

# The Culture of Resistance

The paper below was presented by Salem Jubran, editor of *Al Jadeed* journal published in Haifa, at the International Congress for Support of the Palestinian Culture in the Occupied Lands, held in Athens, March 29-30. Jubran's presentation was entitled: "The Role of the National Culture of Resistance in Confronting National and Cultural Uprooting." It deals with the cultural aspect of the Zionist policy for uprooting/the Palestinians who remained in the part of Palestine occupied in 1984, and with their own efforts to combat this.



The fortress of Dhafer Al Umar Al Zaidani, built during his rebellion against the Ottoman empire in 1770. Today, the citadel is the symbol of Shafa Amr, near the northern coast of Palestine.

After the disaster of 1948, the largest sector of the Palestinian people became refugees - displaced persons. This deeply affected Palestinian culture, yet it is still expected of us to preserve the Palestinian people's cultural unity and national identity. The experience of our Palestinian Arab masses who remained in their cities and villages, and their preservation of the national culture, contributed to foiling the plan to uproot them.

After 1948, the Palestinian Arabs became a minority in 'Israel' - they were no more than 133,000. In the beginning, the Zionists considered us as a "typographical error" or «temporary phenomenon». Rabin Barkat, general secretary of the Mapai party that was in power in 1951, said: «We didn't expect that we would still have minorities in the state of Israel. We wanted a state free of minorities.»

The Kafr Qassem massacre in 1956 was intended to terrorize us and make us leave. Even in the seventies, General

Aharon Yariv, former commander of the Israeli army intelligence, admitted that there were ready-made plans to expell 700-800,000 of the Palestinian Arabs that remained under occupation. Uprooting, expelling and liquidating the Arab presence in Palestine has always been a central, strategic goal of official Israeli policy. From the goal of physical uprooting stems the policy of cultural uprooting - spreading cosmopolitanism\* and ignorance, and depriving the people of their culture.

In the first few years after the establishment of the state of 'Israel', the Mapai official in charge of minorities suggested a gradual transition from Arabic to Hebrew as the official language in the Arab schools. This was intended to end our relationship to our language, so that we would undergo the same tragedy as the Algerian masses who were thrown into cultural exile by being forced to use the French colonialists' language. However, we preserved our national language. The battle began

for developing our authentic national culture, adhering to our land and history, in order to combat the uprooting policy.

The racist authorities tried to create an artificial, weak Arab culture that would harmonize with and justify their policies. Our people, however, displayed an amazing cultural resistance. This foiled the collaborationist culture and spelled doom for collaborationist journalism as was attempted with newspapers such as *Al Youm*, *Hakikat Al Amr*, *Al Anba*, etc. At the same time, our own militant journalism was maintained through *Al Ittihad* daily, *Al Jadeed* monthly journal, published regularly since 1951, and *Al Ghad* youth magazine.

## CHALLENGES TO THE ARAB CULTURE IN OCCUPIED PALESTINE

Until 1967, we were completely cut off geographically from the rest of the Palestinian people and from the rest of the world. Despite our being isolated by the enemy and by some Arab states, it was our duty to protect our link with the Palestinian history and culture, and with Arab history and Islamic civilization. Our children learned nothing about Ibrahim Tuqan, Abu Salma, Abdul Rahim Mahmoud, Mutlaq Abdul Khalq, Asaaf Al Nashashibi, Khalil Ali Sakakin, etc. We had to provide the younger generation with this ideological and cultural national heritage.

The enemy tried to implant feelings of inferiority and frustration in the face of the Israeli 'superman', in the human and national spirit of our people, in order to break down their morale and totally liquidate their national identity. We confronted these attempts by teaching our youth how the whole world respects the Arab and Palestinian culture, thought and civilization.

The enemy tried to prove that the people of Palestine lacked an integral national character, that the Palestinians are a bunch of terrorists, that the PLO is not the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, but only a terrorist organization. We confronted these allegations by presenting the literature, history and struggle of our people. We presented the reality of the Zionists'