goal of uprooting the Palestinian people from their land in one phase, for several reasons, mainly: (1) 'Israel' needs to use the Palestinian Arab citizens as cheap labor, to fill a significant portion of jobs in industry, agriculture and the service sector, that are considered degrading in the Zionist society. This gives 'Israel' the opportunity to send the Jewish working force - that is freed from this labor by Palestinian workers - to the war front against neighboring Arab countries, in order to achieve the Israeli rulers' aims of expansion and occupying new Arab land. (2) The gradual expulsion of the Palestinians enables 'Israel' to avoid the political problems and negative publicity that could be raised by public opinion if it were to expel them all at once. (3) The gradual expulsion of the Palestinians lessens the intensity of the Arab response to this criminal action. This enables the Israeli government to absorb the results, as they think.

There is consensus among the Zionists on the policy of gradually expelling the Palestinians from their homeland, but there are differences among the Zionist groups in 'Israel' as to the method that should be used. On this particular issue the Zionists are divided into two main categories: (1) One section that calls for massive expulsion all at once, regardless of the consequences. One of those who expresses this view most clearly is the extreme racist Rabbi Meir Kahane, who enjoys support from 11% of the Jewish electorate according to Israeli opinion polls. Another is Ariel Sharon, former defense minister, war criminal and architect of the Sabra-Shatila massacre. (2) The other section calls for gradual expulsion in order to avoid the negative consequences of immediate mass expulsion. This group argues that the goal of a pure Jewish state can wait for some time before being fully achieved. Most known for expressing this opinion clearly is the Labor Alignment, led by the Labor Party.

Nevertheless, the Zionist leadership did not refrain from using the most repulsive methods for pressuring Palestinian citizens to leave their homes. Most prominent among the methods used by the Zionists to achieve this goal are the following:

1. The policy of land confiscation and settlement: The Zionist enemy has confiscated over 40% of the Palestinian land occupied in 1967. This is according to the most optimistic figures; some reports indicate that 50% of this land has been confiscated. The Zionist enemy has established approximately 200 settlements on this land under various military and non-military pretexts.

2. The use of oppressive and terrorist methods: From the day the West Bank and Gaza Strip were occupied, the occupation authorities have acted in flagrant disregard of all international and humanitarian laws. They have practiced the harshest mass oppression and terror against our people. From the first day of the occupation, they initiated arrest campaigns whereby, to date, approximately 30% of the population under occupation has been detained at least once. This figure includes 1200 women and girls. In addition, the occupation authorities practice collective punishment, assembling citizens, including women, children and elderly, and holding them in one spot for long hours, under the worst conditions.

I would like to give an example of the way the Zionists treat our people under occupation, as was reported on January 10, 1986, by *Hadashot* newspaper. The judge of Peta Tikvah was looking into the case of one Palestinian Arab citizen who refused to sell his land to an Israeli. The judge said: «We can kill this Arab, and then there will be no one to oppose.» This is how the Zionists think, and these are the Zionist men of «law and justice»...

But did 'Israel' succeed? The answer to this question can be found immediately by anyone who is interested in knowing. The brave resistance of our people against the Zionist hangmen has gained the respect and recognition of the world. Our masses have confronted all the schemes and policies of the Zionist enemy. In many struggles, our masses were able to achieve tangible victories, despite the occupation's arrogance and brutality. In confronting the policy of land confiscation and