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SEYASAT

Special Edition:

The Palestinian Revolution, 50 Years Later



Contributions Focusing on the Path, the Visions and the Strategies



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Seyasat Magazine Edition (31): English Summary

With the Slogan: Fatah Is the Ether, “Fatah Passed from Here”

Introduction:

SEYASAT entitles its thirty-first issue with the slogan: Fatah Is the Ether, “Fatah Passed from Here”. It dedicates the current issue to celebration of the golden jubilee of the founding of Fatah Movement, the largest Palestinian faction which has left its mark on the Palestinian national political history as well as the social and cultural life and development of the Palestinian identity.

In this issue, SEYASAT abandons its usual classification of its materials into studies, articles, a seminar, public policy and international policy. All materials in this issue are in the form of studies, articles and testimonies on or about Fatah and readings into the reality of Fatah. Authors of this issue of SEYASAT vary to include leadership figures such as members of the Central Committee and the Revolutionary Council of the Movement, as well as field leaders, academics and political researchers.

Title of Article: ”Between Fatah and Yasser Arafat, Secret of the Palestinian National Recipe”

Author: Dr. Atef Abu Seif

It is impossible to talk about Fatah without talking about its founder Yasser Arafat. SEYASAT opens this issue with an article by its editor, Dr. Atef Abu Seif, about Yasser Arafat’s role in the Palestinian national movement and Fatah. In his article, Abu Seif describes the virtues of Yasser Arafat and his status in the collective consciousness of the Palestinians in general and Fatah members in particular. Abu Seif then demonstrates the importance of Fatah Movement to the Palestinian national movement and the Palestinian political accomplishment, concluding that it is impossible to imagine contemporary Palestinian history without Fatah.

Title of Article: "From the Memory ... Fatah in the Early Days"

Author: Mr. William Nassar

William Nassar writes about his experience in Fatah Movement, which he joined in the early days of Fatah before being captured and imprisoned by Israel and later released in a prisoner exchange deal to resume working within the ranks of Fatah. William Nassar's study attempts to recall the beginnings of Fatah Movement by answering important historical questions such as: Why was Fatah launched and what was the need for it, and how was it launched? In other words, how was the idea of founding Fatah forged in the minds of its founding fathers? Nassar attempts to answer the great historical question about the beginnings of Fatah: Was Fatah indeed launched in 1965, or was it founded in 1954 and kept operating secretly until its existence was declared in 1965? Nassar utilizes his intelligent reading of history, aided by his personal experience and intimate knowledge as opposed to academic writings, to explore and reach the closest answer to the truth.

Nassar's study is an important historical document for understanding Fatah Movement today, more than half a century after the idea of Fatah came into existence.

As Nassar concludes, after years of hard work accompanied by some military action in the Occupied Territories, and after the uprising of the Palestinian people broke out, political work began to bear fruit, giving rise to the Palestinian National Authority which was supposed to turn into a Palestinian state in 1999. However, the enemy reneged, as usual, on the signed agreements and the Palestinian issue entered yet another downward spiral. In order for Fatah to navigate its way out of this vortex, it has to work hard to rebuild Fatah institutions abroad, revive its alliances and strengthen its relations with friendly countries that can stand with it in dire times.

It basically has to say “enough is enough” to the negotiation approach and put in its place a new/old idea that rejects partition and demands establishment of a unified state in historic Palestine in which we become citizens enjoying equal rights to those of the remaining population in realization of the principles of international law and human rights. Without working to change the current path, we will remain caught up in the same vortex; we will fail to achieve any results and the compass will be lost after Fatah managed to steer it well over the past fifty years.

Title of Article: "Fatah Half a Century Later: Legitimacy and Sustainability of the Idea, and Stumbling of the Organization and Practice"

Author: Dr. Ibrahim Abrash

Former Minister of Culture and Member of the Advisory Council of Fatah, Dr. Ibrahim Abrash, presented a study entitled "Fatah Half a Century Later: Legitimacy and Sustainability of the Idea, and Stumbling of the Organization and Practice." Abrash discussed the reality and the future of Fatah Movement along three axes: (1) Fatah Movement as a national necessity, (2) strategic issues of concern to Fatah which require a different approach, and (3) the Seventh Conference and the challenge of restoring the national decision.

