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This is the personal ideal conception of what its holder, the director of the education division in the Planning Committee of the PLO, believes the form Palestinian education should be in the light of long-term popular war. It does not reflect the strategy of the Planning Committee about Palestinian education. It is a rough conception and there is room for it to be deepened, modified and detailed. But it forms appropriate grounds for discussion in the circles of the Palestinian revolution about how to create a revolutionary education and the contents of this education.

The stateless Palestinian people rose many times before the start of the Palestinian revolution demanding the rights of their children to a national, Arab, Palestinian education. These popular movements in the host Arab countries were particularly directed toward the educational system and teaching programs followed in UNRWA schools. These movements took different forms, including preventing children from going to schools for set periods, attacking schools and destroying some of their equipment and presenting petitions to UNRWA officials and those responsible for refugee affairs. But the main demand repeated across all the popular movements was the insertion of a Palestinian geography and history unit into the educational curricula taught to the children of Palestine, and teaching them the Palestinian cause with a focus on the role of the Zionist movement and colonialism in robbing them of their homeland. The goal behind this demand was the Palestinians' struggle and determination to preserve the Palestinian character and keep the Palestinian cause alive in the spirits of their children until liberation and return was achieved.

After the start of the revolution, the Palestinian public's pressure toward the realization of a Palestinian national education increased. That demand took a step forward when some revolutionaries began to speak about the necessity of creating a Palestinian revolutionary education. Despite all the efforts exerted by the Palestinian people, and the opinions that were presented in revolutionary circles, some of which crystalized through the establishment of an educational planning division (for a revolutionary Palestinian education) in the Planning Committee pursuant to the PLO... despite all this, the basic Palestinian demand for a national education remains far from reach, let alone the demand for a revolutionary education. The reason for the nonexistence of a national and revolutionary education is not some auto-failure of the

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revolution or the people. Rather the fault lies with the conflicting ways in which various Arab and international custodians exercise oversight over raising and educating Palestinians. To this oversight is added Israeli custodianship that was imposed after the occupation of Gaza and the West Bank in 1978.

I believe that for the Palestinian revolution to develop and progress along the path of victory, a revolutionary education delivered to the Palestinian generations in all the countries in which they exist is indispensable. I will attempt in this article to sketch a conception of a Palestinian revolutionary education. This conception reflects what this education should be, without consideration for current Arab overseers and the obstacles that currently stand in the fact of implementing any national or revolutionary Palestinian education whatsoever. These obstacles usually come in the form of accusing any who call for a Palestinian education with proclivities against regional unity. The goal of sketching this conception is to push the revolution toward adopting it, or a similar conception, whenever and wherever it can. My conception of a Palestinian education is made up of basic concepts that I find necessary for any national and revolutionary Palestinian education. Some might see this conception as a fiction of the imagination in light of the current Palestinian and Arab social and political circumstances. This may be true, but it becomes untrue when we look to the distant future and the coming generations, moving past the dismal Arab and Palestinian reality. This conception is basically an optimistic outlook and an expression of faith in the future. I do not at all believe that it will be, in the future, impossible to implement.

The need for a Palestinian education

Before discussing its form and content, we must first discuss the reasons for the necessity of a Palestinian education. It is natural that every people should have its own educational system. But this natural matter is a matter of life and death for the Palestinian people, who live outside their land and who have been divided into geographically isolated groups who have no material daily interaction, even if they have strong emotional and moral interactions. This geographic dispersion threatens a number of foundations of the Palestinian people as a single people, most importantly the unique Palestinian character, heritage, unity of imagination, and efforts towards liberation and reconstitution of Palestinian society. All these dangers make the existence of a Palestinian education a matter of the utmost importance because a Palestinian education can play a decisive role in preserving the Palestinian character, animating and protecting Palestinian heritage, and determining a single

imaginary and unified practice among most Palestinians regarding the Palestinian struggle and society.

