

What has become of the secular democratic movement of the Palestinian people in these dangerous times?

For years I continued to hope that the Palestinian secular movement would be at the forefront, confronting the conspiracies directed against it and against the just struggle of the Palestinian people. I have always believed that the secular movement reflected the true aspirations of the Palestinian people, their struggle for national liberation and the creation of a secular democratic state in all of historical Palestine. I still believe that this will happen sooner or later. In my opinion, that is the only long term solution by which the Palestinian people can obtain justice and see their legitimate and inalienable rights respected.

On the eve of Oslo, I was the only Palestinian in Canada to denounce the preparatory phase (secret negotiations with Washington, the meeting of the PNC (Palestinian National Council) in Algiers in 1988 and the Madrid Conference in 1991) of the Oslo Accords. At the time, I was accused of betraying the Palestinian cause, and my own family who, still living under Israeli occupation, continue their daily struggle and resistance like the rest of the Palestinian population, were threatened. All those attempts to seduce and intimidate did not stop me from taking the position which I took. There is a partial account of these events which appears in my book, *Palestine: le refus de disparaître (Palestine: the Refusal to Disappear)*¹ in the section

entitled “Un État ou deux États?” (One State or Two States?).

I am not a prophet and I do not claim to possess any absolute truth. Today I simply call upon the support of all Palestinians and their sympathisers who believe, as I do, that sooner or later the secular movement will lead to the total liberation of Palestine and the creation of a secular and democratic (Palestinian-*Israeli*) state where all can live as equals both in terms of rights and obligations, be they Christian, Muslim, or Jewish.

It is in this respect that I ask the question: “What has become of the secular democratic movement of the Palestinian people in these dangerous times? First, for those friends of the Palestinian people I will paraphrase the words of Edward Said: Remember the solidarity expressed to Palestine here and everywhere . . . And remember also that it concerns a cause in which many people have become engaged despite terrible difficulties and obstacles. Why? Because it is a just cause, a high ideal, a moral quest for equality and human rights. (Professor Edward Said, 1935-2003)

Today, the Palestinian people find themselves facing Israel, the United States, puppet Arab regimes, as well as two alternatives front and centre on the Palestinian stage: Hamas, with its Islamist, therefore non-secular ideology, and a group of collaborators who control the direction of Fatah. In my opinion, neither of these two choices can lead the Palestinian people to the future which they seek and for which they have sacrificed so much. This Palestinian people, comprised in majority of

¹ Palestine Le refus de disparaître, Montréal édition Pleine Lune, Novemembr 2005.

refugees, need to return home and to live in harmony with the populations now living in historical Palestine in one secular democratic state. In order for this to take place, it is necessary to:

- (1) **reject** the Oslo Accords which do not even render possible the creation of a mini-state in 22% of historical Palestine. It is Oslo which produced the so-called Palestinian Authority which Abbas – the Palestinian Godfather – directs, and which Hamas wishes to acquire. This, while the Palestinian people live under occupation and in exile in refugee camps, and elsewhere in the world.
- (2) **dismantle** the Palestinian Authority and admit that the Oslo process was nothing but a masquerade designed to advantage Israeli-American plans for the region. Instead of resigning, Abbas and the other collaborators have embraced the Israeli-American schemes. In so doing, Abbas destroys and discredits the Palestinian people and their secular movement which Fatah has directed for more than 30 years. One must understand that Israeli-American and Western support for Abbas, as well as that of reactionary Arab regimes, has as its objective the destruction of the secular Palestinian movement. This support is the embrace of the Serpent in Eden, the kiss of death. It becomes easier for the enemies of the Palestinian people to sell their “War Against Terror” and the “terrorists” (Hamas, Hizbollah. . .) and so to continue their attacks upon the Palestinian, Lebanese, and Iraqi peoples. They state so openly. See:

<http://www.jewishindependent.ca/archives/June07/archives07June22-03.html>²

What the enemies of the Palestinian people seek is to put into effect the Yagal Allon plan of 1969. In other words, back Jordanian intervention while rendering to Jordanian control those few remaining West Bank Palestinian enclaves or bantustans;

by the same token, Gaza comes under Egyptian control and we return to the same situation which prevailed before 1967. And this subsequent to Israel achieving its aims in the West Bank (the withdrawal of settlers from Gaza and the subsequent increase of settlers and settlements in the West Bank must be seen in this light.) Ergo, according to the Israeli scheme, never again a Palestine, never again talk of a Palestinian state nor of the Right of Return. Their scheme is transparent.