On the first axis, Abrash noted that although every mistake, breakdown or corruption in the post-Oslo era is ascribed to Fatah Movement — hence the notions of Fatah authority, Fatah government and Fatah security services, etc., the majority of cabinet members, advisors to the Prime Minister and even advisors to President Abu Mazen, managers and administrators of the most important civil society and media institutions, and university presidents are not Fatah members. The problem is that Fatah Movement subsists on the Authority's funds, and this has harmed Fatah a lot and rendered it a false witness to what goes on.

Nonetheless, the Palestinian people continue to pin their hopes on Fatah Movement to realize their national goals for several reasons:

1. Because Fatah continues to raise the Palestinian national banner as an identity, history and political entity, and continues to struggle politically to establish the independent Palestinian state, even on parts of the Palestinian land, without infringement on the declaration of independence of the state in Algeria in 1988.
2. Because Fatah represents, more than any other ideological group, the major contrast to Israel and its Zionist Project. Israel realizes very well that the antithesis to its Zionist project is the national project, espoused and represented thus far by Fatah Movement, not any other Palestinian group. As such, there is no value to the PLO — with full appreciation to all political forces comprising it — without Fatah.
3. In spite of the differences within Fatah Movement, it remains the largest and most cohesive faction. On the one hand, leftist forces alone cannot represent the national project for ideological as well as realistic objective considerations pertaining to their demise and limited popular appeal; on the other hand, political Islam groups in Palestine do not espouse a national project and do not express the national dimension and affiliation.

It has become clear — especially in the wake of the Sixth Conference and the confusions and external pressures that accompanied convening it and the leaders it generated — that the gap is growing day by day between Fatah the ideology, or the national liberation ideology of Fatah, on the one hand, and Fatah the organization on the other. Fatah as an organization – a central committee, a revolutionary council and field leaders – does not truly and fully represent Fatah as an ideology, especially in light of the derision and castigation by some members of the Central Committee of the President of Fatah and the Palestinian people, after previously deriding and scolding President Abu Ammar.

On the strategic issues axis, Abrash discussed a range of issues, including (1) the need to relieve Fatah Movement of the failings and spoils of the Authority, (2) there is no national project without the Gaza Strip: Gaza is the open wound of Fatah, (3) regional representation and regionalism as a threat to the unity and collective identity of Fatah Movement.

Finally, on the axis of the Seventh Conference and the challenge of restoring the independent national decision, Abrash said, “There is no doubt that interest in Fatah conferences today is not the same as before due to the decline of the status of Fatah Movement, its internal woes and slippage of the national decision from its hands in recent years in favor of a new elite being formed on the fringe of the national action. Nonetheless, the Seventh Conference of the Movement is important and remains subject of the focus and anticipation of the Palestinians and the outside world due to the continuing overlap between Fatah Movement and the PNA, the PLO and the promised Palestinian state, and because a leader of Fatah Movement is expected to be elected in it, who will lead, by the inherited extension, the PLO, the PNA and the promised state – the equation will change if President Abu Mazen does not run for the presidency of Fatah, in which case President Abu Mazen will continue as president of the Authority, the PLO and the state until legislative elections are held.”

Title of Article: "Fatah Movement: Legitimate Reading and Questions "

Author: Mr. Ahmad Ghuneim

Ahmad Ghuneim, Member of Fatah’s Advisory Board and one of its leaders in the West Bank, wrote a study entitled "Fatah Movement: Legitimate Reading and Questions." For Ghuneim, the deep crisis facing Fatah Movement illustrates in undisputable terms the movement's inability to serve the purpose for which it was founded, which is liberation of the Palestinian land and people from the shackles of the Zionist colonialism and occupation. Against the backdrop of the struggle of wills within and over Fatah, the

movement appears incapable of mustering the will of free change, based on the consciousness of the reality and the requirements of changing it. He wondered what a revolution is if it is not a tool for change.

