

PALESTINE ESSAYS No. 23

PALESTINIAN CHILDREN :
"THE GENERATION OF LIBERATION"

By
BASSEM SIRHAN



**PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION
RESEARCH CENTER**

**PALESTINIAN CHILDREN
"THE GENERATION OF
LIBERATION"**

PALESTINE ESSAYS No. 23

PALESTINIAN CHILDREN :
"THE GENERATION OF LIBERATION"

A Sociological Study

By

BASSEM SIRHAN

Palestine Liberation Organization
Research Center
Beirut — Lebanon
September 1970

CONTENTS

	Page
FOREWARD	7
CHAPTER	
I RESEARCH SETTING AND SAMPLE	9
A. Selection of the Sample	
B. Characteristics of the Sample	
II NATIONAL AWARENESS AND IDENTITY	13
A. National Identity	
B. Knowledge of the Palestine Story	
C. Attitudes Towards the Jews	
III DETERMINATION TO LIBERATE PALESTINE	21
A. Palestinian Daily Life and the Palestine Problem	
B. Future Plans and Alternatives	
C. Scale of Preferences	
D. Scale of Loyalties	
E. Concept of the Road to Liberation	
F. Concept of the "Hero"	
G. Contact With and Feelings Toward the Fedayeen	
H. Concept of Why the Palestinians Fight	
I. Wishes of Palestinian Children	
IV NONPARTICIPANT OBSERVATION	45
V CONCLUSION	49
APPENDIX (TABLES)	51

FOREWORD

This book is based on a sociological study of Palestinian children.

Two factors motivated the author to carry out this study: first, since Palestinian children are the generation of liberation, I felt that a study of their thoughts, feelings and attitudes about things and events was essential; and secondly, if Palestinian children were what I expected them to be, the book would be the most serious and self-evident warning to Israel, to world Zionism and to imperialist countries which support Israel. Another less significant motive was the desire to show Mrs. Golda Meir and her Zionist associates that the Palestinian people do exist*, that they have existed as a people for centuries, and that two decades of displacement and refugee life have not broken the continuity of that nation of people.

The study aims at measuring two vital matters :

1. The national awareness and identity of the Palestinian children who were born outside Palestine and who have never seen Palestine.
2. The degree of attachment of Palestinian children to their homeland, and how much they are ready to suffer in order to liberate it.

The study is based upon a number of cases. The number is arbitrary; it could have been smaller or much larger. The number of cases is not important in this kind of study. One

* See Golda Meir's statement on the Palestinian people, *Sunday Times* (London), 15 June 1969, in which she declared "There was no such thing as Palestinians. It was not as though there was a Palestinian people and we came and threw them out and took their country from them. They did not exist."

must also keep in mind that the book is more than the study. The study lays the foundation upon which the themes of the book are built, that the Zionists have destroyed and are still destroying Palestinian life, culture and the happiness of Palestinian families, especially Palestinian children, in the name of founding a national home for foreigners from all over the world in Palestine. Such an injustice cannot be forgiven, forgotten, or allowed to continue.

Bassem Sirhan

Important Note : The term "Jews," as used by Palestinians and other Arabs, refers to the Jewish community in Palestine which took over Palestine by force. It does not refer to Jews who now live in the U.S.A., Russia, Lebanon or any other country. The term does not refer to Semites and hence it is not used in a racist sense. Rather, it refers to "those who occupied Palestine and are still occupying it." The term will be used in the same sense by the author throughout this book.

I

RESEARCH SETTING AND SAMPLE

After the big 1948 exodus, the Palestinian people were divided into two main residential groups, city dwellers and camp dwellers. They took refuge in three Arab countries bordering Palestine — Jordan, Syria and Lebanon.

Because these three Arab countries are not in the same stage of social development, nor are their rates of social change similar, a representative sample must include all Palestinian children in the three countries. Lebanon is the most modern of the three countries, and the most economically prosperous. Jordan is the least modern and the least economically prosperous. Syria lies between the two extremes. The different economic conditions and degree of modernization have accordingly affected to some extent the Palestinians' conditions of existence in each of these three countries.

Hence, I decided that Jordan and Lebanon should be my research setting. Within that social and geographic setting, there are two residential settings, cities and camps. Consultations with well informed persons who are well acquainted with Palestinian conditions in the three countries convinced me that Palestinians who live in Syria would be represented in a sample taken from Jordan and Lebanon.

Jordan is a unique setting for any study of the Palestinian people since it includes 1948 and 1967 camp refugees as well as 1948 and 1967 city dwellers. It includes destitute as well as rich and economically stable Palestinian families. It also includes twice-displaced refugees, those who were displaced in 1948 to the West Bank of Jordan and then again in 1967 to the East Bank of Jordan. Above all, Jordan is the only Arab host country where Palestinians form a majority of

the population.

Lebanon, on the other hand, includes firmly established 1948 Palestinians, half of whom live in camps while the other half live outside the camps (in villages, towns and cities). The Palestinians in Lebanon have been exposed to social, cultural, political, educational, economic and even emotional conditions which differ from the conditions the Palestinians in Jordan have been exposed to. This difference in conditions is essential to any study of the Palestinian personality or society. In the present study, we predicted that among almost all Palestinians these factors would not affect national awareness or national identity. We also predicted that these factors would not affect the insistence of an overwhelming majority of Palestinians on liberation and their desire to regain and return to Palestine.

However, we predicted that these factors would affect the course of action which a certain group, family, or individual would take to materialize his desire to return. In other words, these factors determine who will fight and die for Palestine and who will, for instance, only give material aid for the cause of liberation. This prediction applies to a great extent to adult Palestinians, and to a lesser extent to Palestinian children who, as will be seen later, may overcome these influences by the new aspirations which the Palestinian revolution has given them.

The circumstances of the Palestinian people, which have been discussed above, made me choose two samples. The first sample, from Jordan, includes ten children who live in Amman and fifteen children who live in two different camps near Amman. The second sample is from Lebanon. It includes ten children who live in Beirut and fifteen children who live in two different camps.

The number of cases in the two samples may seem to be much too small. But, for the purpose of this study, we need a small number of cases to be studied in depth. As long as the cases are taken at random, we do not

need a full-scale survey to know, for example, whether all French feel they are French or all Chinese identify themselves as Chinese rather than as Japanese.

Similarly, in order to measure the degree of determination to fight for an ideal, i.e. liberation of Palestine, we do not need to ask everyone, "Would you fight for Palestine?" because almost everyone would say yes. This study requires a small number of cases, chosen at random and studied in depth, which will reflect the trend or pattern among the population concerned.

A. Selection of the Sample

The researcher went to "Al-Wihdat" camp near Amman. This camp includes 1948 Palestinian refugees. The researcher wandered around in the camp and chose a row from every few rows of "houses." In that row, the first child whom the researcher met was interviewed. The interviews took place at each child's house, after receiving permission from his parents to interview him alone. A number of PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine) — General Command tiger cubs were interviewed at this camp.

The researcher then moved to "Al-Bagaa" camp where indoctrinated Al-Fateh tiger cubs were interviewed.

The city sample was chosen from schools. The researcher chose at random a number of children from one private and one public school in Amman.

The same method was followed in two camps in Lebanon and in the cities of Beirut and Sidon. PFLP tiger cubs were interviewed in Lebanon.

B. Characteristics of the Sample

The sample includes Palestinian children from ten to fifteen

years old, most of whom were born outside Palestine (1948 refugees). We considered including children as young as five years old, but the idea was dropped because these children would be able to express their national identity but not their determination to fight for liberation and freedom. The sample is composed of children from camps and cities who are not indoctrinated as well as indoctrinated children from three resistance organisations. All interviewed children, including tiger cubs, attend school.

The sample turned out to include Palestinians from all parts of Palestine; the north, the south, the center, and the West Bank. It includes children from various income groups, and from the three categories of refugees, namely 1948 refugees, 1967 refugees and the twice-displaced refugees (1948 and 1967). Finally, it includes both males and females although there are more males.