Among others reasons for the necessity of a Palestinian education is the creation of a new Palestinian capable of long-term struggle and effective contribution towards the success of the struggle for liberation. Creating the Palestinian who bears these characteristics will not come through improvisation or spontaneously. Rather, it will come through a long and difficult process in which revolutionary education plays a vital role. Societies are not constituted "naturally" but rather are the result of a directed creation permeated by conflicts and interactions that eventually coalesce into a society of a certain shape or form. But this shape or form is quickly either subjected to gradual change as a result of new forces, or completely collapses as a result of violent revolutionary change. As a result, if we want a Palestinian society that is wholly dedicated to struggle and liberation, then we must enter into struggle with ourselves and with our external environment to build such a society. The continuation of the Palestinian revolution and rejection until we reach liberation is a matter that requires efforts in all fields generally and in the fields of education and building future generations specifically. If we desire a revolutionary Palestinian we must create this individual. Man is a social animal, a product of his environment or society. A human being is formed as a social animal with a personality and ideas, following certain habits and a particular behavior through a process of social adjustment i.e. Adjusting to living in a certain society within traditions and modes set by this society. The institutions that are responsible for the social adjustment process vary depending on the complexity of society, but they start with the family or home, school, church or religious institution, and state (through army or party). In all or some of these institutions, the individual develops a frame of reference for his behaviors and decision-making regarding whether to do or abstain from certain actions. Thus, we see that the constitution of the Palestinian as a social animal with certain qualities, tendencies and a sense of responsibility is first the responsibility of the Palestinian revolution and second the Palestinian family. These two institutions bear the responsibility of providing a complete education for the Palestinian generations closely tied to the reality and goals of the Palestinian people. Stable societies work to create generations able to contribute to economic, cultural and civilizational development. Through their educational systems they work to create the necessary skills and competencies to drive the wheel of production forward and raise economic standards. This was the case for Palestinians who lived in stable Arab societies and joined their educational systems. The Arab educational systems aim to develop skills and capacities that are beneficial to the economic development of the Arab countries. Over a quarter century,

Palestinians have gained many skills that benefit stable societies, particularly middle class skills such as accounting, trade, teaching, languages, translation, law and economic and political sciences. They have contributed through their skills to the building and development of multiple Arab societies. But half the Palestinian people has been dispersed outside its land and the other lives under occupation.

Thus it is illogical that all Palestinians continue to gain skills oriented towards development, with none turning towards gaining the skills that the struggle for liberation demands. Palestinians must produce a person capable of contributing to liberation more than they need to produce a person capable of running a bank, factory or farm. Consequently, I believe that a part of the Palestinian people must continue to gain the development skills to use in building a Palestinian society after liberation and supporting the durability of the extant society under occupation, and that at the same time other parts of the Palestinian people must gain the skills that contribute to liberation. The revolution must work in two educational fields; education in the Arab countries and education directly tied to it such as schools of the children of martyrs or revolutionary schools that are bound to see the light of day in the near future. The Palestinian revolution's strategy should not differ in these two fields except as regards the practical exercises of the revolutionary schools, such as labor and production together, intensive military training, and special vocational training relevant to the needs of the revolution. But the essence of education in both fields remains an Arab progressive essence that suits the political, social, civilizational and technical problems that face the Arab world. In this way the particularities of a Palestinian education would not make it a particularistic education isolated from the problems of broader Arab society but rather a leader in Arab nationalist education. The Palestinian educational system will be geared toward liberation in a way that serves the goals of the Palestinian people and the needs of the popular war of liberation that these people will undertake. The revolution must pressure to insert revolutionary thought into the traditional Arab educational systems that absorb a large portion of the children of Palestine. By this dual strategy of building the Palestinian and the Arab the revolution can prepare to enter a phase of long-term popular war for liberation. I do not see the possibility of holding long-term successful war for liberation without the revolution creating a limited Palestinian educational system under its own full control. Some may say that building a Palestinian with the skills to fight and liberate will create a contradiction with that Palestinian's stable environment, the Arab countries, that need skills useful for development. But this view is rejected for two reasons: The first is that the broader Arab society must understand, accept and help to build a Palestinian who has the skills to

liberate not develop economically. The second is that the Arab society itself must create thousands of its own who have the skills to liberate because the struggle for liberation is an Arab cause not a country-specific cause, and because the Arab is not free so long as part of the Arab body suffers under occupation.