Despite the obvious incompetence of the movement and the need for change, the movement's internal and external forces are being pushed into a state of conflict within and over the movement to the point that it has become difficult, if not impossible, to agree on the goals, tools and timing of change. As long as such a change is intentional and its outputs are controllable, every power with internal or external interests will seek to influence the will of change and its tools in a manner that serves its interests and goals. Such interests are divided according to the spheres of power of specific individuals, groups or axes that do not seem to have fundamental differences in their political orientations, while all indicators indicate that the nature of the conflict among them lies within the Machiavellian framework whereby the movement has become a tool serving its members and leadership and their personal interests more than them serving the movement's goals and objectives.

This reality confirms that utilizing the general conference as the only way of change is questionable in terms of its ability to achieve the desired change because the decision to convene the conference and its outputs are not subject to the will of the movement alone, but to overlapping wills. Not the least of these wills is the struggle of various axes and individuals within the movement. Such struggle reaches the level of the intervention of regional and international powers, which does not exclude Israel from influencing the course and outputs of the intended conference.

We should not accept such reality, and we should not be naive to the point of falling under the illusion that we can get away with our conference without the effects of such negative wills. Nonetheless, we can certainly limit the influence of all negative wills in order for the movement not to deviate from its basic mission and the function for the

sake of which it was founded. In order to achieve this goal, it is necessary to accomplish a set of prerequisites before going to the General Conference.

Ghuneim considered enhancing the organizational, military and popular components and the strength of their representation a prelude to understanding the Movement's political trends and the extent of the Movement's adherence to being a national liberation movement, whether on the level of its structure or the level of its political program.

The lessons of the Sixth Conference dictate that Fatah must confront its structural crisis and not postpone it again to subsequent conferences. This requires maturity and a high level of objectivity on the side of the preparatory committee.

The role of the preparatory committee goes beyond the organizational issue to the broader framework of ensuring all elements of success of the conference in confronting the movement's crisis and answering the questions of organizational and political stubbornness on the national level through a program based on deep understanding of the Movement's mission and the laws of national liberation movements. Chief among such laws is the non-pairing between the task of national liberation and that of the so-called nation-building in order for the second task not to handicap the first. "I believe that there is a misunderstanding of the task of nation-building, where some think that nation-building is economic development, urbanization and roads, etc.," Ghuneim wrote.

Ghuneim proposed a comprehensive review of the Movement's strategy, objectives, policies, programs and tools including:

1. Keeping the Movement and its components as a national liberation movement.
2. The movement must reflect good understanding of the world around it and of changes in local, regional and international contexts. It is recommended to perceive these changes from a wider context not limited to its own interpretations.

3. The movement's redefinition of itself and its mission in light of the new reality in a manner that does not deviate from its recognition of its *raison d'être* and the justification of its existence, which is the essential realization of the national liberation dream.
4. Developing characteristics of the local, regional and international reality in terms of what is available, what is possible, what is better and from there to what is desired and wanted, in order to serve the movement's vision, basic mission, core objectives, policies and programs.
5. Rebuilding the Movement's organizational structures in accordance with principles that serve its new vision and reality and are consistent with the structural systems of the era of extended organizational networking and democratic values and concepts.
6. In light of the movement's definition of itself and its purpose, redefining the Movement's role and place within the overall Palestinian national composition on the basis of recognizing characteristics of the Palestinian reality and its political and social compositions. The purpose of such redefinition is to allow rebuilding Palestinian national institutions, especially the Palestine Liberation Organization, in a manner that reflects the true reality of the political and social components of the Palestinian society, and on a democratic basis that upholds the fundamentals of the Palestinian national project with its three pillars: Jerusalem, the return and the state.
7. In light of the movement's re-definition of itself and its mission, working on reassessment of the reality of the Palestinian National Authority and its function, duties, commitments and structure and the Movement's position, role and responsibilities in it in order to allow the Movement to restore the role that was taken from it in favor of individuals or groups that do not enjoy adequate

experience in struggle, nor have any roots that legitimate their existence and representations.