II

NATIONAL AWARENESS AND IDENTITY

The focus of this section is on the national identity of Palestinian children, and on the source or sources from which they acquired that identity, or in other words, how they became aware of their national identity. An essential aspect of awareness of national identity is knowledge of the Palestine story. Here also, we should ask how the children came to know the story in order to determine the main channel through which national identity has been passed on, despite the fact that these children have never seen their mother country. A third aspect is the intensity of identification with Palestine which is measured by the degree of desire to return to the mother country and the reasons behind the wish to return.

The last part of this section is devoted to a study of the attitudes of Palestinian children towards the cause of their misery, the Israeli Jews.

In order to assure the depth of the questions, complete ignorance and a sense of naivety was assumed by the researcher. The questions were, for example: Who are you? Where do you come from? Where is Palestine? Why? How? Who told you so? etc.

It is the researcher's belief that such questions are likely to lead to the most natural or the most basic layer of the Palestinian identity and personality. We are not looking for the more complicated manifestations of identity and personality; all we are after is the essence of identity and personality.

A. National Identity

All interviewed Palestinian children (100%) knew where

they came from. They all replied to the question, *Where do you come from?* by saying "from Palestine." They all specified their home towns or villages as well. Most of them first specified their home town, then the country, e.g. "Shaab, Palestine," "Jericho, Palestine." Furthermore, most of them knew the location of their home town or village, e.g. "Sasa in the Safad area," "Innabah in the Lidya area," etc. This is one indication that the Palestinians are not nomads or "bedouins" unattached to any land or community, as Zionist propaganda has depicted them for years. They are a people firmly rooted in a community with a long and well established tradition. Not even the least vagueness was evident in their replies to the question, *Where do you come from?* — their answers were spontaneous, clear-cut and as natural as the answer to a question like "What is your name?"

The next question asked was, *Where is Palestine?* No suggestions were given as to the sort of reply required, i.e. whether it should be in terms of geographic location or in other terms. Our aim was to know how these children who were born outside Palestine conceived its location.

Four patterns of location were conceived by Palestinian children :

1. Emotional conception (16% of responses):
"Palestine is far away."
2. Political conception (50% of responses): "Palestine is in the hands of Zionists," "Palestine is under the Jews," and "Palestine is the occupied land which the Jews confiscated and stole."
3. National conception (24% of responses): "Palestine is in the heart of the Arab countries."
"Palestine is part of the Arab countries."
4. Geographical conception (8% of responses):

"Palestine is in Southern Lebanon," "Palestine is in the West Bank," and "Palestine is on the Mediterranean, near Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and U.A.R."

Only one child (2%) did not know where Palestine is.

What sort of a country do Palestinian children believe Palestine to be? (see Table 3). Eighty-four percent of interviewed children believed that Palestine was "an Arab country" or "a country of the Arabs." Eight percent believed it was just "their country," one child (2%) believed it was "the country of the Palestinians," and finally one child (2%) believed Palestine "is a bride." He probably picked up this idea from the saying, "Palestine is a bride whose price is blood." None of them (0%) believed it was a Jewish or a Jewish-Arab country; and none (0%) believed it was "an international homeland for religions" or any of the other themes which aim at destroying and erasing the Arab character of Palestine.

One often hears in different circles and from various people that most Palestinians identify themselves as Jordanians, Lebanese, Syrians, or merely as stateless refugees. They attribute this to the process of assimilation on the one hand, and to the Palestinians' despair of regaining their country, which has made them choose a new, positive identification (except for those who are said to identify themselves merely as refugees). This claim proved to be totally wrong and unfounded. All interviewed Palestinian children (100%) considered themselves Palestinians, when asked the following question (see Table 1), *Are you - Lebanese - Jordanian - Palestinian - refugee - other?* They had no doubt as to who they were. Even twenty years of refugee life has not imposed on any Palestinian child the idea that he is a refugee. Even the social stigma and the references of other Arabs, of foreign governments and of the United Nations to Palestinians as refugees have failed to erase the Palestinian

concept of themselves. Palestinians are not refugees; they are Palestinians. Refugee life is and has remained a socio-economic condition despite intentional or unintentional efforts to change it into personal identity.

This firm and clear-cut identity of the Palestinians brings to mind a very odd contradiction. Palestinians, who are the rightful owners of Palestine, who identify themselves as Palestinians and who refuse any other identity, even that of other Arab countries, are denied their land and their identity by Zionists. At the same time, Jews who identify themselves as French or Russian or American are pushed by the Zionist movement into giving up their well established and accepted French or Russian identity in order to have a new identity imposed on them — the Israeli identity !

B. Knowledge of the Palestine Story

As stated earlier, knowledge of the Palestine story or of why Palestinians are refugees is proof of their awareness of their condition. The children were asked, *Since you are a Palestinian, what are you doing here ? (that is, why aren't you living in Palestine ?)* Almost all respondents (96%) stated that they were "here" or that they were not living in Palestine because "Israelis" or "Zionists" or "Jews" or "Zionist enemies" "occupied Palestine, took it by force and kicked us out." Some of them (16%) added "we were not armed" or "we were not aware of their threat," and "hence we could not resist them." Two children (4%) said they were "here" because they "were born here." The researcher probed further by asking, *Why were you born here and not in Palestine ?* and the children said "because the Israelis occupied our country and kicked us out by force."

It is not by magic or by the force of some spirit that the Palestinian identity, personality and nationalism have survived

for two generations since the diaspora of the Palestinian people began. Rather, this identity and nationalism have been preserved through the well known channels of socialization. They were passed from father to son, from grandfather to grandson. It was the will of the Palestinian people to preserve their entity and identity which enabled that identity to survive. It is the will of the Palestinian that gives lives every day to the Palestinian entity.

Similarly, it was not magic or a "great national spirit" that enabled the Jews to preserve their identity for 2,000 years, but it was the Jewish mother telling her children who they were and what they should yearn for that has been responsible for the Jewish condition today.

A majority of interviewed Palestinian children (68%), when asked how they knew they were Palestinians and how they happened to know what the Jews had done to them, said that their family (parents, grandparents, etc.) had told them they were Palestinians and had told them what the Jews had done. The family, with its consecutive generations, seems to be the main channel of the Palestinians' continuity as a national entity. Other channels of awareness of Palestinian children's identity are (see Table 4) :

1. *Their Condition.* Four children (8%) said, "Since I am in the camp I know I am a Palestinian."
2. *The Community.* Ten children (20%) said that people around them "told them they were Palestinians and told them the Palestine story."
3. *Palestinian Resistance Movement.* Two children (4%) declared, "we are Palestinians because fedayeen organizations are resisting the Jews so that we will return to our homes."

C. Attitudes Towards the Jews

Four questions were asked to measure the attitudes of Palestinian children towards Jews. The first question was, *Do you — like Jews, hate them, neither like nor hate them ? Why ?* The second question (to a respondent who hates Jews) was, *Do you hate the Jews who took away your country or all the Jews in the world ?* The third question was, *What's the difference between a Jew and a Zionist ?* The fourth question was, *Do you accept to live with Jews in Palestine ? Why ?* (see Table 5).

More than one third (34%) of interviewed children stated that they hated Zionists or the Zionist movement but not the Jews. It is worth noting that those who stated that they hated Zionists and Zionism were indoctrinated tiger cubs from Al-Fateh, PFLP, and PFLP-General Command. A fifteen-year old tiger cub said, "I am against Zionism as a racist movement and not against Jews as a religion." A fourteen-year old Fateh tiger cub said, "I hate Zionists because they sneaked in like thieves and stole the land of Palestine." A fifteen-year old tiger cub from the General Command said, "I hate the international Zionist movement and I feel sorry for the Jews because they too are colonized by this movement."

