

Ḥamās: Historical Roots and Charter (1989)

‘Abdallāh ‘Azzām

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[...]

The tragedy of Palestine and its memories left deep wounds. We lived through it by tears and blood and witnessed our lands being handed over in 1949 after the Treaty of Rhodes. Our village (Silat al-Ḥārithiyya) received 83,000 *dūnums* from the Jezreel valley plain in this treaty by Aḥmad Ṣīdqī al-Jundī—the Commander of the Jordanian Army and the representative of Jordan in the Treaty of Rhodes on 3 April 1948. According to this treaty, the green triangle—the most fertile land in Palestine—was handed over in breach of previous treaties.

I have, because of these nights, wounds that are deep in the heart

I saw the villagers being devastated about giving up their land, having cultivated it with corn and wheat in the Jezreel valley plain, only for the Jews to collect the crops instead of them. The Jewish gangs killed them and put the wheat in their stomach and hanged them on iron poles as an example.

I saw our village fallen in military terms from 1949 to 1967; There were 5000 people and 100 rifles with 100 bullets for each.

I saw our village endure its degrading tragedy and expect to be swallowed at any moment. It was guarded by the villagers (National Guard) who earned only two Jordanian dinars per month, even though they worked from evening till morning night after night.

I saw the Jews reach our homes many nights, and when our neighbor Tawfiq informed the Army in Jenin, they accused him of treachery and put him in jail to be

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presented for military trial, and only God saved him after being advised by one of the officers to testify that he had just been dreaming.

I saw our land being sold and destroyed, its walls calling for God to take revenge. The villagers were living in poverty with only cow's milk left to drink.

Then the Jews came one day and took some of the cows one morning, and my father and the rest of the village council members went to Šāliḥ al-Shar' and asked him to return their cows, which were the only source of food for their families. Šāliḥ al-Shar' (a Jordanian border officer) replied saying: The cows of Sila are finally gone—I can relax now.

After a while some guys from Zabūbā, a nearby village, took a group of sheep from the Jews, and while celebrating the victory they slaughtered some of them. Then Jordanian authorities took some of the men and put them in jail, tortured them, and bought 400 sheep to give back to the Jews with an apology.

I also saw Qāsim Dawāsa killed by a Jewish patrol in front of our house.

Memories of 1967

I saw the Jewish tanks pass by a group of unarmed villages, including ours, and only a few shots were fired against them with English Lee Enfield rifles by five young men, of which I was one. Then a Jordanian officer said to us: "this tank can easily run over you without the driver being hurt." I was in our village during the occupation of 1967 when the West Bank and the al-Aqṣā Mosque fell without even ten young men or Jordanian soldiers being killed around it.

I heard 'Abd al-Nāṣir's telegram to King Ḥusayn, which Israeli radio broadcast, repeating it from time to another during the battle, saying "we destroyed two-thirds of Israeli aircrafts and our planes are over Tel Aviv. Be strong, your majesty. Silmī." Silmī was 'Abd al-Nāṣir's code name.

I saw the Nuṣayrī regime, and as I read in the book *The Conspiracy and the Battle of Fate* by Sa'd Jum'a, Jordanian Prime Minister during the Catastrophe, Jordan asked Syria to provide air cover from the military leadership in Syria, but they kept postponing their reply and Jordan is still waiting for that air cover. Sa'd Jum'a said: "Then we found out that Israel sent a message to ambassador of the Big State [i.e., the United States] in Damascus, America, saying Israel is sympathetic towards the Alawi socialist experience in Syria, and if Syria remains silent Israel will not touch it and the ambassador send a telegram to the military leadership, which agreed immediately."

Churchill's grandson says in his book *The Six Day War*: "While the Syrian Artillery was firing thousands of tons of explosives on empty nests and dry hay, the Israeli bulldozers were on their way to the Golan. While they were on their way, one of the tanks jammed and its driver directed the gun towards the Israeli tanks and destroyed six tanks, which delayed them for 8 hours at that axis."

The shameful thing is that the Syrian ambassador to the UN announced that Israel occupied al-Qunayṭra, which was denied by Israeli ambassador.

To talk about the Egyptian front, I will ask you to read *The Planes Crashed at Dawn* by the Jew Bārūkh Nādāl, who had lived there for 14 years (1935–1967), and who

arranged for a party on 5 June 1967, attended by 400 pilots. At 2 am Bārūkh divided the officers into two: the males were named “Egyptian MiG” and females “Israeli Mirage”... Then Bārūkh continues his story: they spent the whole night having fun, drinking and having sex until 4 am.

He says: “I did not leave Cairo until I saw it covered with smoke of burnt airports, as a result of the Israeli air raids at 5 am.”