8. Possessing the appropriate tools of change which ensure making the desired changes in the structural, organizational and leadership structures and maintain the Movement's unity and effectiveness.
9. Fatah Movement's awareness of its regional role in the forefront of the Arab national stream in light of the Arab Spring and the rise of various forces headed by the Islamist stream.

***Title of Article:* "Strategy and the Palestinian National Liberation Movement, Fatah"**

***Author:* Dr. Samir Awad**

Dr. Samir Awad, Political Science Professor at Birzeit University and a Fatah activist, discussed a new strategy for Fatah Movement. Awad said that since its inception, Fatah has been characterized as a Palestinian national movement that intersected with national and nationalist movements and liberation movements all over the world. It was keen on the Palestinian people's issues and concerns without having regional linkages. Its focus was strictly on Palestinian issues. However, because the world changes and has really changed over the past decades, such changes must find their ramifications on Fatah's political agenda without compromising its strategy. Fatah's strategic objectives lie in alleviating the historical injustice that befell the Palestinian people and reshaping the Palestinian people in a viable Palestinian state with a more modern national identity. What Fatah needs is a new strategy through which it can continue its struggle for liberation. What Fatah needs is not a Palestinian peace assault, but a sound strategic defensive plan.

The path is to confront the occupation. Points of contact with the Israeli occupation or with the settlers in the West Bank, including occupied Arab Jerusalem, must be utilized

as points of confrontation and points of attracting and polarizing foreign as well as Israeli solidarity activists. Moreover, media networks and social networking sites must be invaded. This new sphere allows Palestinians to express themselves and disseminate their narrative in various squares, and to clarify their position and transfer their version of current events to the world and for the sake of history.

From Awad's point of view, several political options and alternatives are available to Fatah, the most prominent of which are the following:

First: Preparing plans for the intervention of the international community or international institutions such as the UN Security Council and the General Assembly, the United for Peace Article [of the UN Charter], the Committee for the Application of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the International Criminal Court in The Hague, and other international organizations.

Second: Thoughtful and planned utilization of the popular resistance to the Israeli occupation and its racist policies. This requires broad popular expansion of the peaceful resistance movement with broader spheres of international solidarity.

Third: Reactivation of national democratic institutions with the entailing unification of internal Palestinian ranks and the necessary reforms of the structure, constitution and laws of the Palestinian National Authority.

Fourth: The Palestinian state already exists as a people, history and partial and fragmented international recognition. It exists on the ground and awaits its place under the sun. All that is required of the Palestinians to realize this choice is continuation of the Palestinian steadfastness on the Palestinian land.

Awad concluded by stating that Fatah must continue to reproduce our successes on the international arena and accurately identify the friends camp and the enemies camp on the Arab and international arenas. He wrote that what is also needed is excellence in using and making the required signals and effects. This cannot happen without the existence of

a clear and specific long-term strategy supported by tactics that respond to changes or anticipated positions in order to achieve the largest amount of gains for us.

Title of Article: "The Bylaws and Participation in the Seventh Conference"

Author: Mr. Baker Abu Baker

Baker Abu Baker, Member of the Revolutionary Council of Fatah, wrote a study entitled "The Bylaws and Participation in the Seventh Conference?" Abu Baker discussed various issues of concern to Fatah, most notably the bylaws, freedom and discipline, and the issue of broad and narrow representation in the movement's conference.