The rest of the interviewed children (66%) said they hated the Jews. Fifty-six percent of these said that their only reason for hating Jews was that "the Jews took Palestine which is not theirs and kicked us out"; a very valid reason, by all standards, for hating someone. A few children (10%) said, "we hate the Jews because they are fighting us," or "we hate the Jews because they are killing the fedayeen."

All indoctrinated children, 32% of interviewed children, were able to differentiate between a Jew and a Zionist, and most of them knew exactly what the difference was (see Table 6). In their own terms, "Judaism is a religion. Zionism is a racist movement trying to use the Jewish religion for its own inter-

ests," or "Jews are like Moslems. A Zionist is the one who occupies the land, rules it, and kicks its owners out," or "Jews are one of three religions; Zionists were created by American imperialism," and "The Jew is a man who follows a holy religion. The Zionist is a member of the international Zionist imperialist movement."

Another one third (32%) could not tell the difference between a Zionist and a Jew. The last group (36%) said that there was no difference between a Jew and a Zionist.

Fourteen indoctrinated children (87% indoctrinated children) said that they did accept to live with Jews in Palestine (see Table 7). Their acceptance, in their own words, was, "Of course I do, on condition that they do not represent a racist, expansionist Zionist movement. There is no objection to living with them as a religious group," and "I would like to live with Moslem Jews like us but not with the 1948 Jews," (the term "1948 Jews" hints at "those who harmed us"), and "I do accept a democratic state," and "I accept, but not under their rule. There are Jews in Syria and Lebanon and they are living among the people," and "I accept to have a Jew as my neighbour if he is a good Jew. I accept to live in peace with them." The two indoctrinated children (12.5%) who refused to live with Jews in Palestine explained, "They would be cruel to us," and "Palestine does not accept half solutions, and the Arabs have the right to it."

All nonindoctrinated children, 68% of the sample, refused to live with Jews in Palestine. As children, they gave understandable reasons for their refusal and their fears. One child said, "I do not accept because they shot us." Others said, "No, because they are our enemy," or "No, because they expelled us from our country," or "No, because they might one day disarm us and govern us as they wish," or "No, they might stab us in the back," or "No, because Palestine is Arab and it is all ours."

After the Zionists occupied Palestine, confiscated Palestin-

ian property, carried out several massacres and fought three wars against the Arabs in which the Palestinians were the main victims, it is not at all strange to find that Palestinian children fear and distrust them. However, as shown by the cases of the indoctrinated children, the Palestinian resistance movement is making a successful attempt to reorientate Palestinian children towards accepting to live with Jews in a democratic state.

The Palestinian children's hatred of the Jews who took Palestine is justified. This hatred is not innate or timeless; rather it started in 1948, and it was instigated by the Zionists. The findings of this study, however, give no evidence of the image of the Palestinians in particular, and Arabs in general, which Zionism has tried to impose on world public opinion. That image views Arabs and Palestinian Arabs as thirsting for Jewish blood, as a people whose hatred for Jews is historically unmatched except by the Nazis (see *Le Petit David*, for instance*). Arab hatred for Jews is not based on race or religion: rather it is the hatred of the victim for his assassin, the hatred of the North Vietnamese for the American soldier, and finally the hatred of the Jew for Hitler.

* Xavier Antomarchy, Jean Choumin, *Le Petit David*. (Paris : Julliard, Spring 1969).

III

DETERMINATION TO LIBERATE PALESTINE

Before June 1967, the Palestinian people were not given the opportunity, nor were they allowed to create the opportunity, to fight for freedom and liberation.

After the 1967 war all obstacles were removed from the path of liberation. Palestinian freedom fighters had been anxiously waiting for such a moment. For the first time since he was expelled from his country, the Palestinian held machine gun, and he held it firmly.

Three years have passed since the liberation movement started operating on a large scale. Since the road to liberation is clear and the Palestinians now have access to arms, we were prompted to ask: Where do Palestinian children stand on the issue of liberation? How determined are they to struggle for their homeland? Where do their loyalties lie? What kind of aspirations do they have?

All of these basic questions need urgent and realistic answers because the Palestinian children of today are the generation which can determine the outcome of the struggle for Palestine. They can fight until victory or put an end to the struggle.

The intent of this section of the study is to answer the above questions and describe the normative structure and value orientations of Palestinian children. Determination to fight is measured by some direct and indirect indicators such as future plans and alternatives, scale of loyalties, scale of preferences, wishes, etc... The rest of the book will be devoted to analysing these indicators and relating them to each other to form a complete picture of the extent of Palestinian children's determination to liberate their occupied homeland.

A. *Palestinian Daily Life and the Palestine Problem*

The presence of the Palestine problem in daily Palestinian life is a major factor in the Palestinians' desire for change. They feel that they must do something, and they keep repeating that being alive but not living cannot be tolerated forever. They cannot tolerate continual torment until doomsday. The only *desirable* escape from their situation is return. An often repeated saying of theirs is, "our feast is our return." They refuse to consider any of their Islamic or Christian feasts as days of joy. On such occasions they say to each other, "next feast in Palestine"; they write the same thing on their Christmas cards and post cards. Of course, not every Palestinian does this, but it is the observable social pattern. Another manifestation of this pattern is the way the old people say with great bitterness, "I wish to die in Palestine. I pray to God not to die outside Palestine," and "I want to die where my close kin died," and "Son, the only request I have after my death is that you remove my bones and bury them in Palestine after we regain it."

The Palestinian problem has been present in the daily life of all Palestinians throughout their years of exile. It has been present in a more intensified form in the life of camp dwellers than in the life of city dwellers. This is true because Palestinian city dwellers are economically better off which enables them to avoid many pressures, and, more important, because camp dwellers form an emotional block due to their physical proximity, while city dwellers are dispersed, and hence their emotional ties are confined to a few Palestinian families and not to the masses of the Palestinians. Camp dwellers face the problems of daily life together and they are subjected to the same social, economic and political pressures. Their children go to the same schools, UNRWA schools, while Palestinian children whose families live in cities or towns go to all types of schools and face daily problems alone.

Our findings show that Palestinian children living in cities do think of the Palestine problem and do encounter the consequences of their plight, but they also think of and do other things, e.g. literature, acting, sports, and school. However, Palestinian children living in camps are almost totally shut in by their plight; all they do and think is directed towards or connected with Palestine. Their main trend of thought is political, and their daily life is political life (listening to news, starting hot discussions about the problem, joining political parties and political movements, etc.).

The Palestinian revolution has further intensified the presence of the Palestine problem in the daily life of camp dwellers, and has become the daily concern of a large segment of Palestinian city dwellers. Many city dwellers who, out of despair, were apolitical, became very active politically when the Palestinian revolution proved to them that there is hope and that victory is certain.

Palestinian children were asked, *What are the three things you talk about most everyday with your peers?* All indoctrinated children (tiger cubs) who live in the middle of and for the revolution have nothing to talk about except the revolution. They talk about various aspects of the revolution, from weapons, training, operations, fighters and camp life, to Arab military efforts, return, liberation, and, in the case of PFLP tiger cubs, the class structure of Palestinian and Arab society.

Among nonindoctrinated children, camp dwellers also seem to confine their conversation to different aspects of the Palestine problem. They talk about fedayeen, commando operations, Israelis, the different commando groups, the Balfour Declaration and how Palestine was lost, and, as one child put it, "how we are going to become fedayeen and fight to regain Palestine." The other main issue discussed by some children was school classes and homework. In this respect one child said, "we say we should be taught the history of Palestine

instead of the history of Lebanon." (The curriculum of UNRWA schools, which was established to educate Palestinian children, did not include any course in Palestinian history or geography from 1950-1969. Only after the Palestinians revolted and carried arms, and after long strikes by Palestinian children, was Palestinian history and geography included in the curriculum, in September 1969). Only one camp child (2%) mentioned that, in addition to talking about Palestine, he talked about riding bicycles with his contemporaries.

