

The Red Minaret

Memoirs of

Ibrahim Ghushah

(Ex-Spokesman of Hamas)



Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies & Consultations

Chapter Seven

The Eighties

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Engagement in the Private Sector

When I finished the King Talal Dam project in late 1978, I began my work in **the private sector, opening an engineering office in Jabal al-Hussein**. This office was dedicated to engineering planning and supervision. It is not easy for any engineer who used to work in the public sector to suddenly switch to the private sector, and the move should be gradual. This is exactly what has happened to me, for I was working in supervision and planning in my previous job, and when I began working in the private sector, the move was gradual and easy. In fact, the private sector's horizons are quite different from those in the public sector, in which I worked for 17 years. The private sector opens new horizons, and provides the opportunity to establish important social relations with a wider spectrum of people, and to substantially increase one's income, two or three folds of that in the public sector. Consequently, during my work in the private sector, 1978–1989, my income was double or triple what it had been in the public sector.

Thanks to *Allah*, during this period, I purchased a flat in Tila' al-'Ali district, which was part of a residential project that I supervised for about three years in agreement with its sponsor, a cooperative society. During this period, I also supervised the construction of other residential projects, some factories, including pharmaceutical plants in Na'ur, schools, such as Dar al-Arqam Islamic schools, and a number of mosques that I supervised free of charge with Brother A.B. Most of my customers were amongst my friends or acquaintances, mostly from KSA and other Gulf States.

Work in the private sector totally consumed me as I used to work for about 18 hours daily. The office that I established was always open for social contacts with different sectors of the society, including trade unions. The day was allocated for supervision of projects and the purchase of building materials, and the night for structural designs.

Tourism

Being fond of seeing and knowing the world, I traveled with my family in a number of visits to Rhodes Island, Spain, Cyprus and Turkey.

Rhodes, an island close to Turkey, was originally part of the Ottoman Empire, but it was forcefully annexed by the colonial powers to Greece. History

tells us that it was the residence of the crusading battalion the knights of Saint John, which came to this island from Palestine after the defeat of the crusaders there. Subsequently, after the conquest of the Rhodes Island in the 16th century by the Ottoman Sultan Sulaiman al-Qanuni, those knights migrated to Malta. Some intellectuals, amongst them Muhammad Hassanein Heikal, record their conviction that these knights are currently organized in militias, and that some of them fight in Iraq under American control and supervision.

Rhodes Island, which is composed of two parts, an ancient part and a modern one, was visited in 1979. While there, we focused on acquainting ourselves with the ancient part, and prayed the Jum‘ah prayer in a mosque in group of not more than six people. Besides this mosque, we visited an ancient school and some of the Ottoman archaeological remains, including fountains and a cemetery. Rhodes is extremely beautiful, surrounded by water from all sides. It is also politically famous because it was the setting for two significant events. First, was the parachuting on to the island during the second world war of a sizable number of German paratroopers who annihilated a British force stationed there, and annexed the Island to Germany. Secondly, it was the place in which the famous Rhodes armistice treaty of 1949 was concluded between the Zionists unilaterally with each of the Arab delegates. It was said that during these negotiations some of the Arab states had recklessly agreed to an Israeli demand to what appeared on the map to be a slight change in the armistice line, but was, in fact, a blunder that lead to the incorporation of some Palestinian villages in the Israeli territories.

My long-standing dream of seeing and knowing the archeological remains of the Arabs and Muslims in Spain was finally fulfilled during a visit that I paid to the country. Just before I left, I heard of a Zionist conference held in occupied Palestine, at which Zionist intellectuals focused on the study of two issues, namely the manner through which Salahuddine al-Ayyubi had emerged, and, secondly, how the Muslims were expelled from Spain. With such scrutiny, they wanted to block the appearance of future Salahuddines, and to draw lessons and experiences from the expulsion of the Muslims from Spain.

