

crime of expelling and uprooting our people. We presented the reality of the Palestinian people, and their willingness to actively participate in making peace in the framework of justice and international legitimacy.

The 'civilized' racism of the Zionist ideologues reached the point of claiming that the Palestinian people, throughout their thousands of years of living in Palestine, had not created any civilization or cultural values. They thereby aimed to prove their claims that there is no national link between the people and the land.

We confronted these racist lies. Here I would like to mention the late Emil Touma, the great intellectual. He refuted these racist lies by compiling a list of the hundreds of Palestinian Arab scientists, poets, writers, researchers and historians throughout the past centuries. This confirms the Palestinian people's active contribution to the crea-

tion of the Arab and Islamic civilization.

## THE CULTURAL AND LITERARY MOVEMENT

On this backdrop of struggle to remain in the homeland, for cultural and national survival, and to foil the conspiracy to uproot us and annihilate our nationalism, the Palestinian Arab cultural and literary movement was established in occupied Palestine after 1948. This movement had national and humanist goals, a popular orientation and revolutionary conduct - this was its ideological character. We wrote about our people and for them.

In the fifties and sixties, the phenomenon of poetry festivals flourished. Poets read their poems to mass assemblies in public squares and under the trees. This period was characterized by

enthusiasm, for the poets were close to the masses and the popular culture. Poems came first, and soon afterwards, stories. The art of story and novel writing was developed, as was literary critique. Efforts began to create an Arab theater, and to advance the plastic arts.

The Zionist critics accused our culture of being extremist and full of hate, but this was a big lie. We don't hate, but we are confronting hate. We are not extremists, but we resist the official extremism directed against us. We don't like to kill, but we defend ourselves.

The Palestinian people are not terrorists, but the victims of terrorism, resisting terrorism. It wasn't easy to destroy this distorted picture which tried to portray the victim as the killer, and the rightful owners of the land as terrorists. We in occupied Palestine resisted politically, socially, culturally and ideologically, to present the facts, and to have the conscience of the world face its responsibility vis-a-vis the Palestinian tragedy and the necessity of solving the Palestinian problem.

After 1967, there were those who wrote that the Palestinian Arabs in 'Israel' had created a political and cultural miracle through their steadfastness and developed, revolutionary nationalist culture. We believe that what we did was very normal rather than a miracle. We were steadfast and refused to leave our homeland. It was only natural to refuse having our national identity wiped out, to insist on preserving our genuine national culture. All the aspects of Palestinian culture in occupied Palestine automatically converge with Palestinian culture everywhere.

Our immortal poet, Abu Salma, once said in a conversation with us, his students: «The unity of Palestinian culture, wherever it exists, despite geographical boundaries, is proof of the unity of the Palestinian people as a strong entity.» Between 1948 and 1965, when there was no official Palestinian organization, Palestinian culture served as the institution which preserved the name *Palestine* and foretold the birth of the Palestinian revolution in its modern form. This year, we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Palestinian revolution of 1936-39. If we return to that period, we find that the best of the Palestinian intellectuals, poets, writers, critics and teachers were with the revolution. They were the cultural face of the fighting people.

From this important meeting in solidarity with the Palestinian culture, let us appeal to conscience and mind, to completely restore the unity of the PLO, the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people--- to reunify our cultural movement and increase international solidarity with our people's just cause and their national culture of resistance.

\* Cosmopolitanism: repudiation of patriotic sentiments and national culture and traditions.

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