Nonindoctrinated children who live in cities devote most of their conversation to various aspects of the Palestine problem, but give more room than camp dwellers to talking about nonpolitical activities, i.e. sports, films, and school. The two words most frequently used by Palestinian children in Lebanon are "Klashnikov" (the Russian assault rifle) and "Feda'i" (commando).

The above findings and analysis show that the Palestinian problem occupies a larger portion of daily Palestinian life than personal or public matters. This definitely leads people to think about solving, and working to solve that problem.

B. Future Plans and Alternatives

We proposed some plans to the Palestinian children interviewed, with two aims in mind: first, to offer Palestinian children tempting alternatives to becoming fedayeen; and second, to find out their readiness to accept such alternatives and indirectly get to know their future plans or at least present tendencies which point to their possible future plans.

The three proposed alternatives were:

1. A five-year scholarship to study in the U.S.A. or any European country one chooses.

2. A five-year training period in some business in Kuwait, ending with the trainee becoming a big merchant.
3. A free five-year tour of five different countries of one's choice.

The five-year period was chosen as a sufficient period to keep the child away from the social influences of the "battlefield" and at the same time to enable him to begin a career.

A child's acceptance of one of the proposed plans could mean that he is not yet committed to the struggle, but it does not necessarily imply that he is not committed to the struggle. So a follow-up question was asked to determine whether acceptance of a proposed plan does or does not indicate noncommitment to the struggle. The question was, *After your five-year training, education or tour is over, what would you like to do ?*

Acceptance or refusal of the proposed alternative plans, and intended course of action thereafter could tell us, where other factors remain constant, whether a vast majority of Palestinian children would become freedom fighters or would be following private careers within five years.

Although tiger cubs were already committed to the struggle, they were asked the question as a chance for them to sever their commitment and get out of the struggle.

All interviewed tiger cubs (32% of respondents) turned down without any hesitation the two alternative plans of becoming a big merchant in Kuwait and touring five different countries for free. Reasons given for rejecting the Kuwait plan were, "We are not now in the stage of merchants and big people," or "I want to regain Palestine" or "I want to live among revolutionaries, and after I liberate my country I will be a merchant in Palestine," or "I want to be a fighter," or "My class condition after training in Kuwait would not allow me to struggle."

Reasons given for rejecting the free travel plan were, "I prefer that the money for my free tour be given to the resistance," or "I would rather serve my country than waste my time," or "I do not want to leave the battle before we regain Palestine."

All but two tiger cubs (87.5 %) accepted the five-year education plan. This finding is not strange or contradictory when one considers both the high value which Palestinians place on education, and their plans after the study period is over. All tiger cubs who accepted the education plan said that after their study was over they would join the revolution. They said it in different ways: "I'll join the revolution," or "I'll join Fateh," or "I'll return to Jordan and become fedai with Fateh." The two tiger cubs (12.5 %) who rejected the education plan gave the following reason for their rejection: "I want to remain in the midst of the revolution," and "My class condition after such education will not allow me to struggle."

Unexpectedly, nonindoctrinated camp dwellers took a more negative attitude than tiger cubs towards the tempting alternative plans. A large majority of nonindoctrinated camp dwellers interviewed (88%) rejected the three alternatives, and did not give them a second thought. Intention to join the Palestinian resistance movement was the only reason given for the rejection of proposed plans. To quote the sayings of some children, "I don't want to be a merchant; I want to be trained and be a fighter," or "I want to fight," or "In five years I can destroy a part of the enemy's force," or "We do not need degrees now, Palestine needs fighters." Only one child (2%) of this group accepted all three plans and said he did not know what he would do after five years. Another child (2%) rejected all three plans because he wanted to remain close to his family, and said that he intended to get a job after he finished his education. The probability of either of the two children

joining the struggle is rather low. One girl (2%) accepted the education plan, rejected the merchant plan and seemed willing to accept the tour plan. However, she said that her aim for the future was to become a doctor in order to take care of fedayeen, soldiers of the Palestinian Liberation Army, and other Arab soldiers.

Among children who live in cities, income had an effect on the matter of the proposed alternatives and future plans.* Children of low-income families had attitudes similar to those of camp dwellers. However, children of high-income families (16% of sample) seemed to think more in terms of their personal interests. A majority (7%) of this latter group of "rich" Palestinians accepted all three alternatives. However, acceptance of the proposed plans did not exclude feelings of national duty among "rich" Palestinian children. They had every intention of helping the revolution financially, socially, and politically, but they fell short of becoming fighters. Most "rich" Palestinian children (90%) of the present generation will probably be in the "supporting front" of the revolution. They aspire to become lawyers, doctors, engineers, businessmen, etc. They intend to help the revolution to a great extent without risking their own lives. I estimate, on the basis of my field work among Palestinians, that the "supporting front" group composes 10-15% of all Palestinian people. Some members of the "supporting front" might become fighters.

It was noticed that the majority of those who want to be in the "supporting front" came from Lebanon. This could be explained by the great emphasis which Lebanese society places on "giving help" and on political action, rather than on fighting.

* No analysis on the basis of class structure is included in this study although such an analysis is essential in the case of the Palestinian revolution, because the class structure of the Palestinian people has not yet been studied and is extremely hard to define.

As far as camp dwellers, indoctrinated children, and low-income city dwellers are concerned, no difference was observed between Palestinian children who live in Jordan and those who live in Lebanon (the above three groups form 84% of the sample).

C. Scale of Preferences

If all other factors remain constant, preferences are usually guidelines to decision making and then to action. By knowing the preferences of Palestinian children, we know the most probable line of action they are going to follow. Since the subject of this study deals with the preference for fighting over other lines of action, the following question was asked (see Table 9): *Would you prefer to enter: engineering college - medical college - technical college - other. Why ?*

Almost all indoctrinated children, nonindoctrinated camp dwellers, and low-income nonindoctrinated city dwellers both in Jordan and Lebanon (78% of the sample out of 84%) said they would prefer to enter a military college. In three cases (6%) the children said they would prefer to enter an engineering college and a medical college in order to "be an engineer with Fateh," and "for the sake of wounded commandos." One girl chose to be either a doctor and a commando, or an engineer and a commando.

All but one "rich" Palestinian child (14% out of 16%), said they would prefer to enter engineering, medical or arts and sciences colleges, and did not relate their personal preferences to their national background.

None of the interviewed children aspired to enter a technical college. This is what one would expect since it reflects the Arab value system, which appreciates mental labor and white-collar occupations and looks with contempt on manual

labor and blue-collar occupations.

The Palestinian children's overwhelming preference for entering military colleges does not reflect an innate quality in themselves; rather it reflects a high sense of national feeling aroused by the present conditions of the Palestinians as a people in revolt. Almost all Palestinian children (92%) seemed to be quite aware of the present stage of their people's struggle and realized the urgent demands of that struggle. This goes to prove the generalization, mentioned previously, that Palestinian children's decision making and action is influenced by national factors. It seems that the Palestinian child says to himself, "Before doing this or that, I must know how it would affect my role in the revolution." With most adult Palestinians the mental process is the reverse "Before joining the revolution I must know how it would affect my present condition." It is obvious that Palestinian children are much more revolutionary than Palestinian adults in their way of thinking and in their degree of commitment to the revolution.

The deep effect of the Palestinian national crisis of survival on Palestinian children's personal preferences, aspirations, and decisions was best expressed by Palestinian children themselves : "Our conditions are not for engineering and medicine; our prime concern is to regain our country," and "The military college is the one which regains Palestine," and "The present circumstances demand a military college more than any other college," and "Military college, of course, in order to defend my people," and "I'll learn how to fight bravely," and "It is better for me to fight because I should help my country," and "Military college, of course, because my experience will serve my country."

It is of course noticeable that *not one* Palestinian said he would prefer to enter a military college in order to "annihilate the Jews," to "throw them into the sea," to "kill the Jewish people," or any other Zionist cliché. Palestinians are fighting

to liberate their country from foreign occupation in the same way the French fought to liberate France in the Second World War.