This visit was essentially to Madrid (corruption of the Arabic word Mujrit, which literally means a stream of water, and the town was so called because of the abundance of rivers and water). In the neighborhood of Madrid, we visited a suburb called El Escorial, which houses a huge library of Arabic and Islamic sources. While touring a museum in this area, my son ‘Umar excitingly drew my attention to a photo of a battle between the Spaniards and Arab Muslims, where an Arab group, fully dressed in Arab clothes, appear amongst the Spaniards. Sadly I responded to my son, “No wonder, we are currently living at a time

when some Arabs support the Zionist enemy and conclude treaties with it.” This is the kind of shocking history that we must sometimes experience and confront.

Like Granada (*Gharnatah*) and Cordoba (*Qurtubah*), Seville (*Ishbiliyah*), a city situated at the Guadalquivir River (Grand Valley River), is one of the major Spanish cities that had been an important European center for Arabic and Islamic sciences and thought. The Arab and Muslim impact is crystal clear in its buildings and bridges. One of its famous rulers, al-Mu‘tamad bin ‘Abad, was filthy rich and extravagant, and known to be a distinguished poet, author of the famous poem on “submission.” To confront the danger of the Spaniards, he was compelled to seek the support of his rival Yusuf Bin Tashafin, the then leader of the Murabitun movement. In response to a warning by some of his advisers on the danger of this move to his rule, he sarcastically said; “It is better that I pasture camels rather than pigs.” However, Yusuf Bin Tashafin was a pious man who united all these kingdoms—known as al-Tawa’if kingdoms, and in 1086 CE/479 AH he confronted the Spaniards in the decisive battle of al-Zallaqah, achieving a resounding victory. This followed a previous victory that he achieved in the preceding year—1085 CE—that led to the downfall of the town of Toledo (*Tulaytilah*).

I visited Toledo, a town north of Seville, which is strategically located on top of a hill and at the river Tago. Many strategists had claimed that its downfall at the hands of the crusaders marked the beginning of the collapse of Arab/Muslim rule in Spain. While touring this city and inspecting its remains, I had, in fact, felt similar to being in the heart of the old city in Jerusalem. I visited a number of churches in Toledo and Seville, which had originally all been mosques, but, surprisingly, I found no mosque in the town. A more beautiful town is Granada where Arab remains are clearly visible. It is said that all Spanish towns were at one time inhabited by Arabs from the East, e.g., Valencia, Toledo, Granada and Cordoba. However, I did not visit the latter town during this tour. Granada seemed to have been inhabited by Arabs from Damascus, a likelihood that is supported by many commonalities between the two towns: white houses, gardens within the houses, narrow streets and white window curtains. With the downfall of Granada in 1492, the Arab Muslims lost their last stronghold in Spain, and there are signboards that show the surrender of the town’s key by Abu ‘Abdullah al-Saghir to the two Spanish royals, Isabella and Ferdinand, who captured the town after a year long siege.

In response to al-Saghir’s bitter sobbing for the loss of his rule, his mother had reportedly sternly reprimanded him with the following famous words: “Thou dost weep like a woman for what thou couldst not defend as a man.”

Al-Saghir was reportedly allowed to stay in the town for one year only, after which he was compelled to leave. On his way out towards North Africa, looking back at the town, al-Saghir had reportedly breathed a big sigh of regret at the place where he could no longer see the town, nicknamed Puerto del Suspiro del Moro (The Pass of the Moor's Sigh). The most famous landmark of Granada is the efficiently designed and beautifully constructed Alhambra Palace. The slogans written on it are: "*Wa la Ghalib illa Allah*," or (There is no conqueror but Allah) and "*Al-Hamdu lillah 'Ala Ni'mat al-Islam*" (Thank to Allah for the blessing of Islam). The popular utterance of the Tunisians "*Allah Ghalib*" (Allah is victorious) may be based on the former slogan. What distinguishes Granada is its magnificent palaces that attract 15 million tourists to Spain annually from all over the world. Adjacent to these palaces are beautiful and coherently organized gardens, known as Palacio de Generalife (Arabic: *Jannat al-'Arif*—Architect's Garden), which get their waters from distant mountains that are covered with snow. The Arabs transferred the melted waters of these mountains to this garden through especially designed canals, which demonstrates that our forefathers were not only genius in warfare but also in the sciences. As I mentioned earlier, the Europeans used to come to Andalus to learn Arabic, and subsequently transfer these sciences to their countries. Hence, many of these sciences were translated by distinguished scholars, notably Ibn Hazm al-Andalusi, whose statue stands right in the heart of one of the Spanish cities.