Some concepts of revolutionary education

The basic goal of national education, as mentioned, is to preserve the Palestinian character and bond the Palestinian to her/his land and heritage. As for the basic goal of revolutionary education, it is to create a new Palestinian and Arab (i.e. a revolutionary capable of facing the Zionist threat and bearing the burdens of liberation and reclaiming the plundered lands). Naturally, revolutionary education is grounded in national education. And any education presented to the Palestinian must be a complete education, meaning an education that is concerned with all aspects of the character and life of its recipient. Creating a revolutionary does not consist only of weapons training, political awareness, or even any skills or art that exclusively serves the revolution. It consists of socially changing this person radically, where s/he bears the soul, thought, mind, values, ethics and skills of the revolutionary who will lead a popular war of liberation. This burden is not at all simple. Educational systems in stable countries attend to one or two of these aspects, whereas the revolution must attend to them all. Much has been written and said about the birth of the new Arab after the defeat of June 1967. But the truth is that the new Arab has not yet been born because the social values, thoughts and behaviors that led to the defeat remain prevalent among Arab and Palestinian audiences, except for a few exceptions concentrated in the ranks of the Palestinian revolution. The Palestinian revolutionary and the Arab revolutionary forces must destroy the Arab social values that led to the defeat in order to build a new individual who holds the values that will surely lead to victory.

Social values become social realities that affect human behavior and interpersonal relationships. Social realities tend to live on even after the reasons for their existence and social role have been lost. They do not fall except after new social realities that grow gradually are created to replace the old realities. There are numerous social realities that have been inherited for hundreds of years that the Palestinian revolution and revolutionary forces must challenge in order to replace them with new social realities that accord with the nature of the challenge that the Arab nation faces. The biggest challenge facing the Arab revolutionary forces, particularly the Palestinian revolution, is replacing the current standards of social status - family, money,

education and profession – with new standards, particularly for Palestinians, which are commitment, service to the public, education in order to meet the demands of the revolution not to improve personal standing. The individual who is most respected and valued in society is s/he who works to serve the revolution, serves the people, and selects the subjects of study (particularly higher education) in the light of the needs of the revolution. Among other challenges facing the revolution is to reject the pressure of the family upon the individual and the elders over the youth, opening the space for freedom of thought, expression and discussion, actual and practical equality between men and women -- for women are an indispensable human potential in the popular war for liberation and play an important role in the education process through their work at home --, creating a group spirit and eliminating individual spirit and selfishness. As for how these social realities can be created, we say simply that the revolutionary vanguards must create them. The role of the vanguard – whether fighters, teachers or politicians – is to follow a new mode of behavior in their daily life and relationships with others, resisting the social pressure opposed of their behavior until the new mode is victorious over the old modes and becomes the prevailing mode. In this field, a dual responsibility falls upon the revolutionary teacher, who must both follow this new mode and defend it in her/his environment and surroundings, and also plant the new values and behaviors it dictates to her/his students. The teacher must continuously place into discussion with her/his students all the social behaviors and phenomena that govern their society and then present new ideas and values. We believe that without this radical social change there will be no popular war of liberation capable of lasting for decades. But this is not to say that social change must first occur in its entirety before the war begins. The truth is that a large part of social change and creating new social realities comes from revolutionary praxis and through the journey of the popular war for liberation. In any case there remains for revolutionary education a vital role in creating fertile soil for the revolution and revolutionary psyche.