I lived through the theatre of ‘Abd al-Nāṣir’s resignation on 8 June 1967, when he said: “we knew for sure that the attack would be on Monday 5 June, and the American ambassador called me at 7 pm saying ‘don’t strike’, and the Russian ambassador called at 3 am saying ‘don’t strike’. The first Israeli strike came two hours later, at 5 am.”

I compared this to the situation of the Jews, who are motivated by religion, as Dāyān’s daughter mentions in her book *Soldier from Israel*: “We were afraid because of the news of the amassing of enemy troops on the southern front, but then the rabbi came and prayed with us and read some texts from the Holy Book, which made us feel safe.”

As for the Egyptian Army, the radio was giving it “Strike for the spring, for life, for the love of life” instead of “Verily, God has purchased of the believers their lives and their properties; for the price that theirs shall be the Paradise. They fight in God’s Cause, so they kill and are killed”.

And the media outlets were saying: “Umm Kulthūm is with you in battle, and ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm and Shādiya are with you in battle” instead of “God is with you in Battle” or “And they said nothing but: ‘Our Lord! Forgive us our sins and our transgressions (in keeping our duties to you), establish our feet firmly, and give us victory over the disbelieving folk.”

In the Syrian army newspaper, one month before the battle, Ibrāhīm Ikhlaš wrote: “God, capitalism and imperialism, all the dominant values of the old society have become artifacts in the museums of history” (Exalted be He from the great falsehoods that they speak.)

Memories of the Fedayeen Activity (1967–1970)

I took part in the Fedayeen activities from 1967 to 1970. The beginning of Fataḥ was very clean, there were good people, respected for their actions and seriousness. Then I saw many other people joining the organization, they were some of those who fled from the army or failure in school, they carried weapons without education or morals, they fell in the hands of leftists trading with blood, and they were building their glory over the bodies of poor Palestinians. They taught the youth how to rebel against religion, and to glorify Lenin, Stalin, Guevara, Mao, and Ho Chi Minh. They raised the banner of secularism, and they fought people who maintained their morals, and they oppressed the devout.

Then George Ḥabash came along and founded the Popular Front, and the communist Nāyif Ḥawātima founded the Democratic Front (they were in one front, and ‘Abd al-Nāṣir was supporting anyone who was fighting Islam), and the communists established al-Anṣār Organization, but they did not perform any operations.

Then came the Syrian Ba'th party which formed the Syrian "al-Şā'iqa" while the Iraqi Ba'th party formed the Iraqi al-Şā'iqa.

Then Jordan lured all these fronts, preparing for battle with them, keeping account of their faults and counting their breaths. Then the Fedayeen organizations provoked the anger of the Jordanian regime, incensing it greatly. Their slogans filled the walls of Amman in red and black ink and broad lines: "All power to the resistance", "Amman is the Hanoi of the Arabs", and "Our road to Palestine is the toppling of the reactionary regime in Amman".

They kidnapped three aircraft from Europe in one day, and they gathered them in al-Azraq and blew them up.

I was under the missiles and bombs that were falling over people everywhere in 1970 after the agreement between Jordan and 'Abd al-Nāşir.

Later, I lived the time of besieging the Fedayeen in the cities, and their chasing from home to home, from mountain to mountain in Amman. The actions of 1970 were horrible, to the extent that psychological and mental illness appeared among children because of the shooting day and night.

I also lived through the gathering of the Fedayeen in the Jirāsh woods following the many agreements between Waşfi al-Tall, the Jordanian Prime Minister, and the leaders of the Fedayeen organizations. Then I lived through the final crushing of the Fedayeen in the Jerash woods with tanks and the elimination of the Fedayeen. I was studying in Cairo when Waşfi al-Tall was assassinated in Cairo in front of the Sheraton hotel by some Palestinians. I followed the events of the expulsion of the Palestinian people from Jordan to Syria, and then their eviction from Syria and their gathering in Lebanon. Then came the battle between Palestinians and the Maronites in Lebanon; the Organization [PLO] nearly occupied Lebanon, but the situation ended when the Nuşayrīs entered with Carter's blessing and stood by the Christians against the Muslims and the latter were eliminated at Tal al-Za'tar.

[...]

The Jihad of the Islamic Movement (1969- 1970)

After the defeat of the Arabs in 1967, Fatah moved forward and expanded its cadres and called for people. Many came forward but most of them were scum. The Islamic movement came late, but it offered three brigades and it had four bases that were under Fatah's name and the people called them the "Bases of the Shaykhs", and they performed well. I was a commander in one of these bases (the "Bayt al-Maqdis" base in Marw).

In fact the first brigade that moved forward—and I was part of it—was an exemplary unit. Among us was a group of Sudanese brothers led by the Sudanese Minister Muḥammad Şāliḥ 'Umar, who was later martyred in the Aba Peninsula under Egyptian aerial bombardment.