The author offered interesting takes on these issues. He noted that regional leaders, cadres and councils, unions' and syndicates' leaders and councils, as well as PLO and PNA institutions and agencies can express themselves and their desires for change through participation and election, but such participation could reach thousands in the case of Fatah Movement and could therefore harm the concepts of discussion, dialogue, evaluation and planning. Nonetheless, participation is suitable for choice; meaning to choose and decide. The link between the number (exclusive representation) in the conference and the number (broad number) is a fabrication process whereby it is either this or that, in other words, either "broadening" membership or deciding to "tighten representation." However, the latter does not cancel the former, so what to do?

Abu Baker puts forward a number of questions that Fatah must address:

1. Will deciding membership in the movement in terms of brackets, numbers and names remain subject to whims until the last day in contradiction with the bylaws' provisions?
2. Why isn't a clear detailed system devised through a mechanism specified by a Movement Election Commission – that does not exist in Fatah until today – which

does not have a role at all in the nomination for any position, and simply sets criteria and standards and monitors their application only?

3. How is it possible to devise a mechanism for determining who is able to attend versus who is expected to nominate himself/herself, leading to overlapping personal and national factors together?
4. Can we think carefully about establishing a special movement institution for membership and performance monitoring and legislation (which has a permanent professional, organizational, regulatory legal nature) which enforces with the power of law protecting membership, advocates and defends members' rights, hold leaders accountable, and exercises real and active monitoring, alongside the Movement Election Commission?
5. Do we leave devising plans, conducting studies, and presenting ideas and reports until the last day of any conference or entrust the body charged with supervising performance with this duty, and give it absolute authorities over the president (of Fatah Movement), the Central Committee, the Revolutionary Council, the Regional Councils and syndicates in accordance with the bylaws?
6. Can we get our cadres used to the idea that the conference is not necessarily followed by elections? In other words, to hold between every two conferences a real political, ideological, cultural, organizational conference whose outputs are binding for the conference that includes the election mechanism?
7. Isn't it time for us to distinguish clearly between public democratic action and specialized field work?

8. Is it not necessary for us to resolve our political thought and the nature, functions and trends of the current stage, thereby the form of the structure entailed with executing the (organization's) goals before we get to the organizational details?
9. Isn't it better for us to have a specialized movement studies center, a specialized movement training center, and a position analysis or brainstorming think tank enjoying a discretionary status?

Abu Baker presents examples from the Chinese Communist Party and the German and Swedish Socialist Parties to argue for his points.

***Title of Article:* "The Social Dimension of the Palestinian Revolution: Fatah's Social Vision"**

***Author:* Mr. Abdul Ghani Salameh**

Researcher Abdul Ghani Salameh, another Fatah cadre, wrote about the social dimension of the Palestinian revolution: Fatah's Social Vision. The social aspect means taking a stance vis-à-vis many important issues such as women, children, youth, social traditions (especially negative ones), and the prevailing values and concepts. In addition, it means giving attention to the issues of education, health, unemployment, community empowerment and others. Furthermore, it means the enactment of laws and regulations (or development of existing ones) related to social life and the future of the regime. The movement has not given adequate attention to such topics, as we will elaborate later.

Nonetheless, the movement has succeeded to a large extent in dealing with the humanitarian and relief aspect as well as in giving attention of the families of activists. Salameh made use of Fatah literature as well as utterances of Fatah leaders to identify these positions.

Although political and military aspects are the prevailing aspects in the scene of the Palestinian struggle, and in the history of Fatah Movement in particular, the other side of the scene should also be seen, and that is its social, economic and cultural struggle through the institutions it created such as the Martyr's Families Institute, the Red Crescent Society, Samed Institute and others. Those institutions were created in order to provide services and the bases of decent life for the Palestinian people — especially those living in refugee camps in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan — by providing job opportunities and meeting their objective needs.

Fatah Movement sought through specialized institutions it created to achieve a decent standard of living for the families of the martyrs and wounded and other affected Palestinians, Arabs and foreigners. In addition, it sought to provide healthcare, raise the level of community and health awareness and education and psychological support, provide educational services at various stages such as the construction of basic schools and provision of higher education scholarships and grants for high achievers, especially children and siblings of martyrs, provide rehabilitation and training programs to develop the capacities and skills of beneficiary groups in order to reintegrate them in the society, and enforce the principle of self-reliance through the development of human resources and enabling them to participate in the production process. Furthermore, it gave attention to the prisoners and their families, the search for missing persons, and regaining the bodies of martyrs so as to bury them in a dignified manner.

