

**“Testimony of Adel Abdel Karim (Prepared and Edited by Yahya Yakhluf)” [Excerpts]. *Awraq Filasteeniya*, Volume 11 (Winter 2016): 14-16. Translated by *The Palestinian Revolution*, 2016.<sup>1</sup>**

...During the summer break of 1958 I went back to Damascus... One day, while I was visiting Dr. Abdel Karim al-As'ad, he told me: “I have an appointment with a political activist. He is a well-known Palestinian whose name is Yasser Arafat, and he was just part of a Palestinian delegation that went to Iraq to congratulate them on the success of the revolution there. He will have with him someone called Ali Nasser Yassin (Abu Nasir).”

I went with Dr Abdel Karim to meet Arafat and Ali Nasser Yassin, so we found the former but not the latter. That day, we talked about the Iraqi revolution and about Palestine. He spoke like a leader and exaggerated his importance by referring to his extensive networks. That day, I discussed with him the idea of starting a Palestinian magazine and I asked him to help us secure authorisation to issue it in Cairo as we were unable to publish it in Damascus. He exhibited enthusiasm and readiness, and said that they will carry all the costs. The meeting ended without us getting his address or telephone number.

I returned after the vacation ended to Kuwait, where I found myself transferred from the school I was teaching at in Fahaheel to the Industrial College. This basically meant that I was promoted.

At the end of October or the beginning of November 1958, Yasser Arafat visited me all of a sudden (I later learnt that he got my address from Dr. Abdel Karim). We spoke about the magazine, and he replied by saying that the Egyptians did not agree to it. He then changed the subject and told me: “we must create a revolution, just like the Algerian one”.

I liked the idea, and we discussed the subject extensively, and at the end we agreed to start a group to proceed with the work. We decided to have a meeting soon in which two would be represented from my side and two from his. We would then pick an additional two from Damascus.

At the first meeting, Khalil al-Wazir (Abu Jihad) and Yousef Amireh came with Yasser Arafat. I brought with me my two friends Omar Husni Omar and Mahmoud Hanouneh. We started to discuss the idea of the Palestinian revolution and how we could create a basis for it. After the meeting, we

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agreed to continue preparatory meetings, and we used to meet once every two weeks at the house of Omar Hosni Omar in Fahaheel. We agreed to select two from Damascus: Abdallah Danan and Abdel Karim Abdel Rahim (who is from the town of Abassyieh in Palestine).

During the preparatory meetings period Mahmoud Hanouneh withdrew, because he was a committed member of the Ba'ath party, and as a committed member he had to inform his party. And since, morally, he was not prepared to trick us, he was submitting his resignation but had no problem with participating as a supporter of the group.

Hanouneh resigned, so I brought with me a friend called Tawfiq Shadid (who was a cousin of Ali Nasser Yassin). Tawfiq Shadid stayed with us until May 1959, and he was in constant disagreement with Yasser Arafat. In May, Tawfiq Shadid gave his resignation from the group. Until that date, we still did not have a name for the organisation that was going to launch an armed revolution.

In the last week of May, we held a decisive meeting during which we decided to find a name for our new organisation and to write a manifesto through which we would announce our ideas.

We were all captivated by the Algerian revolution, and that is why our name was inspired by the Algerian National Liberation Front. We initially suggested that we name ourselves the Palestinian National Liberation Front. But in the discussion, we decided that the word 'front' does not apply to us, because a front is a coalition between a group of organisations. As such, we changed the word 'front' with 'movement', and the name of the organisation became the Palestinian National Liberation Movement. We then discovered our acronym by reversing the first letters of each word, and this became "Fath" [n.e. Fateh in colloquial Arabic]. The name had optimistic connotations for us. After all, it appeared in the Quran in the verse: "When the Victory of God Arrives and the Fath".

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In that meeting we discussed the subject of the manifesto that would specify our identity (work at the time was secretive, very secretive), and the brothers entrusted me with the writing this manifesto. Our meeting took place during the last week of May 1959, so I promised them to finish writing the manifesto in the first week of June 1959. I was able to do that, and after the manifesto was completed and approved, Khalil al-Wazir (Abu Jihad) took it from me and worked on printing and distributing it. At the time, Mohammad al-Ifraji

contributed to distributing it in Gaza. We called ourselves at that meeting: the Central Committee of the Movement.

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After the manifesto, there was a need to issue a magazine that would carry our ideas and publish our opinions without revealing who we were. One day, Abu Jihad informed me that he had found a way of issuing it from Beirut. As such, Filastinuna was issued... Our movement now had two media tools: Our Movement's Manifesto (*Bayan Harakatuna*) and Filastinuna Magazine. I used to write the editorial for the magazine under the title 'Our Opinion'...