My other trip was to Cyprus in 1982. The island is divided into two parts, the bulk is incorporated in Greece and the other—the northern part—in Turkey. By 1974, the Turkish forces reportedly controlled the northern part, but the then Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, the founder of the Turkish Islamic Party, was said to have been sad for his inability to control the city of Larnaca that housed a mosque and a shrine of the Prophet's Companion Um al-Haram who was "martyred" in Cyprus and was buried there. However, we spent several days in the Greek part, which had earlier been conquered by the Umayyad Caliph Muawiyah Bin Abi Sufyan. It depends largely on tourism, and we had the opportunity to visit two of its towns: Limassol and Paphos in the west. The translator told us that Arabs, including some Jordanians, have a good number of palaces in the latter town.

During our visit to Turkey, we became acquainted with Istanbul, the capital of the Ottoman Empire. It is an important city that lies along the two sides of the Bosphorus Straits, and has two parts—a European and an Asian part—connected together by a suspension bridge. It is famous for its mosques, particularly a large mosque known as the Blue Mosque, which was constructed in a beautiful architectural manner with pillars and composed of a number of domes that support each other. Another mosque is Aya Sofia, which was converted by

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk into a museum. Amongst the famous remains is the headquarter Palace of the Ottoman Caliphate, which is used as a museum under the name of Topkapi Palace. It houses the belongings of the Ottoman Sultans, starting with Muhammad al-Fatih down to the last one. A visitor to this museum notes a surprisingly great difference between the dress code and the sword of Muhammed al-Fatih and those of the last Sultans. While the former are very simple and modest, the latter are lavish, being decorated with Sapphire and gold. This reveals that simplicity and asceticism were instrumental in the early strength of Islam, while its later weakness was linked with extravagance. I also noticed this phenomenon in Spain, where the Spaniards had been able to swiftly defeat Muslim rulers when they were consumed with laxity and luxury. Topkapi Palace is a tourist attraction, as it houses some of the Muslim remains such as the swords of Umar bin al-Khattab, ‘Uthman bin ‘Affan and some of the Prophet Muhammad’s relatives. We also visited Dolmabahçe Palace, built in the 19th century by Sultan Abdul-Majid I, and in which Atatürk resided. It reflects some interesting architectural features and great luxury. Atatürk pursued westernization, and thus he took a number of measures to de-Islamize Turkey: prohibited the turban and imposed the wearing of the hat, stopped the *Athan* (call for the prayer) and cancelled the use of the Arab alphabet. Currently, Turkey is led by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who tries his utmost to please Europe by pursuing a lenient policy towards the army and secularist thought, but without achieving his goal of joining the European Union. The Turks depend upon themselves, have very advanced industry and are united to confront any external aggression.

The Activities of the MB Movement in Jordan

MB activities in Jordan have progressively increased since 1967. Their scholars intensively propagated Islam among the youth—both boys and girls—and among businessmen, and the movement became deeply rooted in Jordanian society. The strength of the internal front, the success of the Iranian revolution and the beginning of its counterpart in Afghanistan were all factors that stimulated this drive. In fact, Hassan al-Banna’s call, which was launched in 1928 after the collapse of the Muslim Caliphate, fundamentally aimed at the revitalization of Islam. As emphasized by Grand Ayatollah Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah in one of my meetings with him in Beirut, Hassan al-Banna was the first to call for an Islamic state in modern times. Subsequently, Sayyid Qutb crystallized this trend by emphasizing the necessity of building Muslim society to be the bedrock for the establishment of Islamic rule and the Islamist state.

I am personally convinced that the overwhelming majority of people support Islam and the implementation of the Shari‘ah. But change in my opinion should start by Islamizing the individual, then forming the Muslim society through active engagement with all the influential sectors of the society—social, economic, political, educational and others. The masses should be organized and urged to press the dictatorial and oppressive regimes to radically move towards freedom, democracy and social justice, and to uproot corruption, exactly as has happened lately in a number of European states.