In my opinion, any Palestinian revolutionary education must be based on the following foundations:

1. Focusing on opening the mind and providing a mode of thinking rather than on providing students with information. Although both are important, the first takes priority because when a student's mind is opened and s/he gains a way to think and research well, and can obtain information, which is available unlimitedly.
2. To end the idea that s/he who fails at education (or at acquiring degrees) fails at life and work. Instead, to establish the idea of the

necessity of serving the revolution according to each person's ability mentally and physically. There is no failure in Palestinian society because the revolution is capable and in need of absorbing the efforts of every Palestinian. The failure in Palestinian society is s/he who does not directly serve her/his revolution and her/his people. The motto of revolutionary education is "Serve the revolution in the best way possible."

3. To vanquish individual selfishness without vanquishing individual talent, and to work on directing individual talent and ability to the service of the whole. In this war, to make students understand that there is no accomplishment that can be called an individual accomplishment (ie. credit belongs to an individual). Any accomplishment, even that which on the surface appears to depend largely on an individual is in reality the product of a great human effort, for all knowledge is built on previous knowledge.
4. The teacher's openness and closeness to students. The teacher should not fear losing respect as a result of being open with and close to her/his students. The teacher should break all barriers between her/himself and her/his students in order to help develop their bold independent characters, wherein they can participate in a popular democratic revolutionary movement without being soldiers quivering before their leader and carrying out orders without awareness. This participation in revolution helps to protect the revolutionary path and its basic direction, and strengthens the Palestinian fighter by giving her/him a huge combative power.
5. Making the individual accept learning what the revolution requires, not what will provide a comfortable life. This requires that the revolution estimate its human and technical needs every few years or at every stage.
6. Strengthening the relationship of the teacher with her/his students' parents in order to provide a complete, cohesive education and create harmony between education in the home and in the school.
7. Making students understand that every social reality is capable of change and that there are no constant, absolute values and standards, but rather that standards, values and behaviors depend on relative matters. The idea of absolute truths and immortal values is one that retards the revolution and impedes the process of revolutionary change.
8. Creating a rebellious, resistant Palestinian. We do not want a Palestinian who is submissive and obedient no matter how hard conditions become and how big the challenges grow. Rebellion and

resistance are the source of strength of the Palestinian individual and Palestinian society.

The Palestinian revolutionary educational system

The Palestinian revolutionary educational system should differ from traditional educational systems in form and content. The traditional structure of education as one of schools, phases, degrees and metrics of success and failure is irrelevant to the structure of revolutionary education. A people in midst of revolution and a daily revolutionary life cannot have normal, fixed schools as a framework for theoretical teaching. It is neither possible nor acceptable to place our children in these schools for 12 years in which they learn nothing but reading, writing and some weak general knowledge. Also, the degrees given to students at the end of each phase are irrelevant to a revolutionary educational system, particularly if such degrees are seen as allowances to pass from one level to the next or from one field to another. We imagine the structure of revolutionary education as follows:

First: the pre-school phase. This is an important phase in the formation of children's character, psyche and intellectual development. The revolution must give it much attention because it determines the bases of career paths children will take when they grow up.

Second: the reading, writing and arithmetic phase. This phase is equivalent to primary school in traditional education, but differs in content.

Third: the phase of preparing the individual to take her/his place in armed struggle. This phase is not temporally fixed but lasts at least three years.

Fourth – Select fighters are chosen for specialization and to gain the scientific, military, political and intellectual skills needed by the revolution.

The general framework of this educational structure is the revolutionary schools. Building revolutionary schools assumes drawing some Palestinian children from traditional schools. The revolutionary schools must be inside or close to camps during the pre-school and second phase. They should take the form of youth training camps at the phase of preparing boys and girls for armed struggle. We should not isolate our children during this phase between walls for hours every day. As for the specialization phase, the revolutionary schools should take the form of workshops and production, so the individual is not separated from revolutionary praxis and contribution to the revolution. They should be located where there is a scientific presence of the Palestinian revolution.