D. Scale of Loyalties

Loyalties are studied as an essential part of the population's normative structure and value system.

For centuries the loyalty of the Arab has been, above all, to his family. Some people consider loyalty to religion among the Arabs second to family loyalty and others consider it more important than family loyalty. I tend to agree with the first group. Other less important loyalties of the Arab are loyalty to his community and to his village. National loyalty was for a long time absent from the Arab's scale of loyalties. Only recently did national loyalty enter that scale (late in the nineteenth century). Although the newly introduced loyalty of the Arab to his nation has continued to grow stronger since then, it cannot compete, even today, with family or religious loyalty in Arab society in general, e.g. in Lebanon, Syria, or Jordan. The loyalty of adult Palestinians like that of other adult Arabs is first and foremost to family and religion. It has been found that this loyalty and the value placed on the family's welfare and safety encouraged the Palestinian exodus of 1967. Palestinians who fled did not give the slightest thought to the national consequences of their action (see Emira Habibi's study of the 1967 exodus from the West Bank, published by the P.L.O. Research Center).

Are the loyalties of Palestinian children any different from those of their parents and of adult Arabs? To answer this question several scales were constructed and tested. Most of them did not work or were beyond the children's mental capacity. After several attempts the following scale turned out to be efficient :

Which is easier for someone :

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <i>a — to lose his country or</i> | <i>b — to lose his education?</i> |
| <i>a — to not see his family</i> | |
| <i>any more</i> | <i>or</i> |
| | <i>b — to not see his country</i> |
| | <i>any more ?</i> |
| <i>a — to lose his religion or</i> | <i>b — to lose his country ?</i> |
| <i>a — to lose his parents or</i> | <i>b — to lose his country ?</i> |
| <i>a — to lose his arm or</i> | <i>b — to lose his country ?</i> |
| <i>a — to lose his parents or</i> | <i>b — to lose his religion ?</i> |
| <i>a — to lose his money or</i> | <i>b — to lose his land ?</i> |
| <i>a — to lose his money or</i> | <i>b — to lose his religion ?</i> |
| <i>a — to be imprisoned for or</i> | <i>b — to lose his religion ?</i> |

All Palestinian children who were interviewed adhered to the same value system. Country of residence, place of residence, indoctrination and income did not make a difference in this respect.

The findings of this study draw the following ladder of loyalties among Palestinian children (of course, total conformity to any value system does not occur anywhere, and hence there were a few exceptions among Palestinian children) :

- A. Primary loyalty was to the country (or the nation). Almost all Palestinian children (92%) said it was easier for someone to lose his family (or parents) and his religion and to suffer personally, rather than lose his country. It is really a new feeling for children who have never seen their country to say they would sacrifice seeing their family rather than seeing their country.
- B. Religion came second after the country in terms of loyalty. I was really astonished to hear children say they would prefer to see their brother or parents shot rather than abandon their religion. The main cause of my

* The original question was "Which is more difficult for some one," however the children could not quite grasp the scale, so I changed it to "Which is easier" and they understood the question.

amazement was the fact that religion is a spiritual matter which can not be easily comprehended by children, while the family is the dearest material object the children encounter and live with; yet loyalty to religion was greater than loyalty to the family. However, I felt that the children's loyalty to religion was conditioned. When I asked them, "Why is religion more important to you than your family?" they could not give any answer other than, "because it is my religion."

- C. Family came third on Palestinian children's scale of loyalties. This is a very fast and radical shift in loyalties especially when we consider the effect of their parents' value system under which the children were socialized, and the grip of traditions on Arab society. It seems that Palestinian children will be the first generation of Arabs to break the iron grip of the family over the individual. In general, the Palestinian child or teenager leaves home to join the revolution without saying "good bye" to his family. He simply sends them a note later telling them of his whereabouts. As one mother told me, "They disappear; they just go without saying a word. But they come back of us as heroes."

Almost all respondents (98%) showed willingness to suffer personally whether by imprisonment, losing an arm, losing their education or losing all their money, rather than see their country, family or religion suffer.

Four cases (8%) deviated from the above value system. In the first case the child could not choose between losing his religion and losing his country. He could not tell which was easier for him. In the second case, the child could not choose

between losing his religion and losing his family, or between losing his family and losing his country. In the third case, the child could not choose between losing his country and losing his family. The fourth case showed complete inability to arrange loyalties in order of importance.

E. Concept of the Road to Liberation

Palestinian children were asked: *Do you want to go back to Palestine or settle where you are.* All of them (100%) said that they wanted to go back. When asked why they wanted to go back to Palestine, most of them (90%) simply replied, "because it is my country" or "because it is my homeland." Some (10%) gave other reasons for their wish to return: "Palestine is our country and here is not," or "all that we own is in Palestine," or "life is better there," or "because it is my real country," or "the land there is more fertile; it gives honey and milk."

One main theme behind the desire to return was "regain-
ing our dignity." Some children (20%) expressed this theme by saying, "The one with no country is one with no dignity," or "to see my country and regain my dignity," or "I do not feel at ease here because people say we are refugees who have no country, and one has no value here," or "in order to live there in pride and dignity."

The next question asked (if the child said he wanted to go back) was, *You said you wanted to go back to Palestine; will the Jews let you go back ?* All interviewed children (100%) gave negative answers to the above question. All of them were certain that the Jews would not allow them to return to their homes.

The follow-up question was, *Since they will not let you go back, how will you return?* All interviewed children (100%) believed they could go back by force or more specifically

by force of arms. Most children (86%) referred to force as "war," "fighting," and "revolution." Some children (8%) believed that Arab armies would help in regaining Palestine, and others (20%) believed that popular war was the only road of return. Some quotes are, "If we beg them they will not allow us to return, but we will return by force," and "If we work hard, fight and die we will be able to return," and "by thought and machine gun." One of the most interesting answers was given by an eleven-year old camp refugee who said, "When the Jews die we will go back."

Only one child (2%) said he could return "through a peaceful solution if it is just, and by the machine gun if not." Many readers, especially non-Arabs, may be shocked or dismayed at the almost total lack of responsiveness of Palestinian children to peaceful solutions or the possibility of such solutions. The truth is, Palestinians are quite sensitive to and suspicious of peaceful solutions and political agreements because peaceful solutions, talks and political agreements have, since 1914, done so much harm and so much injustice to them. In 1917, 1936, 1947, and 1948, Palestinians came out of political agreements as losers, colonized, homeless, stateless and refugees. They were continuously rebelling and every time they were led to lay down their arms and talk politics, they were deceived. It seems that this time they will not talk politics and let themselves be deceived again. It is my judgment and belief that Palestinians will not lay down their arms until Palestine is liberated. If they lay down their arms this time they will not be allowed to rise again; they would be trapped and could be very easily exterminated.

To be more sure of Palestinian children's conceptions of the means of liberating Palestine, and to know how they envisage the future of the Palestinian people and the kind of role which every Palestinian should play, we used the sentence completion method.

The children were asked to complete the following sentences :

- a. *Palestine is regained only by...*
- b. *Nobody will liberate Palestine except...*
- c. *Every Palestinian must...*
- d. *The Palestinians will...*

Here again all Palestinian children (100%) maintained that force is the only means of regaining Palestine. They completed the first sentence with words like "force of arms," "thought and gun," "fighting," "blood," "blood of martyrs," "the revolution," "war and education," "guns."

The second sentence was completed by all interviewed children (100%) as follows : *Nobody will liberate Palestine except...* "war," "force and faith," "arms," "its own sons," "fighters and armies," "fedayeen," "popular liberation war," or "the Palestinians."