² *Frisch believes that Israel has two main objectives on its road towards peace. In the short term, he said, Israel seeks to divide and conquer its enemies by increasing the differences between Gaza (Hamas) and the West Bank (Fatah). In the long term, Frisch(*) said, he does not think the Palestinians would ever be content with a two-state solution that gives them a state comprised of only 20 per cent of the land mass of Israel and, therefore, he believes Israel hopes to "bring an end to the Palestinian state option ... draw in the Jordanian and Egyptian states and restore, more or less, the political order that prevailed before 1967."*

() Frisch, who has been hailed as one of the world's top experts on Palestinian and Arab politics and who is the senior research associate at the Begin-Sadat Centre for Strategic Studies, talked about the prospects for peace in Israel*

- (3) **call** upon Palestinian secularists and democrats, upon Palestinian intellectuals, upon the entire Palestinian population both inside and outside Palestine to mobilise massively in order to change the current situation.
- (4) **call** an emergency meeting of the PNC (Palestinian National Council), bound by its original Charter as soon as possible outside Palestine far from pressures which can be exercised upon it by the Israeli-Arab-American triumvirate. And let the PNC take the necessary decisions such as the situation calls for.
- (5) **have** Mahmoud Abbas and his government resign immediately. They no longer have the confidence of the Palestinian people.
- (6) **have** Farouk El Kadoumi, supreme leader of Fatah, dismiss Abbas, the latter's security service, and the actual clique running Fatah. Kadoumi must create a tribunal in order to judge them. Moreover, Fatah's Congress must be assembled as soon as possible to elect a new Central Committee if Fatah wishes to remain as actor on the Palestinian scene. Hamas must make changes to its Islamist program if it too wishes to remain as a legitimate actor in the Palestinian struggle. The Palestinian population is 35% Christian, the majority of whom live in exile, and the majority of the Palestinian population (both Muslim and Christian) have no interest in Islamist ideology, an ideology which greatly pleases Israel and justifies Israel's call for a Jewish-only state. On this same subject please read the

article, "Israel and Hamas: The Zionist-Islamist Waltz"³

Today, the Palestinian population is in shock everywhere – in the West Bank, in Gaza, all over the world. The daily resistance continues. Today, Palestinians take neither Haniyeh nor Abbas seriously; these two struggle over a Palestinian Authority created by Oslo. Furthermore, Palestinian NGOs are in agony.

- (7) **continue** the struggle via popular committees (as during the First Intifada) which will benefit from the uncontested support of the Palestinian people both inside and outside Palestine. This struggle will renew itself more quickly than the enemies of the Palestinian people realise.
- (8) **I call** upon the friends of the Palestinian people, and upon all those who support their struggle for a secular democratic state in all of the territory of historical Palestine to consolidate and continue their support for the Palestinian people whose struggle has endured for so long.

I ask all those who agree with me to pass along Edward Said's message: "Remember the solidarity expressed to Palestine here and everywhere . . . And remember also that it concerns a cause in which many people have become engaged despite terrible difficulties and obstacles. Why? Because it is a just cause, a high ideal, a moral quest for equality and human rights".

³ *Rezeq Faraj was born in Palestine.This article was first printed in Covert Action Quarterly.No.71, Winter 2001. In addition <http://www.thehandstand.org/archive/jan2002/EdcellJan2002/rezeq/index.htm>>.*

