

## Muin Bseiso

### Songs of Revolution and Life

The Palestinian cultural movement has lost one of its great leaders: The poet, Muin Bseiso, passed away on January 24th, after suffering a heart attack while in London, pursuing his nationalist duties. Announcement of the death was made by the General Secretariat of the General Union of Palestinian Writers and Journalists, and by the PLO's Department of Information and Culture.

Bseiso made great contributions to our people's cause through his revolutionary nationalist poems. He offered many sacrifices for the sake of Palestine and other Arab national causes, always standing firm against the Zionist occupiers and their imperialist allies. By his consciousness as a revolutionary writer, he contributed much towards strengthening the PLO's ties of friendship and alliance with Arab and international liberation movements, and with the Soviet Union and the socialist community. In this respect, his work was based on awareness that, though our just cause will be victorious, this victory cannot be achieved without strong relations with all progressive and peace-loving forces in the world. Muin Bseiso also exerted great efforts towards deepening relations between progressive writers all over the world.

Below is a short selection translated from one of Muin Bseiso's poems:

*I'll resist,  
there's still a white page on this wall  
the fingers not yet melted  
someone is knocking  
a telegram through the wall  
now the wires are our veins  
veins of these walls  
all our blood is shed  
it is shedding through these walls  
a telegram through the wall  
they closed a new cell  
they killed a prisoner  
they opened a new cell  
they brought a new prisoner...*



Muin Bseiso was born in Gaza, Palestine, in 1930. In 1947, he joined the National Liberation League (the Arab wing of the Palestine Communist Party). He completed his higher education in Cairo, where he participated in the 1952 demonstrations that led to the overthrow of the monarchy. He worked as a teacher and in the media in Palestine and other Arab countries. While the Zionists briefly occupied the Gaza Strip in 1956, he was imprisoned for being involved in the resistance. He was later to be imprisoned in Egypt, charged with membership in the Egyptian Communist Party. Having been abroad for a period, Bseiso returned to Beirut at the start of the 1982 Israeli siege and directed his revolutionary poems towards the developments of the war.

In 1952, Bseiso published his first collection of poems, entitled "Al Maaraka" (The Battle), to be followed by many others, some of which were later translated into English, German, French and Russian.

Muin Bseiso was also one of the main pioneers in Palestinian theater, and wrote many plays including "The Death of Che Guevara", "Samson and Delila" and "The Black Revolution". He served as assistant editor-in-chief of *Lotus* magazine, published by the Afro-Asian Writers Union, and was honored with the Lotus international prize, as well as with the highest Palestinian medal, the Shield of the Revolution. He was responsible for cultural affairs in the General Secretariat of the General Union of Palestinian Writers and Journalists, and a member of the Palestinian National Council.



*"I do not believe that there is a separation between politics and poetry. The real poet shapes from these two streams his political and poetic existence. He derives themes from his principles and commitment to the cause he serves. The cause of the revolution for Palestinian poets is land, as progressive motifs are for other poets who struggle against military dictatorship to maintain progressive values."*

— Muin Bseiso, excerpt from a 1983 interview, reprinted in "Al Fajr".