As for the content of revolutionary education, it should differ substantially from the content of traditional education. During the pre-school phase, there should be a focus on Palestinians anthems and group play. Palestine should be planted in the hearts of children through pictures of cities, coasts, landmarks, dress and heritage. The image of the *fida'i* should be established in the mind and imagination of the child in such a way that the *fida'i* or fighter becomes the ultimate role model. In the primary school phase, children should be taught the history and geography of Palestinian with simplified information about the Palestinian cause, the rape of Palestine and the Zionist enemy. They should also be taught the history of Arab struggle and the nature of colonialism. But the number of hours dedicated to these topics should be less than the number of hours given to history, geography and languages in traditional schools. In addition, history, geography and politics should be taught as living subjects related to the environment and reality of the Palestinian and Arab people, and used as tools of awareness. As for the rest of the hour of the day, children should spend them doing handiwork and craftsmanship that develops mechanical skills. Physical educational and military training are very important. And we should encourage the impulse toward creativity and innovation in our children.

In the phase of preparation for direct and effective participation in the armed struggle, the athletic and military program should be intensified. Math and the natural sciences are important. Then a technical program through which each student learns at least one craft, ideally more than one, that directly benefits the armed struggle. As for general education, in this phase we emphasize the following:

1. Tying the student to the revolution and return to the land based on tangible matters not only emotional slogans. Revolutionary education must show our children in numbers and tangible evidence the benefits they will gain from liberation, the most important being that the Palestinian will be free and be her/his own master, will have dignity. These are benefits s/he does not have outside her/his homeland. There is no economic, intellectual, social or individual dignity, honor or independence for the Palestinian except through armed struggle and reclaiming the land.
2. Heavy focus on studying the enemy and the nature of our struggle, while attempting to understand its strengths and weaknesses to find the best path to victory.
3. Studying Palestine and the Palestinian cause from various angles through deep, detailed study.

4. Studying the experiences of other peoples who have been through circumstances similar to ours.
5. Studying the conditions, phases and methods of popular war for liberation.

After completing the preparatory phase, boys and girls enter actual participation in various aspects of the Palestinian struggle and continue their technical or scientific specialization at a revolutionary institution for higher education given that they do not suspend revolutionary praxis and work to apply what they have learned particularly in medicine, engineering, agriculture or other technical specializations.

Achieving this educational system and implementing its content requires the fulfillment of two basic conditions:

1. Creating a revolutionary teacher who does not only serve as a teacher but as a tool of revolutionary change. This can be done through training courses and sessions given to Palestinian teachers with the primary goal of creating a revolutionary thought movement amongst teachers. This movement will become a mode of work and practice, and a tool for agitation and directing others within and without schools.
2. Placing a complete educational curriculum that takes under consideration modern methods of education. Without this studied, complete curriculum the goals of the revolution to build revolutionary and fighting generations will not be implemented.

Within this educational, or socio-educational, system we absorb the Palestinian revolution and use the energies of the Palestinian people no matter how big or small. This conception may be idealistic and impossible to implement, but the reality is that implementing even part of it is better than none at all. Adopting the educational concepts that have been presented in this plan gives a push forward to the revolution of the Palestinian people and places it on solid, lasting foundation.

The main concerns regarding establishing a Palestinian educational system are funding, restriction to Palestinians outside the occupied territories, and the possibility of the system becoming closed in on itself.

We fear that allowing Arab countries to fund this educational system will lead to the Palestinian revolution falling under the mandate of these countries. This is why the revolution must depend on its own potential and work to build a Palestinian educational system step by step, as it must

depend on Arab Palestinian teaching cadres willing to work at half pay or fighters' rates.

Opening the doors of the revolutionary schools to any Arab youth willing to join can solve the problem of self-enclosure. The problem that remains is restricting Palestinian education to Palestinians outside the occupied territories, as we cannot ask Palestinians in the territories to leave in order to join revolutionary schools, but rather we must push the Palestinians outside inwards.