

we would give him a chance to prove he was not a collaborator, but a true patriot, and he agreed enthusiastically. At this point we began to prepare to carry out our idea.

We sent the driver out several times to keep watch on the road and see how searches were carried out. When we were confident that our plans had a chance of success, we decided to move. We sent for the driver and had him sleep at our place. At 4 a.m. we got into the trunk of the car. We had instructed the driver how to act, and also threatened him in case he thought of giving us away to the enemy. We had taken our arms with us - four klashnikovs, two guns and some hand grenades. When we reached the checkpoint, the car stopped. We could hear the conversation between our driver and the Zionists. When the search was over, the driver went on for an hour. Then the car stopped in a deserted area. The driver got out and came around and congratulated us on the success of the first part of our plan.

At around 9 a.m. the car stopped again and the driver let us out. We found ourselves in Ain Al Sultan camp (on the West Bank, where the Zionists had evacuated all the families during the 1967 war due to the camp's proximity to the Jordan River). We jumped into the first house which was near the main road, and stayed there till about 6 p.m. We got acquainted with the camp where one of us had formerly worked as a laborer in a grove. When we reached the house, comrades who had been on the lookout for us came and gave us food, as well as a rope and deflated car tire. We stayed in the house all day. The only thing we lacked was water. We noticed a pool of rainwater and drank from the top, using a handkerchief as a filter. The date was February 21, 1972.

At around 6 p.m. we left the house, hanging a sock in front of it as the signal that we had left. We moved eastwards, led by the comrade who knew the directions of the area, but not all the details. After walking about three kilometers, we came up against a road covered with special material to pick up footprints. Beyond that there was barbed wire and then a minefield. We were braced for the situation. The fact that we might die before getting out was a possibility and we were fully prepared to take the risk. We crossed the road, the barbed wire and the minefield. We came upon a stream and walked close to the bank where it would have been difficult to plant mines. We came upon another stretch of barbed wire and crossed it. After that was a stretch of rocky heights. We began to feel acute thirst about this time. To save energy, every time we got to the top of a hill, we would slide down instead of climbing. At the bottom were salt marshes which we had to swim across. We were so thirsty that we hazarded drinking this water, but it was so salty we vomited. We walked non-stop until 4 a.m. the next day when we came upon a grassy area. We sat down and gradually we discerned the sound of running water. We got up and walked toward the sound. We found a river (the Jordan River). One of the group tried swimming to the other side, but the current was too strong. We then built a fire; after getting warm, we slept.

At around 6 a.m. we woke up. The first thing we saw was an Israeli lookout post. We hastened to hide in the trees. We then began to search for a good place to cross the river, a place where it was wider and shallower so the current would not be so strong. Luckily we found such a place. One of us tied one

end of the rope to a tree and got in the tire to swim to the eastern bank. When he got to the other side, he tied his end of the rope to a tree, and we began to cross one by one with the aid of the rope. Our klashnikovs got wet and muddy, and could only have been a burden from then on, so we cast them aside, but kept our guns and hand grenades. Again we had to cross a field of landmines, but luckily it was obvious where the mines had been planted, so we made it across safely. By the time we got to the main road it was around noon, and we were extremely hungry and thirsty.

IMPRISONED IN JORDAN

We were still in doubt as to whether we had actually made it to Jordan, but then we saw cars with Jordanian license plates. We hitched a ride with a Jordanian military vehicle. We had no alternative but to tell the driver we were fedayeen coming from the occupied territories. He asked for our IDs, but of course, we had no papers; we showed him our guns and hand grenades. Then another military vehicle came and the officer started asking us who we were. We told him. They took us to a military camp and gave us food and clothes. We were transferred to Amman and questioned by the military intelligence for fifteen days. After that, we were moved to the general intelligence. They took our pictures with us holding up a number, full-face and in profile. Then we were locked up in cells one meter by two meters. The cell I was put in contained about twelve men. Most of them were people in the resistance movement, who had been arrested after Black September. We were careful about what we said. I got to know one man whose family I was well acquainted with in the occupied territories. After I gave him details about his family, he was reassured, and the other prisoners were encouraged to talk with me.

We remained in the general intelligence prison for about a week or ten days. They then gathered all of us before the interrogation officer who asked us what we wanted. When we told him we wanted our weapons back, he laughed at us. We were then sentenced and transferred to Mahatta prison where we should remain until someone could bail us out; then we would have to check in at a police station twice daily. At Mahatta, they shaved our heads. I had pictures of my friends who had been martyred in the occupied territories. The prison warden tore them up, heedless of my attempts to stop him. They were scornful of us.

When we entered the prison, we began to look for a place to sleep. In the process, one of my comrades said, «There's your brother!» I did not know that he had been deported after the Zionist authorities had arrested him, keeping him hostage to press me to turn myself in. It was a highly emotional moment for me. My brother said he had not expected to ever see me again, thinking I had been martyred. He took me to a special room for deportees from the occupied territories, supervised by the ICRC. Some members of my family were there for a visit. They then informed the underground resistance of my presence in Mahatta. I remained there one month. Then comrades bailed me out.

Seventeen years later, comrade Hassan is still a revolutionary. He works in the PFLP's military section and is active in training new recruits how to fight the enemy.