Besides my active engagement during the 1980s in the well organized *Usar* and *Kata’ib* of the MB Movement, I participated in the Political Bureau of the movement, and presided over the media committee of the Palestinian section. The Political Bureau, which constituted the elitist aspect of the movement, included such distinguished brothers as Dr. Ibrahim Zayd al-Kaylani, Dr. Muhammad Abu Faris, Dr. Hammam Sa‘id, Dr. ‘Abdullah al-‘Akailah, Muhammad Thunaibat, Ziad Abu Ghneimeh, Rohile Gharaibeh, Ahmad Qtaish and others. For a long time, we would meet weekly and present recommendations and suggestions to the leadership of the movement. By an initiative from this bureau, the MB Movement decided to participate in the **1989 parliamentary elections**. The supreme electoral committee that was formed under the presidency of Dr. Muhammad Abu Faris, and of which I was a member, was empowered to prepare for those elections and to pick the candidates. The program of the elections was printed in a booklet and 26 nominees ran for these elections. Since the Jordanian brotherhood had by then been active in the country for several decades, and it was united as one front, 22 of its candidates were victorious and four won the race in their individual capacities, in addition to six sympathizers with the movement. Out of the total 80 members of parliament (MPs), the Brotherhood had thus 30 MPs, i.e., about 40%. This election tsunami, so to speak, had a shocking and far-reaching internal and external impact. The media and other circles in the US, UK and other Western countries focused on this “bugbear,” i.e., the Islamic movement, and I have personally read many of these biased news and analyses on the subject. Meanwhile, during the parliamentary session of 1989–1993, Dr. ‘Abdul Latif ‘Arabiyyat, presided over the parliamentary council and after the elections the Brotherhood was subjected to intense pressure in two forms. The first was the issuance of the new law of the parties that compelled the movement to form a political party, named the Islamic Action Front (IAF). I had been a member of the preparatory committee that founded this party. Secondly, was the amendment of the electoral law. While the elector in the previous law was required to elect in one go all the representatives of his constituency, the amended law, known as the Law of the Single Vote, was framed in such a way as to restrict the size and impact of the Islamic movement.

This law, which is said to have been proposed by the American Ambassador Edward P. Djerejian, is indeed unprecedented in the whole world, as the elector has no choice but to elect one MP among the MPs who represent his constituency. Its application has thus led to a sharp reduction—to almost half—in the number of the MPs of the MB Movement.

The **Palestinian section** of the Jordanian Brotherhood was of such importance to the movement that it was always presided over by the secretary-general himself, and some members of the Brotherhood's Executive Bureau had actively participated in its deliberations, of which the most important was the call in 1983 for an internal conference on the Palestinian issue.

Before its drive to support the political and military struggle of the Palestinian people, the Jordanian MB Movement, particularly the Executive Bureau in Amman, had supported their counterpart in Palestine by extending to them financial support, and by providing the required infrastructure for the social, philanthropic, women's and student activities in the WB and GS, for example the formation of two important institutions in GS; the Islamic Compound under the presidency of Sheikh Ahmad Yasin, and the Islamic University.

Hence, the recruitment of the vanguard Muslim youth that had actively participated in the 1987 *Intifadah* was launched from the Islamic University. As for the reports that said that the Israeli military ruler had specifically agreed to the formation of the Islamic Compound, these are grossly inaccurate. The truth is that he gave licenses to different Palestinian quarters and leaders, such as the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) under the presidency of the communist Haidar Abdul Shafi, and The Shabiba youth movement founded by Fatah. Thus, the license given to the Islamic Compound was only one of those licenses. However, some of the Israeli leaders and thinkers may have encouraged the granting of this license because they thought that this compound could act as a balancing factor between the secularist trend of the PLO and the religious trend of the MB Movement. If this were their analysis, neither Sheikh Ahmad Yasin nor the MB Movement should be assumed to be part of this decision, or to be involved in it in any manner. If the Israelis have made a serious error of judgment, they should bear the responsibility of the subsequent developments. Hence, the exaggerating of this scenario to allege that Hamas itself was founded by the Israeli military ruler is sheer nonsense.