Salameh discussed Fatah social institutions in detail, especially the Institute for the Care of Families of the Martyrs and Wounded, the Red Crescent Society, and the Workshops of the Children of the Martyrs of Palestine Society – Samed. He then moved to discuss women and their position in Fatah, students and Al-Shabibeh before concluding his study by discussing the social dimension of Fatah in the era of the [Palestinian National] Authority.

Salameh wrote in his conclusion: In light of presence of political forces enjoying strong influence in the Palestinian arena (Hamas and Islamic groups on the one hand, and national action factions, leftist forces and civil society organizations on the other hand), and because Fatah is the pioneering organization, leader of the popular struggle and protector of the national project (as it proclaims), it is required now to define clearer ideological positions vis-à-vis all social issues raised in the Palestinian society. It is also required to crystallize an integrated socio-economic intellectual theory through which it determines its outlook toward the future of the regime in Palestine.

Title of Article: "Fatah: The Revolution Is Continuing"

Author: Mr. Mahmoud Al-Aloul

Mahmoud Al-Aloul, Member of the Central Committee in charge of Fatah in the West Bank, wrote an article entitled "Fatah: The Revolution Is Continuing". Al-Aloul wrote in a festive missionary language: Yes, they were 50 years full of suffering, pain, sacrifice, martyrs and blood, but they were also 50 years of hope, victories and achievements. These years witnessed a tremendous number of basic junctures during which issues pertaining

to political action interacted with the military harvest and issues pertaining to military action interacted with the political harvest. As a result, the world recognized this revolution and its people in all arenas. Because of this revolution, the world recognized the rights of this people and Fatah entered forums throughout the world, including the United Nations. As its struggle continues, it continues to preserve its identity, fundamentals, constants and basic premises, and will continue until it realizes its people's objectives.

In recent years, and following emergence of the Oslo Agreement and establishment of the Palestinian Authority, we returned to the discussion that has not stopped, because

those developments caused controversy regarding several issues. We clarified our identity yet again at the Sixth Conference of Fatah Movement, which I called Fatah "The Political Declaration", in the preamble of the political agenda. This declaration states that Fatah Movement is a national liberation movement that continues to struggle for the freedom and independence of the Palestinian people, and believes that resistance, with all its forms, is a legitimate right of all occupied peoples in the face of their occupiers.

Al-Aloul concluded by writing, "When you evaluate Fatah experience, you have to see it through its general course, the positive general course, the general course of a struggling national liberation movement. This is the basis on this subject, and within this experiment and general course there surely are successes as there are failures. Nonetheless, we must evaluate things through their general course, not their details."

Title of Article: "Fatah: Active Presence in the International Scene"

Author: Dr. Nabil Sha'ath

Dr. Nabil Sha'ath, Member of the Central Committee of Fatah in charge of its Foreign Relations, wrote about Fatah's vision of external relations and the engagement, alliance and cooperation with various parties all over the world. Sha'ath outlined the evolution of Fatah's understanding of its foreign relations since it believed that the role of such relations is concentrated in the media and explaining the movement's positions to building alliances and attempting to influence the positions and attitudes of Western governments in particular. After that, Sha'ath discussed the need to utilize Palestinian communities abroad and activate their participation in the domestic politics of the countries they gain their citizenships for the sake of serving the goals and agenda of the political movement.

Title of Article: “The Experience of the Prisoners’ Movement, Shedding Light on Fatah’s Experience”

Author: Mr. Ismail Ad-Da'our

Researcher Ismail Ad-Da'our reviewed the experience of the prisoners’ movement, shedding light on Fatah experience in an attempt to reveal the nature of this important experience in the history of the Palestinian struggle and Fatah Movement, which continues to represent the largest percentage of prisoners in Israeli jails until this day.