It was a group of high morals and strong Islamic ethics, and I wrote some recollections of it in "Messages from Heart to Heart" in *al-Jihād* magazine—a message of devo-

tion, brotherhood, asceticism, and love. They were all refusing to speak about their battles because they were afraid of being insincere. The leader and martyr Ṣālih Ḥasan was educating us through his deeds not his words, and his brother Abū Khalīl was considering us as his brothers, not as his students. Our general leader ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ‘Alī had our greatest respect, love and admiration.

The Sheikh groups remained, making their way between wild hurricanes that aimed to destroy the groups. We appreciated the good relationship with the Jordanian army, which respected us greatly, to the point where Khalaf Rāfa‘—the brigade commander responsible for guarding the borders of Ghawr—would stop his car if he saw any of our young men.

Memories of al-Rafīd and Ḥarthā

Between us and the locals was a close connection and a deep love, especially with those living near our bases. I want to highlight the ‘Ubaydāt clan in al-Rafīd and Ḥarthā. They dealt with us as if we were their sons and they cared so much about us. They took a good position when the Jordanian army entered to attack our bases. They said, “our blood will be in your way if you seek to harm them, and our chests are open in your way if you seek to hurt them”. They said, “we knew them as teachers to our sons, as imams and preachers in our mosques, and as guardians of our villages and farms.” In fact, God knows that al-Rafīd will not be forgotten for as long as we live. One of their sons, Aḥmad, knew us from the talk of his family, the people in the village and his clan, so he loved us from a distance. When he rose to high positions in the state, even to the office of prime minister, he defended us when hearsay proliferated and campaigns were waged against us.

The brothers engaged in many battles, and the cooperation from the Jordanian army was excellent. We were honest with it, so it was honest with us; we treated them with Islamic chivalry and they treated us with manliness and Bedouin chivalry.

The Battle of al-Mashrū‘

I cannot ever forget the battle we entered at al-Mashrū‘ (Rutenberg). I was there with Abu Muṣ‘ab al-Sūrī, who was gravely wounded beside me during the battle, when the commander of the Jordanian unit came through the fire and shooting (he was wounded too) and saved our brother and took him to the hospital.

The Battle of 5 June 1970

Six of our brothers, including Abū Ismā‘īl Mahdī al-Idlibī al-Ḥamawī, Ibrāhīm (Bin Bella), and Bilāl al-Filistīnī were able to confront Israeli tanks and a minesweeper. Dāyān sent a Canadian and an American correspondent to go with them to see that the Fedayeen activities had ended, and by God’s help they jumped out on them like Djinn from underground. The two journalists were wounded, and the Jews admitted that 12 were killed, but the real number of dead was much higher.

The Arab media, especially Fataḥ, talked about this wonderful operation at 4 pm on 5 June. Three of our brothers were martyred, including the beloved Mahdi al-Idlibī, who had been in my base, and Bilāl al-Maqdisī from the "Gaza base".

Sayyid Quṭb Operation:

Brother Abū 'Amr (Sāliḥ Ḥasan) prepared a rocket attack dubbed the "Sayyid Quṭb operation" against a patrol of several tanks. He coordinated the plan, supervised the location, and distributed the rockets which he would set off with electricity, but it so happened that the Jews ambushed him near the road. A battle ensued between them, and Abū 'Amru fell a martyr along with Maḥmūd al-Barqāwī and Zuhayr Qishū (from Hama). It was a fortunate coincidence that the date of their death was the same as that of Sayyid Quṭb, namely, 29 August 1970.

Thus Abū 'Amr won his martyrdom—which we all seek from God—twenty days before the crackdown on the Fedayeen activity in Jordan. His body was taken with great honour to Amman airport and received at the airport of Kuwait where his family lived. It was a great day for Muslims in Kuwait.

I transported Zuhayr's body to Hama in Syria, and I stayed there several days with Shaykh Marwān Ḥadīd, and then I took care of the funeral of Naṣir 'Īsā, the brother of Dr. Rashīd 'Īsā who stayed with us in Palestine to take care of his brothers in Hama. 'Abd al-Sattār al-Za'īm lived with us in Palestine at that time too.

Then began the preparations to strike the Fedayeen, and those of us responsible for the young men gathered together and decided that if the army attacks the Fedayeen, we would not enter into this conflict. We feared that forbidden blood would be spilled, for killing a Muslim is a great offense to God. Moreover, the battle was not clear-cut, and the banner was populist and not Islamic, especially since the Fedayeen were full of bad people. Fighting the army was completely out of the question from the standpoint of Sharia, logic, and interest.

We preferred to be neutral, and we discussed the dangers lurking around the next stage and the murkiness of the coming nights, but God's eye was looking after this group, so I said: take heart, for God will not lead us astray and this will not end with us dying under Jordanian tanks. [...]