The role which every Palestinian must play, (see Table 10) as conceived by a vast majority of interviewed Palestinian children (84%), is the role of the feda'i (commando). Most children (84%) completed the sentence, *Every Palestinian must...* by, "be a feda'i," or "be a revolutionary." Most of the "rich" Palestinian children and some low-income city dwellers (total 16%) conceived the role of every Palestinian as that of sharing in the struggle of liberation "according to one's ability or means." As one child put it, "Every Palestinian must offer something." Only one child (2%) said, "Every Palestinian must kill the enemy."

All Palestinian children anticipated that in the future of their people they would triumph over the enemy and liberate and regain Palestine. This idea reflects their confidence in the future. Every Palestinian "knows" that Palestine will be regained one day because it is his, and it cannot be in other hands forever.

Some children (18%) completed the sentence, *The Pales-*

tinians will..., by "become fedayeen," or "carry out an operation," or "join fedayeen organizations and resist the enemy" or "fight to regain Palestine."

F. Concept of the "Hero"

This concept is composed of two parts : the child's ideal person from people around him, and his idea of who the hero is.

Two questions were designed to measure the children's concept of the hero :

1. *Of your acquaintances, who is the one you most admire and want to be like ?*
2. *Who is the hero ?*

In more than half the cases (52%) the children were able to point out persons around them whom they admired and wished to be like. The rest of the children (42%) mentioned either well-known figures or "general others." The well-known figures mentioned as ideal persons were Castro, Guevara, Yasser Arafat (Abu Ammar) and George Habash. The "general others" mentioned by about one third (30%) of the Palestinian children who were interviewed were, "the feda'i" or "the fighter" or "the tiger cub." Only three children (6%) said that there was no one around them whom they admired and wished to be like.

All persons specified as ideal persons whom the children wished to be like were fedayeen and revolutionaries. To quote some children, "My brother, Mohammad, because he is a feda'i," or "My cousin, Talal H., who was killed while fighting in Ajloun. I admire him because he is a fighter and a hero who died for God and for his country," or "My instructor, Abu Rachid, who was transferred to the town of al-Salt and was killed in a battle, and I wish to be like him," or "My uncle who likes the revolution, and we must be revolutionaries," or "My neighbour

Abu Hassan who is a feda'i and who is going to regain Palestine," or "My instructor who gives us revolutionary and cultural ideas."

Only two camp dwellers (4%) wished to be like their father "because he is a good man," and a third child (2%) wanted to be like his school principal because "I am a good student."

Unlike the rest of the Palestinian children, most of the "rich" children (14% out of 16%) mentioned persons from outside the revolution as their ideal figures. Most of them said they wanted to be like "my father because he is an engineer," or "my brother, who is rich and successful," or "my uncle the doctor."

Who is the hero? Half (50%) of the interviewed Palestinian children identified the hero with Gamal Abdul Nasser and Abu Ammar.

The rest of the children were equally divided into two groups. The first group (24%) believed the "feda'i" or the "fighter" or the "revolutionary" was the hero. The second group (26%) gave a definition or a description of the hero. The hero was described by members of this group as, "The one who struggles to liberate the land and the human being," or "The one who offers the dearest thing he possesses to his country," or "The one who offers his life cheaply for his country's sake," or "The one who dies for his country and who protects it." These definitions of the hero revolve around one meaning: sacrifice. The hero then, to a good number of Palestinian children, is the one who sacrifices everything, including his life, to his country and his people. Although this idea is nationalistic, it is not like European nationalism. European nationalism, as I understand it, means sacrificing everything to your country so that it grows stronger, larger, and more imperialistic. You sacrifice in order to dominate other nations. European nationalism contains strong aggressive elements. Palestinian nationalism, and for that matter, Asian nationalism in general, is based on the idea of self-defence rather than aggression. It is the

sacrifice of the poor nations to resist the rich nations' colonialism and imperialism. The sacrifice of the Vietnamese is radically different from that of the French or the Americans although both are "sacrifices."

Hence the sacrifice of the Palestinians should not be considered only in its nationalistic sense, but also in the humanistic sense. It is a sacrifice by Palestinians to end the humiliation, degradation, deprivation and regular extermination of their own people, and the injustice done to that people.

G. Contact With and Feelings Towards the Fedayeen

I consider physical contact with the fedayeen to be a key factor in the determination of Palestinian children to become fedayeen. Fedayeen "culture" has become a key factor in the socialization of Palestinian children. The element of imitation, which is very important in the study of social behavior, plays a role in driving and motivating children to join the resistance movement. The other major effect on the children of physical contact with the fedayeen lies in the highly favourable attitude of Palestinian society towards the feda'i and the special high status which he is given. Wherever he goes, the feda'i is treated with respect and love by the entire population; everybody wants to do something or offer something to the feda'i "who is dying for us."

Being a feda'i is now the trend, and I expect it to remain so for years to come. For this if for no other reason; Palestinian and other Arab children will continue to join the trend in greater numbers because it is the dominant social pattern. During the past ten to fifteen years, Nasserism was the prevailing trend and getting a university degree, especially in engineering, was the social trend. Now, becoming a feda'i is both the political and social current. This does not mean that this prevailing sentiment is a "fad" or a "craze," it is rather a powerful

social force which is capable of introducing radical and permanent changes into society.

The study measured the degree of physical contact between the children and the fedayeen, and the consequences of that contact as reflected in the children's feelings towards the fedayeen. The contact and its consequences are seen as decisive factors in the children's determination to join the revolution.

Eighty-two percent of interviewed Palestinian children stated that they saw the fedayeen every day, and associated with them. This is to be expected because the fedayeen are the children's neighbours, relatives and friends. Close physical contact, then, does exist between most Palestinian children and the fedayeen.

There are three basic features in the Palestinian revolution which strike the imagination of the people, especially the children, and move their deepest emotions. These three basic features are; (1) operations in occupied Palestine; (2) funerals of fedayeen killed in such operations; (3) militia parades carried out when the militia have completed their military training.

The study aimed at ascertaining how these features affect the children, and to what extent they influence them.

1. Fedayeen Operations :

The children were asked, *How do you feel when you hear of an operation in the occupied land ?*

Fedayeen operations in the occupied land affect different Palestinian children in different ways. About one third (28%) of the children feel "happy" when they hear of an operation in the occupied land. They feel happy because "Israel loses its weapons and soldiers," or "enemies are killed," or "they blow up some Israeli place." One child said he "feels happy if no feda'i is killed and feels sad if one is killed."

The majority of the children (68%) feel encouraged and more enthusiastic about becoming fedayeen and carrying out

such operations. Put in their own terms, "I feel I want to be like them," or "My blood boils and I get enthusiastic about supporting the fighters," or "I feel encouraged and loyal to the revolutionaries," or "I feel encouraged and I wish to be like them and carry out operations," or "I feel encouraged and I think that I did the operation."

One child (2%) said that his hope of return rises when he hears of an operation in the occupied land, and another (2%) said, "I feel the efforts of the revolution."

2. *Fedayeen Funerals* :

The children were asked, *How do you feel when you hear of a feda'i's death ? Have you seen or walked in a feda'i's funeral ? How did you feel during the funeral ?*

Fifty percent of the children we interviewed said they felt sad when they heard of a feda'i's death. Twenty-six percent of them said they felt happy when they heard of a feda'i's death. Some of them explained the joy they feel on such occasions by saying, "I feel happy because the next generation will liberate Palestine," or "I am pleased. Why should I feel sad over one since many are going to follow him?" or "I am pleased because he becomes a martyr," or "I feel happy because he died for Palestine."

The remaining 24% of the children had different feelings. Some felt that "It is natural that a feda'i should die and we must make sacrifices," others felt encouraged, others felt they should avenge him, and others felt the feda'i should die ten times so as to enter heaven and said they believed the martyr remains alive.

All interviewed children (100%) had seen at least one feda'i's funeral and most of them (82%) had walked in such funerals.