Ad-Da'our opened by briefing the reader on the evolution of the prisoners issue in general and how the national movement began to crystallize in various Israeli prisons. After his introduction, Ad-Da'our explained the reality of the prisoners in prisons today and the forms of repression and torture they are subject to in an attempt to deprive them of decent life.

The researcher also attempted to explain to his readers briefly the most important tactics used by the prisoners movement in their struggle against the prisons administration before moving to the main subject of his study, which is the role of Fatah Movement in organizing the prisoners movement’s affairs in prisons. He argued that Fatah had a pioneering role in transforming prisoners from being just "prisoners" to becoming a group of organized people in accordance with an organizational structure who have demands, and the evolution of the way the prisoners’ movement worked with time.

Ad-Da'our did not forget to mention the important cultural life that evolved in prisons, which contributed to refining and strengthening the identity and character of the prisoner. Ad-Da'our wrote, “Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails were able, with their determination and strong will, to turn the darkness of jails into university campuses and cultural centers where cultural, academic, political, national, economic and social materials are taught.

They held organizational sessions in which lectures were given by university professors and prisoners with long experience in the particular topic to be taught.”

Ad-Da'our discussed at length the various stages of evolution of the struggle of the prisoners' movement over the past fifty years, noting that the prisoners' movement has experienced throughout those years many changes and developments. Life in detention did not have a single pace, moving from the stage of organizational vacuum, chaos and randomness to that of cultural and emotional creativity and production, and graduating a conscious cadre that understands its issues and is capable of managing the conflict.

The author explained the forms of political participation by the prisoners in Fatah Movement and the important positions they filled following their release, and then how Fatah Movement used the prisoners issue for political theorizing and to attract masses. The researcher concluded his important study by looking into Fatah institutions concerned with the issue of the prisoners, especially the prisoner club.

Title of Article: “In Its Golden Jubilee, Fatah Is an Ultimate National Necessity”

Author: Mr. Yihya Rabah

Yihya Rabah, former Fatah Official and spokesman in the Gaza Strip, wrote an article in which explains how the existence of Fatah was a national need and how it was the best at responding to the concerns of the Palestinians at a time of ideological abundance. Even when Fatah embraced the option of peace, it expressed in doing so the need of the Palestinian people to achieve their own state and live in peace away from big slogans, he argued. Thus, as Rabah stated, “Fatah is the real pulse of the Palestinian street.”

Title of Article: “I've Learned in Fatah Life ... The Honor of the Struggle and the Sincerity of Words and Deeds”

Author: Mr. Fathi Al-Biss

Publisher Fathi Al-Biss wrote an opinion piece entitled, "I've Learned in Fatah Life ... The Honor of the Struggle and the Sincerity of Words and Deeds," in which he presented a personal testimony of his experience in Fatah Movement since the sixties of the past century when he was still a child. Parts of his testimony reveal the secret of Fatah's presence in the Palestinian consciousness and on the streets.

Title of Article: “Fatah ... Pioneer of the Palestinian Struggle Cinema, Too”

Author: Mr. Yousef Ash-Shayeb

Fatah's filmmaking experience is not absent from this issue of SEYASAT, in which film critic Yousef Ash-Shayeb presented an in-depth study entitled "Fatah ... Pioneer of the Palestinian Struggle Cinema, Too". Ash-Shayeb noted Fatah's attention to filmmaking and its leading role in developing the national identity and documenting and promoting the work of the revolution. The launch of Palestinian filmmaking coincided with the establishment of the first film department affiliated with Fatah as a result of a long yet fruitful dialogue that took place among cadres of the Palestinian revolution.

This dialogue was based on a central issue, which is answering the question of whether the struggle cinema was feasible enough to spend a significant amount of resources, especially under the circumstances experienced by the revolution and under conditions of intensifying danger facing the Palestinian people. The second question was the revolutionary concept of the cinema as an ideal media tool that outperformed all other means due to the ability of the image to juxtapose, penetrate and persuade.