And God's great favor was upon us and His watchful eye watched over us and no one was hurt, although many citizens were killed, tortured, imprisoned, and humiliated.

The Martyrs

31 martyrs from the Islamic movement were martyred, including: Riḍwān Kriṣhān, Riḍwān Bal'a al-Dimashqī, the Yemeni officer Muḥammad Sa'īd Bā'bād and Abū l-Ḥasan Ibrāhīm al-Ghazzī, who was one of Fataḥ's founders and one of the best trainers in the 'Alūk camp.

My Opinion of the Jihad of the Islamic Movement in 1969

The truth is that there were two shortcomings.

1 – First, [the movement] was late in mobilizing for jihad, so it was preceded by the secular, communist and national organizations, who are all enemies of Islam and fight the Islamist line.

It was so hard during this time to find someone in these organizations who prayed. I hope you can understand the extent of the evil in the organizations and the depths to which they sank: on 4 April 1970—the 100-year anniversary of Lenin's birth—all the organizations agreed—without exception—to celebrate for a week this glorious and honorable anniversary!! And the Jordanian Minister of Religious Endowments participated in arranging and contributing to the success of the celebration.

You can imagine the deep distress that we—the members of the Islamic movement—felt while living in these dark circumstances.

I remember being subpoenaed to a military court for criticizing Guevara. I told the cultivated revolutionary representing the prosecution: “who is Guevara?” He said: “A noble fighter”. I said “what is Fataḥ's religion?” Then he said “Fataḥ has no religion”. So I said “As for me, my religion is Islam, and I am here to wage Jihad in God's path. As for Guevara, he is here, under my foot.”

This type of scum didn't exist in 1948 because the Islamic movement back then was the master of the situation, a symbol of perseverance, and a shining star on the Palestinian scene. That was because it joined the Jihad before most people and remained steadfast until it suffered the calamities that were brought by God through the hands of their Arab rulers at the time.

[...]

Harbingers of the Jihad of the Intifada

I had been sensing for years that the Jews were afraid of the repercussions of the earthquake in Afghanistan, and I had been noticing the tightened security measures applied by the Israeli security agencies on anyone who arrived from Pakistan. Their fear increased when they found that waves of Arab youth were heading to Afghanistan. Then the martyrs began to fall, and Israel rose up in fears and mobilized Western government agencies and the United States to be stricter about granting visas to Pakistan. Then came the clear orders to the international airlines not to let anyone on board without a visa check.

The Jewish-American Shachterman wrote about the jihad in Afghanistan: “What have we done? We have awoken the giant.” And the Jews set as a condition in the Geneva negotiations that the Afghan training camps in Pakistan be closed so that Arab youth could not train there.

Meanwhile, the Islamic current, consisting of people in the Islamic Awakening who were affected by the Islamic mother movement in Palestine, were including in their

chants [*anāshīd*] famous names from the Afghan jihad who had become symbols of sacrifice and models of pride, glory and redemption.

In their national Palestinian chants [they would sing]: “My brother Sayyāf, the Russians are afraid of you; my brother Ḥekmatyār, you are like fire to the enemy; we want men, prepare the generations, arise at night, tear down the mountains, like the steadfast Sayyāf”.

The [Palestinian] youth began to read the book *Signs of the Merciful in the Afghan Jihad*; they printed it and disseminated it while the Israeli security forces pursued it and chased them.

[...]

The Beginning of the Jihad of the Intifada

It began with military operations undertaken by the al-Jihad organization led by 'Abd al-'Azīz 'Awda and Faṭḥī al-Shiqāqī in Gaza and its surrounding areas. There were also some operations by al-Jihad Battallions and by some of the youth from Fataḥ who had returned to God, such as the Wailing Wall operation that shook the Jews. Then the Jabāliyā operation happened, in which a Jew crushed four people in a refugee camp to avenge his brother. Then the Muslims and the people in Palestine mobilized, and Aḥmad Yāsīn arose as a symbol of the steadfastness of the Islamic movement. The Palestinian street began to return to God to the echoes of “God is great, Khaybar, Khaybar, Khaybar, Oh Jews; the religion of Muḥammad is returning.” All the classes and factions of the Palestinian people participated in this Jihad. The Organization began to invest money to support the uprising, but the Islamic Resistance Movement (Ḥamās) emerged in an organized and clear way, and it grew more forceful by the day, its structure solidifying and its momentum growing. Then the movement began to attract the attention and the admiration of the masses because of its commitment and organization. We were watching and waiting for that day when the stones would become live ammunition in the hands of Ḥamās and the stones could be replaced by bombs and guns; This is easy if the young men seize the weapons from their enemies and fight them with it. We were waiting for the day when the land would shake under the Jews and they would be afraid. We were praying to God that He would provide an opening to Palestine through which we can perform the worship of fighting and the duty of jihad.