Around one third of interviewed children (30%) said they felt sad during the funeral. Another 30% felt quite encouraged

and felt that they must join the resistance movement and become fedayeen. The remaining 40% were divided into small groups with a wide range of feelings. One group (18%) felt happy during the funeral. Another group (8%) felt that the revolution was losing men as martyrs but that Palestine would be regained. A third group (8%) wished to die in the same way and to have a similar funeral. Only one child (2%) was frightened and scared. Another child (2%) felt proud of his people "who offer sacrifices." Only one child (2%) said that he did not feel anything during the funeral.

3. *Militia Parades :*

All interviewed children (100%) said they had attended militia parades (of course, some of them are members of the militia).

Palestinian children are moved by three dominant feelings while attending militia parades. The first, which is felt by 50% of the children, is a feeling of happiness, joy and pleasure. Some of the reasons given for such a feeling are "Palestinians now have training camps," and "they will be heroes and regain my country," and "they will be revolutionaries who carry out their attacks inside the occupied land." The second feeling felt by 34% of the children is a wish to be like them, to join them and to do the same things as they do. The third feeling, which is not as widespread as the two other feelings and is felt by 16%, is one of confidence that the next generation will liberate Palestine.

We conclude from the above findings that the three basic features of the Palestinian revolution do strike Palestinian children positively; that is, they strongly attract Palestinian children to join the revolution, they encourage them and they make them confident of the triumph of their struggle. In other words casualties, funerals and tough training do not scare Palestinian children away from the revolution.

H. Concept of Why the Palestinians Fight

Some observers relate the discontent of the Palestinian people to their socio-economic conditions; others relate it to their persecution by some Arab governments; and others, mainly the Zionists and their collaborators, relate it to the Palestinians' overwhelming desire for revenge. Some observers believe that the cause of discontent is a national one and that Palestinians fight to reestablish their national entity in their own country.

The researcher was interested in studying the children's conception of why the Palestinians are fighting. Such a conception reflects the children's ideas of why they too are going to fight in the near future.

To make it easy for the children, four reasons mentioned by observers as motives for the Palestinians to fight were included in a question, and the children were asked to name the reason or reasons which they believe the Palestinians are fighting for. The question asked was (see Table 11), *Are the Palestinians fighting for the dignity of the Palestinian people, to get rid of tents, poverty and rations, to take revenge on the Israelis, or to regain his country where he wants to live ?*

The findings were fascinating. Ninety-two percent of the Palestinian children believed the Palestinians were fighting to regain their country where they want to live. Six percent of interviewed children believed that Palestinians were fighting for the dignity of the Palestinian people. Only 2% believed that Palestinians were fighting to take revenge on the Israelis. None of them believed Palestinians were fighting to get rid of tents, poverty and rations.

These findings clearly show that Palestinian children view their people's fight as a national fight, not a social or economic fight or a fight motivated by hatred. We can also conclude from these findings that Palestinian children are not asking for and would not be satisfied with financial compensation, material

rewards and resettlement. The only thing that would satisfy them is to return to their homes and to regain their national sovereignty.

I. Wishes of Palestinian Children

We asked children about their wishes with one aim in mind: if the general tendency among them was one of personal desires concerned with private interests then the possibility of their joining the struggle would be lower. If, on the other hand, their general tendency was one of impersonal wishes concerned with national interests, then the possibility of their joining the struggle would be higher.

The children were asked, *What are the three things you wish to see realized ? Give them in order of importance to yourself.*

This question was asked very early in the interview in order to avoid directing the children in a certain direction or biasing their replies towards the nationalistic side. When the question was not quite understood by some children, the researcher simplified it but did not give any suggestions or examples.

The first wish mentioned by all (100%) interviewed Palestinian children, regardless of their place of residence, income or indoctrination, was to regain Palestine or to see Palestine liberated. There was not one single exception to this pattern. A few children (10%) mentioned this as their only wish in life (they did not mention any other wishes).

In general, the wishes of the Palestinian children fell in the national sphere. This was, however, not so much the case among children of high-income families who live in cities.

In general, the wish second in importance to regaining Palestine was also a national wish. It was expressed by 76% of interviewed children. It generally revolved around the following subjects : (a) Becoming a feda'i; (b) Dying as a martyr

for Palestine (a very repeated wish); (c) Unity of the Palestinian commando organizations; (d) Being able to carry out commando operations.

It is quite significant that all three wishes of 66% of interviewed Palestinian children were on the national level. Self-denial and a high sense of national awareness and national loyalty are evident from this fact. The third wish of this 66% group was about the following things; "to regain my dignity," or "to serve my country," or "that everyone should become fedayeen," or "that the Jews should die," or "unity of Arab countries," or "that we should live alone in our country."

Among the 34% who expressed at least one personal wish (in addition to nationalistic wishes) the most commonly expressed wish was "to continue my education" or "to become a lawyer/doctor/professor, etc." Other personal wishes were that "my parents should remain alive," or "I should live a happy life," or "I should never get sick," or "I should never enter a hospital," or "I should get all the things which I desire," or "I should own a beautiful, fast car when I grow up." One child wanted to see world peace and the establishment of a socialist system in capitalist countries.

The above findings show that there is a very high possibility that the great majority of Palestinian children will join the revolution. Their almost total concern with national goals, as expressed by their wishes, supports this conclusion.

IV

NONPARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

The researcher thought of supplementing the data he had obtained through interviews by data obtained through non-participant observation. It is always useful and sometimes essential not to be satisfied by what people say but to observe what they do and see how much it coincides with what they say.

Observation was thought to be essential in the case of our present study, because the subject of the study is very sensitive and people might easily only claim to be patriotic and to adhere to the aims of the national struggle.

Because it is practically impossible to observe city dwellers, observation was confined to camp dwellers who could be very easily observed without their being aware that they were being observed.

My observations are constructed from private visits to the different camps and from structured nonparticipatant observation of children in the camps.

Children were observed in their play hours, while they were not attending classes, and during weekends.

I encountered many incidents while carrying out research and at other times. I am going to relate three significant and interesting incidents; then I will present a comprehensive review of things I saw during my observations.

As I walked over to visit Fateh tiger cubs at al-Bagaa camp (my first visit to such a camp), at noon with the temperature at 40°C I saw a little boy at the camp gate apparently doing his guard shift. He was sitting on a small chair with a machine gun taller than himself in his lap. The machine gun was aimed in my direction. Frankly I was quite frightened because

I could not imagine that such a small boy could handle the machine gun. I shouted to him to point the machine gun in another direction. He did not answer. He just adjusted his machine gun, and I jumped in the opposite direction. I shouted to him again, but my shouting went unheeded. At last I said my prayers and walked over to him. There was no accident. I later related my story to the camp commander, who laughed at my worries and said, "he is a tough guy, he is a tough guy." Later when I saw that "guard" showing younger children how to do drill and how to fall, I tended to agree with the camp commander that the seven-year old child really was a tough guy. During that incident and later incidents, two feelings gripped me. I felt like kissing that child because I was so proud of him, and at the same time I felt sad at seeing the Palestinian child, the victim of Zionism and imperialism, being crucified in the hot sun of Jordan while most children his age in other parts of the world were eating delicious food, being given sweets and being taken out swimming or on picnics by their parents. At least other children of his age would be well taken care of at school and at home.

At a refugee camp in Lebanon, a three-year-old child entered the headquarters of a certain commando organization while I was there. He walked over to one of the fedayeen in the room and said, "I want a klasen (meaning a Klashnikov rifle). The feda'i laughed, put his Zlashnikov on the floor, and said to the child, "Take it if you can carry it." The child tried desperately but could not lift the rifle off the ground. The feda'i picked the child up and kissed him, "Go home now and come back when you grow bigger." "I don't want to go home," said the child, "I want to stay with you."

The third incident took place at a certain Palestinian family's house. The head of the family had a three-year-old child. I said "hello" to the child. His father told him to shake my hand, which he did. Then his father said to him, "This man is your relative; do you know exactly how he is related to you?"

The child looked at me and said, "He is my relative because he is a feda'i and I am a feda'i." Very simple but very effective words.