The MB Movement has addressed the Palestinian issue across three stages. First, the pre-1948 phase when the movement actively participated in the 1948 war. As we explained before, the MB Movement was then the largest popular force that sent freedom fighters to Palestine. But the ultimate outcome was that on their return they were sent to prison on the direct instruction of King Faruq,

from the battlefield to the detention camps. The second phase continued for the next two decades, and was largely concerned with providing an assessment of the humiliating defeat of 1948. By then, the idea of forming, first and foremost, an Islamic state to shoulder the responsibility of the “*Jihad*” had emerged. It was predominantly crystallized by the Muslim thinker Sayyid Qutb, who emphasized the building up of a Muslim society that would lead to the formation of an Islamic state. Seemingly in line with the spirit of the time when some of the ideologues, like the Nasserites, Ba‘thists, socialists, leftists and nationalists, had waged military coups in one or another Arab country (Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Yemen) to establish a political base for the implementation of their ideology, the Muslim Brotherhood and others, such as the Hizb ut-Tahrir, focused on the establishment of an Islamic state in one or another of the Arab countries. However, this trend of establishing an Islamic society that provides the base for an Islamic state has dragged on for a considerable time.

In 1983 an internal conference on the Palestinian issue convened under the presidency of the General-Guide Muhammad ‘Abdul Rahman Khalifah, which was attended by representatives of the Brotherhood from within and outside Palestine: ‘Abdul Fattah Dukhan from the interior and Hassan al-Qiq and others from the WB. Other representatives also came from abroad: several from the Gulf states, including Khalid Mish‘al from Kuwait and myself from Jordan. I presented a paper in this conference, entitled “The Prospects of a Positive Action,” i.e., resistance. I suggested that the Brotherhood patronize this concept and apply it. This reminds of my earlier, but unsuccessful, proposal of “Islamic resistance” to fill the vacuum that resulted from the 1967 defeat. However, in this conference it was decided to financially support the MB Movement cadres in GS and the WB, who should arm themselves and be ready to launch the resistance at the earliest opportunity. This meant that the Brotherhood had changed in this conference its previous strategy of the “state first and then the resistance” to a new orientation that balances the drive towards an Islamic state in Arab and Islamic countries with popular resistance in Palestine, in order to break the monopoly of this resistance by the nationalist and leftist forces. A third stage had begun for the Brotherhood to address the Palestinian issue.

In continuation of the trend initiated by the 1983 conference, the MB International Organization had decided just one year before the 1987 *Intifadah* to **found Palestine Apparatus**. Soon it formed under a chosen president, and the youth started to prepare for the resistance until it materialized in 1987. Meanwhile, the Brothers in Gaza, lead by Sheikh Ahmad Yasin and his colleagues, bought arms in preparation for the resistance, though they were arrested and imprisoned. Sheikh Yasin was released in 1985 as part of a deal that freed 1,115 Palestinian

detainees in return for the release of three Israeli soldiers captured by Ahmad Jibril's organization. By then the Brotherhood organization in *Bilad al-Sham* had decided to launch the resistance at an opportune time, and it had, actually, prepared the infrastructure for it among various sectors of the community, including women, and university students from Hebron University, the Islamic University in GS, Birzeit and An-Najah National universities. Meanwhile, some clashes took place in these universities between the supporters of secular Fatah and the advocates of the Islamic Brotherhood. This student unrest and struggle marked the beginning of some important future developments.

The 1987 Intifadah

The trigger for the outbreak of this *Intifadah* was a reckless and deliberate Israeli attack in 1987 on a trailer carrying Palestinian workers, which led to the deaths of four of them. But, of course, there were underlying factors that had been at work too, which were consequential of the then 20 years of humiliating Israeli occupation of the WB, GS and Jerusalem. The trailer incident led to an explosion that started from Jabalia refugee camp, the biggest one in GS, which the students of the Islamic University had supported and actively participated in on the directive of the Brotherhood leadership in GS. Later, the whole Strip was involved and many of its people were killed. Within two weeks or so the Islamists dominated this outburst of anger, which the local and foreign media initially named "The Mosques' *Intifadah*," an indication of its Islamic essence and flavor, though it later became popularly known as "The Stones' *Intifadah*." The first communiqué issued by the MB Movement on the *Intifadah* was on 14/12/1987, in the name of Hamas.

