

**Movement of Arab Nationalists Administrative Committee. Internal Communiqué on the Establishment of *Al-Hurriya*. Beirut: Movement of Arab Nationalists, 1 January 1961.<sup>1</sup> Translated by *The Palestinian Revolution*, 2016.<sup>2</sup>**

The first issue of *al-Hurriya* magazine will be published in Lebanon on Monday January 4, 1960. On this occasion, the Movement's Administrative Committee recognises the importance of clarifying a few points:

*Firstly:* When the Movement came to decide the general outlook of the magazine, it did so based on a study of the ideological press in the Arab homeland. The Movement found that the Arab ideological press has generally vacillated between two opposite poles as it attempted to confront a complex challenge: how to reconcile between ideological content and journalistic thrill. Ideological materials, by their very nature, do not attract the general readership that constitutes the mass of the people. Nevertheless, the purpose of these materials is, first and foremost, to address the popular masses. As such, we detected the presence of two types of ideological publications. The first focuses on the ideological material without due attention to the quality of the production, and this has meant that they appeal to a narrow circle of readers. The second type presents light journalistic themes that satisfy the desires of the readers at the expense of the overall ideological standard of the paper. Our older publication, *Al-Rai*, belonged to the first type.

Today, however, the Movement hopes that *al-Hurriya* will contribute a new ideological press initiative, confronting the aforementioned traditional dilemma and offering a proper solution to it. The magazine will preserve the appropriate ideological level while carefully presenting it in a successful journalistic format. This is by no means an easy task, and it is in fact very difficult. Nevertheless, we believe that it is not impossible. Our success in this initiative would open a path for creating a popular ideological paper that is read by tens of thousands of citizens. Through this, our concepts and positions will be carried over to every citizen, and the paper will become a tool of general popular education as opposed to narrow party education.

*Secondly:* We cannot claim that *al-Hurriya* will succeed in achieving this goal fully and completely from the very beginning. In fact, we already expect that

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<sup>1</sup> Reproduced in Hani al-Hindi. *Ḥarakat al-Qawmīyīn al-'Arab: nash'atuhā wa-taṭawwuruhā 'abra wathā'iqihā, 1951-1968*. Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Abḥāth al-'Arabīyah, 2001

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the paper will stumble into some mistakes and errors. This is quite normal for any new initiative, and the important thing is that we have now conceptualized the main contours that will ensure that the paper will ultimately have a successful march forward...

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All members now know that the Movement has acquired the publishing permission for this weekly political magazine in Beirut. It is now almost certain that the first issue will appear on Monday January 4, and that it will thereafter appear regularly on every Monday. The paper will be twelve pages long in tabloid format (it will therefore be equivalent to the size of *al-Hawadith* magazine that appears in Lebanon).

The names that will appear in the magazine (Publishers, Editor-in-Chief, and General Manager) will be as follows:

Mohammad al-Zayat and Omar Fadel	Publishers
Mohsen Ibrahim	Editor-in-Chief
Ahmad Steityeh	General Manager

The magazine, as is well known, needs a director who would be responsible for it before the state authorities. There are several conditions that must be met by any director, the most important of which is that they must have belonged to the Press Union for at least three years. The Movement does not currently have any member who belongs to the Press Union. Accordingly, we have agreed with Mr Ahmad Oweidat, who is one of our friends, to take up the position of director in exchange for a monthly salary. This is in line with the practice of other daily and weekly newspapers.

An office was rented for the magazine a while back. All the equipment is now ready, and we only have a few preparations that need to be urgently completed, such as securing a telephone line and a P.O. Box etc...

An editorial and production team has been established, led by the Editor-in-Chief. It includes, aside from the working editors, a caricaturist and someone who is responsible for arranging the different items and presenting them. This person is from outside the Movement. Their work is strictly technical and has no bearing on the politics of the magazine and its editorial process.

The team has been regularly meeting for a while. Its work can be summarised in terms of finalizing the format of the magazine and its different columns.

The first issue will appear on the basis of this work. Moreover, the editorial team has started to edit the weekly issues as if the magazine has been already in print. This is so as to ensure that the team members will acquire enough experience, and to avoid future mistakes that could affect the experience of the reader.

It was initially decided that some experimental issues will appear as of the first week of November. However, the editorial team decided to postpone this to the first week of December, due to technical and financial considerations. For, each experimental issue costs 500-600 Lebanese Lira. Given the fact that the editorial team did not initially feel that its activities were completely coordinated and that it was able to satisfactorily edit each issue, it decided to continue its writing and column design experiments without printing. This was to avoid printing experimental issues while knowing in advance that they were not of an acceptable standard. The outcome then would have been considerable loss of money without arriving at any meaningful returns. As such, the editorial team now hopes to produce the first experimental issue in the first week of December.

The editorial team is also working now on securing a network of reliable sources in all state bodies in Lebanon, so that it could publish accurate reports that do not appear in other daily and weekly papers. The team is also working-with the help of the Movement- on securing a number of reporters and sources in all parts of the Arab homeland so as to gather Arab news and to solicit weekly reports covering the most important political events unfolding across the Arab homeland.

The editorial team is also working now on organizing an archive for the magazine. This would contain photographs and information that we will inevitably utilise in our reports, news stories, and items.

### *Magazine Finances*

The magazine's finances are completely independent from those of the Movement. The General Manager will be responsible for these finances, and he will be assisted by an accountant whose role will be bookkeeping and overseeing expenditure.

Currently, the main financial source for the magazine is a fundraising campaign that the Movement undertook amongst its circle of friends and supporters. This campaign has now achieved its goal of raising enough

money to undertake initial publishing. The campaign is still ongoing, and some amounts are still being gathered in many parts of the Arab homeland.

Of course, the Movement is also thinking of ways of securing a more permanent source of income that will ensure the continuation of the magazine. After all, it is not easy at all to launch, every once and a while, a fundraising campaign on the scale that we have undertaken so far. Our hope is to secure subscriptions, and these must become the main source for funding the magazine. The magazine management has found, through basic calculations, that the problem could be permanently resolved through an enormous effort for soliciting subscriptions. All members of the Movement must be enlisted in this effort. The success and continuation of the magazine depends on the energy of the Movement's members in this regard.

Soliciting subscriptions will undoubtedly require the Movement to issue a more detailed plan, and we will initiate a campaign for subscriptions as soon as the fundraising campaign is completed. We can then also begin to effectively promote the magazine. Indeed, it would be difficult to expect any member to start gathering subscriptions when we are still gathering funds. It would equally be difficult for any member to ask their friends and other citizens to subscribe in the magazine before the promotion campaign commences and before people begin to feel the presence of the magazine...