The first thing that strikes an outsider is the large number of Palestinian children scattered around the very narrow alleys of the camps (30 - 40 centimeters wide). The birth rate among Palestinians is high. The average size of the Palestinian family is eight.

The second point one notices is that these children have no place to play except in the mud and the sand. Their games are usually tough; they fight and wrestle with each other in the muddy ditches and "swamps" of the camps, and play football.

As one walks around the camps one sees Palestinian children, as well as adults, absorbed in hot arguments over Palestine, Nasser, the Jews, Israel, the fedayeen, imperialism and politics in general. I am led to believe that Palestinian children are among the most if not the most, politically-conscious and politically-oriented children in the world. Any Palestinian child can argue for hours with intelligent political journalists.

These days, observers walking around Palestinian camps can also see the children busy talking about all kinds of Russian and Chinese weapons. They discuss the range of these weapons, their weight, their effectiveness, etc. They also talk for hours with great enthusiasm about the heroic action of a feda'i in their neighbourhood, or about the skill of a certain military instructor. A common scene in the camps since the revolution "freed" the camp population is that of children imitating the militia "games." They keep practicing the falls, the holds, and all the techniques of unarmed self-defense which are practiced by the militia.

One seldom hears Palestinian children talking about sports, films, movie stars, games, cats and dogs, cars, trips they have taken, new things they have bought or any of the subjects usually discussed by children of their age in other countries.

Palestinian children do not intentionally avoid talking about such things; they do not talk about them simply because they do not have them.

The revolution is in every house. Almost in every house one sees Nasser's and Arafat's pictures. In every house there is a map of Palestine, the land that will never be forgotten by its people. In every house with children, one hears children as young as three and four years old singing popular fedayeen songs to their parents. On the walls of the houses of Palestinians one sees all sorts of writings glorifying the revolution and its leaders.

The faces of Palestinian children living in camps have varying expressions of hardness, grimness and sadness. Misery is apparent on every face. One cannot help asking himself when do these people get a chance to laugh. Before the revolution they did not laugh. But with the revolution they have their chance to laugh. When the fedayeen record some victory over the Israelis, Palestinian faces light up and they laugh wholeheartedly.

Palestinian children do not cry when their brothers, uncles, fathers, friends or neighbours return in coffins. They attend funerals with grim faces and frozen eyes gazing into infinity. They know that they have to take the place of those who fall.

A final remark. One expects the life span of a large number of Palestinian children to be very short, hardly over twenty years, during the next two decades. One also expects that most Palestinian children will not have the time or inclination to learn any skill of value. Fighting will be their only trade.

These two expectations naturally do not please any Palestinian, especially Palestinian mothers. Yet they know that in our crazy world, blood is the price of freedom, so they go on producing fighters in greater numbers so that they can pay that high price and be free. To the free man life is more important than freedom, but to the slave freedom is more important than life.

V

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study enable us to make several generalizations about Palestinian children, regarding their national identity and awareness, and their determination to join the struggle against racist Zionism in order to liberate Palestine from its poisonous grip. However, the reader must keep in mind that the generalizations concerning determination to fight remain in the normative sphere, and in the sphere of cherished values. If no factors beyond the control of the Palestinians stand in their way — i.e. an international conspiracy against the Palestinian people by world powers — the Palestinians will definitely realise their aspirations, desires, and demands.

The generalizations arrived at in this study are the following :

1. Palestinian children possess a high level of national awareness. They know who they are, who their enemies are, where they come from, and what brought them to their present condition.
2. Palestinian children identify themselves only as Palestinians.
3. Palestinian children do not accept resettlement or compensation. They insist on regaining Palestine.
4. Palestine is the only place Palestinian children feel to be their real home.
5. Dispersion, expulsion and refugee life have not destroyed the national entity of the Palestinian people. That entity has preserved its traditions, its values, and its emotional

bonds.

6. All Palestinian children believe that Palestine is an Arab country.
7. The main avenue of continuity of Palestinian identity and personality is the Palestinian family.
8. Palestinian children are fully determined to liberate their country.
9. The plight of the Palestinian people touches almost every aspect of the life of a great majority of Palestinian children. It greatly affects their aspirations, conceptions, wishes, plans, and daily activities.
10. Palestinian children's supreme loyalty is to their nation.
11. Palestinian children believe that Palestine can be regained only by armed struggle carried out by Palestinians themselves.
12. Palestinian children are not anti-Semitic. They are only anti-Zionist: indoctrinated Palestinian children are taught to love non-Zionist Jews, and to accept the idea of living side by side with them in a democratic Palestinian state.
13. Palestinian children do not want to fight to take revenge on the Jews, but to regain their country.
14. The Palestinian revolution itself is a very powerful motivating force for Palestinian children. It has become the norm and the pattern of life among the Palestinian masses. Children find other activities undesirable and inferior, or at least of secondary importance compared to revolutionary action.

APPENDIX

TABLE 1 : NATIONAL IDENTITY

	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
	—	—
1. Lebanese	0	0
2. Jordanian	0	0
3. Palestinian	50	100
4. Refugee	0	0
5. Syrian	0	0
6. Other	0	0
	—	—
Total	50	100%

TABLE 2 : CONCEPTION OF PALESTINE'S LOCATION

	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
	—	—
1. Emotional conception	8	16
2. Political conception	25	50
3. National conception	12	24
4. Geographical conception	4	8
5. Don't know	1	2
	—	—
Total	50	100%

TABLE 3 : CONCEPTION OF WHAT PALESTINE IS

	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
	—	—
1. An Arab country	42	84
2. "My country"	4	8
3. Other	4	8
	—	—
Total	50	100%

**TABLE 4 : CHANNELS OF NATIONAL AWARENESS
AND IDENTITY**

	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
	—	—
1. Family (parents)	34	68
2. Their own condition	4	8
3. The community	10	20
4. Palestinian resistance movement	2	4
	—	—
Total	50	100%

TABLE 5 : ATTITUDE TOWARDS JEWS

	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
	—	—
1. Like them	0	0
2. Hate them	33	66
3. Neither like nor hate them	0	0
4. Hate Zionists but like Jews	17	34
	—	—
Total	50	100%

TABLE 6 : DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A JEW AND A ZIONIST

	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
1. Knew the difference	16	32
2. Did not know the difference	16	32
3. Said there was no difference	18	36
	<u>—</u>	<u>—</u>
Total	50	100%

**TABLE 7 : ACCEPTANCE TO LIVE
WITH JEWS IN PALESTINE**

	<u>Accept</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Do not accept</u>	<u>%</u>
Indoctrinated children	14	28	2	4
Nonindoctrinated children	0	0	34	68
	<u>—</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>—</u>
Total	14	28%	36	72%

TABLE 8 : ATTITUDE TOWARDS ALTERNATIVE PLANS

	INDOCTRINATED		NONINDOCTRINATED	
	Accept No. %	Reject No. %	Accept No. %	Reject No. %
1. The Kuwait plan	0	16	14	24
2. The free tour plan	0	16	12	22
3. The scholarship plan	14	2	12	22
	0.0	100.0	29.4	70.6
	0.0	100.0	35.2	64.8
	87.0	12.5	35.2	64.8

TABLE 9 : EDUCATIONAL PREFERENCE

	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
1. Engineering College	6	12
2. Medical College	4	8
3. Military College	40	80
4. Technical College	0	0
5. Other	0	0
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	50	100%

TABLE 10 : CONCEPTION OF EVERY PALESTINIAN'S ROLE

	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
1. Feda'i, fighter	42	84
2. Taking part in other ways, i.e. financial help, etc.	8	16
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	50	100%

TABLE 11 : REASONS WHY PALESTINIANS FIGHT

	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
1. For their dignity	3	6
2. To get rid of poverty, tents and rations	0	0
3. To take revenge on the Israelis	1	2
4. To regain their country where they want to live.	46	92
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	50	100%