Ash-Shayeb reviewed the evolution of Fatah's understanding of filmmaking and how such understanding reflected on Fatah's practice of cinematic production and nurture of the cinema at different stages. Finally, Ash-Shayeb offered a review of the most important films produced by Fatah over the past fifty years, some of which were produced in the seventies of the twentieth century and others were produced in the early years of the twenty first century.

Title of Article: "Palestinian with no Identity: Historic Narration and Revolutionary Manuscript."

Author: Mr. Rashad Twam

Researcher Rashad Twam presented a historical narrative reading of Salah Khalaf's book "A Palestinian without Identity." This book, analyzed by the researcher in great detail, may be considered the most important intellectual production by a founder of Fatah Movement and is probably one of the most read books about the subject. Salah Khalaf (Abu Iyad) was the second man in Fatah (after Yasser Arafat). He was born in Jaffa on August 31, 1933 and martyred in Tunisia on December 14, 1991. Between these two dates, Khalaf "preoccupied the world" with his words and deeds. He is one of the most famous founders of Fatah Movement in 1958, member of its Central Committee, and the person who established relations between Fatah and the PLO on one side and several world leaders and international liberation movements on the other. He committed to the struggle in 1967, following years of secret work (during which he worked as a teacher in Gaza and Kuwait). He filled the position of head of the intelligence services and special operations in Fatah and the PLO, especially the unified security service of the revolution.

The last sentence on Khalaf's book read: "We are determined to remain a people and one day we will have a homeland." This statement became one of the most frequently repeated Fatah slogans. The research included testimonials by many Fatah figures who

interacted with Abu Iyad, in which they talked about their experiences with him and with his book “A Palestinian without Identity.”

Prisoner Marwan Barghouthi also contributed a short article in which he talked about the personality of Salah Khalaf and his book “A Palestinian without Identity.”

Title of Article: “Glossary of members of the two most important cells within Fatah Movement – the Central Committee and the Revolutionary Council”

Author: Mr. Saed Abu Farha

Researcher Saed Abu Farha wrote a detailed glossary of members of the two most important cells within Fatah Movement – the Central Committee and the Revolutionary Council – from the day Fatah was founded in 1965 until the [sixth] general movement conference was convened in 2009, along with the subsequent additions to the Central Committee and Revolutionary Council. The glossary started by defining the functions and jurisdiction of the Central Committee and the Revolutionary Council as stated in the bylaws of Fatah Movement, then referred to the brief debate about the beginnings of the existence of these two important institutions, and finally presented to the reader a detailed glossary of the names of all members of these two institutions over the past half century. By this, SEYASAT hopes it has compiled a glossary that should help researchers and scholars with their research concerning the national movement.

Book Reviews: “Fatah Movement between the Resistance and Assassinations”

Amin Darawsheh offered a review of Mahmoud An-Natour’s book “Fatah Movement between the Resistance and Assassinations” in two parts. In addition, SEYASAT presented a list of the most important books discussing Fatah Movement and its leaders in a contribution aimed to remind the reader of Fatah library.

Finally, SEYASAT wrote in the introduction to this issue:

“Some may say that Fatah has dominated the PLO and the PNA and consequently enjoyed benefits that were not granted to other factions and thus gained the advantage of existence and influence. Those who do so forget the fact that political positions are gained with the legitimacy of the struggle, and that Fatah’s national presence among its masses is what gave it this opportunity. Had Palestinian masses not found themselves in Fatah, Fatah would not have found itself the pillar of the tent, the protector of the project and the soul of the Palestinian body. Fatah is what gave the [PLO] institution its existence. The PLO existed to be a gateway to the Arabs’ influence and domination of the Palestinian people, and the PNA, in spite of all its pitfalls, was seen by Fatah as the nucleus of the Palestinian state. Yasser Arafat did not see the Oslo Accord, which he reached, as more than a statehood project.”

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