Two points are worthy of note here. First the PLO, presided by Fatah and Yasir 'Arafat, had paid attention to the *Intifadah* quite late. However, after a month, they tried to contain it by forming, with the PFLP and DFLP and others, a Front called United Leadership of the Intifadah, "*Qawim*" (Resist), and by issuing declarations starting from 8/1/1988. As for Hamas, following its first declaration, it issued monthly declarations that highlighted the philosophy of resistance to the occupation. They also enumerated all the means of resistance: strikes, confrontation, graffiti, etc. Subsequently, Balatah refugee camp in GS and other areas of the WB joined the *Intifadah*. However, some of the Brotherhood committees in the WB had initially hesitated to join because they wanted to know who the forces were behind the *Intifadah*. Thus, the leadership of the MB Movement in Jordan directed all its WB committees to actively participate and

support the *Intifadah*. For the sake of history, this commendable action by this leadership should be recorded. Moreover, on the instruction of the Jordanian MB Movement leadership, Hamas' charter was printed for the first time in Amman in August 1988, though some copies had been confiscated. Subsequently, it was also published in Kuwait and inside Palestine.

The 1987 *Intifadah* was indeed a popular and widespread resistance movement that attracted extensive international sympathy, and had far-reaching impact. However, right from the beginning the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas and the pro-Fatah *Qawim* had competed to control and dominate the *Intifadah*. Right from the beginning, the media tried to cloud its Islamic inspiration and dimension, and the foreign media had in particular focused on the activities of the PLO. A writer in Arab newspapers, under the pen name "A journalist under the occupation," wrote reports on the *Intifadah* that focused on the activities of the various organs of the PLO. Subsequently, we knew him as Hafiz al-Barghouthi, a Fatah leader and the editor of the newspaper *al-Hayat al-Jadidah*. When asked about the role of Hamas in the *Intifadah*, a Fatah leader alleged that it was negligible and never exceeded 4%. However, the *Intifadah* had become extensively widespread and popular, and it achieved substantial achievements. But, alas, they were all later aborted by the Oslo Accords!

Meanwhile, the Palestine section of the Jordanian Brotherhood formed a media committee in Amman under my presidency and the membership of Dr. 'Abdullah al-'Akailah, Ziad Abu Ghneimeh and another member whose name I will not reveal, but refer to him by his initial ('A.). The terms of reference of this committee, which functioned for a year and a half after which I left to Kuwait, were to record and analyze the media news and reports on Palestine, and to submit recommendations.

Thanks to the Islamic trend in Kuwait, a number of **student associations** were formed in the Gulf, particularly in Kuwait, and from there they extended to other countries to support the Palestinian issue. In the winter of 1988, these associations held a meeting in Istanbul that was chaired by the president of Palestine Apparatus, and to which I was invited. It was there that I met many young vigorous and open minded youth, amongst whom was Khalid Mish'al, who talked about their activities and experiences. They spoke about their trips abroad, e.g., to South America, the US and Europe, where they established contacts with counterparts there and urged them to support the *Intifadah*. For the first time they were using the Fax, which was then state-of-the-art technology, and the declarations would reach all countries easily. I was greatly impressed by these associations, and decided to join them.

