

**“Art and the Revolution”. Anonymous Manuscript. Palestine, n/d (late 1970s). Translated by *The Palestinian Revolution*, 2016.<sup>1</sup>**

## *Introduction*

We, the Palestinians, are struggling for an identity. We started forming this identity when we started loving the land. Love for the land like the poet Muzaffar al-Nawab says is “a passport” that grants us the right to enter it and wallow in its embrace. This is the land that the enemy wants erase all its Arab features. The enemy wants us to be unable to recognise it.... In every neighbourhood, village, city.... on the steps of Izz ad-Din al-Qassam, Abdel Qader al-Husseini, Ahmad Mousa, Jala Ka’oush, Abu Ali Iyad, Ramdan al-Banna, Dalal al-Mughrabi, Lina al-Nabulsi, Taghrid al-Butmah, Abu al-Fahm, Ali and Rasem, Abu al-Walid, Adwan, Nasser, al-Najjar, Fahd, the six martyrs of Land Day, the martyrs of the independent national decision and many more. These martyrs gave their lives on this path; we are still waiting and we will not break our oath instead we renew our oath. This is the land they want to reduce the sap in its veins. From the moment we loved the land and it loved us back it became connected to our veins and hearts. It is impossible to sever this relationship. It is impossible that the sap runs dry and we die. The eternity of the land give us, the Palestinians, the eternity of love and life.

## *Art Heritage*

First we need to distinguish between heritage and civilisation and determine similarities and differences between the two terms. In terms of time periods heritage represents the past while civilisation can refer to ancient civilisations that are no longer part of the human heritage, dying civilisations, and emerging and current civilisations. In terms of what is included in the two terms civilisation can be considered to be the more inclusive term. Heritage can be part of civilisation where as civilisation can’t be part of heritage. When we use the term heritage to refer to culture, art and anything similar we mean that this heritage is not suitable, partially or entirely, to survive and continue. On the other hand, civilisation can be limited according to the historical period it existed in, its demise, and its continuity or discontinuity. There are ancient civilisations, continuing civilisations, and emerging civilisations despite any connection between the past and the present. This is speaking in general terms but when we want to discuss the issue in more detail and study our Arab heritage and Arab civilisation, especially at this juncture, we can’t overlook the following points:

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- a) Our Arab nation is going through a period of national liberation from imperial influence. We need to consider the imperialist position towards our civilisation and heritage and the role our civilisation and heritage in this battle.
- b) The second factor that we can't overlook is the connection between our heritage and civilisation to the monotheistic religions, the role that Islam played in shaping this nation's heritage and civilisation, and the position of human openness towards religions from cultural and heritage perspectives.
- c) Despite the cultural isolation in our region as a result of ignorance, fragmentation, and external factors the region is still alive and continues struggling to reconnect. What were the factors that preserved this vitality and the ability to reconnect? What are the differing positions in dealing with the Arab heritage and civilisation and which position is more accurate and therefore more successful?

From these factors comes the gravity and the sensitivity of discussing such a topic hastily or in an article during a period of liberation within the current intellectual constraints. There are many colonial methods of combating the national culture and heritage. Their entrance was sectarian division and protecting minorities. Under such slogan preaching and western education entered the region. We can see that many parties and ideologies, including nationalistic ones, were established and expanded by intellectuals from these sects. The struggling masses forced them to change their orientation and use the masses language; whether it was the result of conviction or simply to deceive the masses. Some of the parties that didn't play this game well were isolated and faltered while others remained loyal to their colonial masters. These methods clearly indicate that this process was being implemented according to a well-laid plan. This process is a process of erasing, falsifying, fragmenting, and stamping out everything that is great and honourable in our historical heritage. It is a process of fragmenting and mocking our heritage, separating people from their roots, displaying contempt for our heritage and disseminating thoughts to ensure our subordination and ignorance of everything that colonialism is planning such as poverty, ignorance and disease.

This is why it was important to understand the nature of the conflict correctly. We needed to understand that it is a cultural conflict between a colonial racist culture and a past, present and future liberation culture. From here comes the

importance of studying this topic not on the basis of a fleeting study but on the basis of institutional guidance where all efforts of the strugglers come together for one progressive Arab nation. We shed light on one side of our national heritage because of its great importance for the revolution and as an outcome of the revolution. This comes from the fact that these strugglers are struggling to remove the roots of subordination and civilisational backwardness. This can't be done through imitating other civilisations or searching for new ones but through reconnecting the history of our civilisation and resorting it to the position it assumed in history. This would enable it to assume its active role in serving humanity through embodying its righteous principles and through exposing the falseness of the western material civilisation. This civilisation drank the blood of the nations until it had its fill and when it started to feel that its tentacles are being severed one after the other started closing on itself, wriggle in pain and die. Its screams became louder and louder indicating its collapse and demise. The civilisation of the struggling people will be open to humanity and far from any form or radicalism.

One of colonialism's main missions is the continuation of its domination, looting, and stamping out culture, heritage and civilisation of others. It employs several methods to achieve this. The experience with colonialism in this field is a rich experience. The policies of the Zionist entity in our homeland and its daily practices against everything connected to our Palestinian people are still visible. A process like this during a period of national liberation becomes the individual responsibility of the vanguard of the struggle. On one side it needs efforts to preserve it, revive it and emphasise its importance against the process of erasing it and on the other it needs to play a role in the revolution, liberation and struggle.