Just before I left for Kuwait, an uprising took place in Jordan in April 1989, known as *Habbat Nisan* (April's uprising), in protest of the increase of the price of petrol by the then government of Zaid al-Rifa'i. The drivers went on strike which extended to the southern towns, particularly Ma'an, al-Karak and al-Tafila, until it reached Amman itself. The Muslim Brothers were accused of masterminding this unrest, but, in fact, they did not, as King Hussein had himself discovered on his return to the country from abroad. This position was in line with the Brotherhood policy of maintaining the status quo in Jordan, and their consistent line not to shake the fundamentals of the Jordanian state, as was the case before, in 1957, 1970 and 1989. This was notwithstanding the suppressive policy that the Prime Minister Zaid al-Rifa'i had pursued against the Brothers in 1986, and the consequential heavy losses that the organization had suffered, including the killing of two and the injury of a large number of students. A number of Brothers were arrested, under the pretext that they were the prime movers of the unrest at the University of Yarmouk. Nonetheless, the Brotherhood remained calm and pursued their policy of distancing themselves from any move against the Jordanian state. This was openly admitted and confirmed by the then Jordanian minister of the palace, 'Adnan Abu 'Awdeh, who said in an interview that the MB Movement was the backbone of the Jordanian regime. Incidentally, around that time (late 1980s) a Jewish writer named Satloff, published a book on incidents that took place in the Eastern Bank, in which he claimed that Jordan is based on four pillars; namely the army, tribal leaders, the refugee camps and the MB Movement. The book urged the government to target the MB Movement, a policy that was in one way or another implemented during the 1990s and the post-2001 period.

Dedication to the Palestine Apparatus

In 1989, the General-Guide Muhammad 'Abdul Rahman Khalifah told me that my brothers in the Palestine Apparatus wanted me to work with them, though, as I mentioned earlier, I met them only in 1988. Nonetheless, having since my youth had a strong urge to participate in an Islamic Jihadist activity, I decided after thorough thought to accept this call, particularly because I was keen, being at that time in my early fifties, to allocate the rest of my life in the service of *Allah*. Thus, I closed my office in Amman and left for Kuwait for good to participate in this resistance apparatus that was founded by the international Brotherhood organization to support the *Intifadah* and the resistance in Palestine by all possible means, including financially, militarily and in the media.

As I mentioned earlier, Palestine Apparatus had a number of branches in KSA and the Gulf states. My political activity in Kuwait was of paramount importance, as I had been asked to **form Hamas' first political committee** in the Diaspora, which included, besides myself, Sami Khatir, 'Izzat and another member that I refer to him by his initial (S). This committee drew its terms of reference and its plans to be implemented. While in Kuwait, I observed closely political and the media affairs, and submitted to the Palestine section a number of studies and suggestions, including what may have been the earliest study on the relationship between Hamas on one side and Fatah and the Palestine Islamic Jihad (PIJ) on the other. All of us in the Palestine section had experiences in dealing with Fatah.

My colleagues in Kuwait and I had also experiences of work within student organizations, which I had personally gained in Egypt and Jordan. We also submitted a study on the *Intifadah* and what should be its priorities, how to get in touch with the Palestinians in the interior and the means to achieve unity of vision among the Diaspora towards the *Intifadah*. Through the political committee, we initiated the formation of delegations to establish relations with countries abroad. The first attempt undertaken by Hamas in this direction was in 1989 when Sami Khatir and Muhammad Siyam were sent to Baghdad to arrange a meeting with the Iraqi leadership, which did not materialize. During May of the same year Hamas suffered a huge blow with the **arrest of Sheikh Ahmad Yasin and all its leadership** in GS and the WB, which paralyzed the ability of the Brothers in the interior to issue declarations on the events of the *Intifadah*. We took up this duty from abroad by drafting and sending them, throughout the period 1990–1992, monthly declarations to be distributed inside Palestine. We also supported them financially, while other branches of Hamas would send individuals from abroad to help them.

This Book

This book is not merely the autobiography of Mr. Ibrahim Ghusheh, it is also a living testimony of the Palestinian and Jordanian Muslim Brothers' experience over a fifty years span.

Ibrahim Ghusheh was the official spokesman for Hamas during the period 1991–1999. His memoirs provide rich material and information published for the first time. These are the memoirs of a man who was present during the political decision-making of the Hamas Movement, especially in the first twelve years following its inception.

Ghusheh's memoirs are characterized by their clarity and candor. They bring to light many of Hamas' stands and viewpoints regarding a number of issues, which could be considered points of controversy among researchers, in particular during the period leading to *al-Aqsa Intifadah*.

Without a doubt, this book is indispensable for all those interested in Palestine studies and the contemporary history of the Palestinian issue.

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