

this competition is bad for both parties. Maybe the only beneficiaries are the Israelis. If we compete as to who would be closer to the Israelis, that's bad for both of us. But we have to admit, there's a problem at the level of leadership, between the Palestinians and Jordan.

**EIR:** What is your assessment of the population's view of the peace process in Jordan?

**Fanek:** I think even the opposition agreed that the majority of the people support the king in his move. I think that the Jordanian people would not have supported the peace process, had it not been pushed strongly by the king himself. So the king used his own popularity, his political weight for the peace process, and succeeded. So most of the Jordanians are ready to go along with him because he made a decision. But without that, the popularity of the peace process would have been less, and it could diminish over time, if no results are coming forth. People are complaining and are disappointed that the peace process is slow and is not giving fruits. If that continues to the end of the year, if 80% are for peace now, that would go down, I don't know how much, but the peace operation could lose ground over time if no results are seen or felt.

**EIR:** Do you see a breakthrough coming with Syria?

**Fanek:** I think the Syrians have been ready since the very beginning. The question is whether the Israelis are ready to move or not. In order for the Israelis to delay the process with Syria, they make things more difficult. They ask for conditions that they know cannot be accepted. But the Syrians are ready for full peace, economically and politically. [Syrian President] Hafez Assad told the new Syrian parliament that he knows there are requirements for peace—he means normalization—that he is ready to comply with. But the Israelis have not said yet that they are ready to withdraw from the Golan Heights; they say they will withdraw *in* the Golan Heights. Playing with words does not help. They should say they are ready to withdraw from the Golan Heights and that they recognize Syrian sovereignty over that piece of land. Then they can talk about gradual withdrawal, about conditions, about American presence, etc. That all is negotiable, provided they say they are ready to withdraw according to a timetable and to recognize Syrian sovereignty.

**EIR:** Peres said in an interview to a Jordanian paper that he would "not touch the existing settlements."

**Fanek:** That's a prescription for not reaching a peace treaty, because the Syrians will not accept less than full withdrawal. If they want to leave the settlements under Syrian rule, it's up to them, but I don't think the settlers would like to stay there. The Syrian Jews left Syria although they were nationals there. So they wouldn't stay in the Golan Heights under Syrian rule. And without Syrian rule, there is no peace. No one can ask the Syrians to make peace with Israel while their land is occupied.

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## Interview: Mohammed Nazzal

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# Hamas opposition still opposes the accord

*Mr. Mohammed Nazzal is a leader of the Hamas movement of Palestinians opposed to the PLO. He was interviewed by Muriel Mirak-Weissbach in Amman, Jordan, on Sept. 19, 1994.*

**EIR:** What is your overall assessment of the situation, particularly in the Gaza Strip, one year after the Gaza-Jericho accords?

**Nazzal:** As you know, we were against this Gaza-Jericho accord, because we thought (and still think) that this agreement is against Palestinian aspirations. We are against the accord because we don't think it solves our problems. After one year, we can say the Hamas stand is right and the stand of others is wrong.

Because this accord in practice proves that it will not give the Palestinians anything. If you consider the economic situation in the Gaza Strip, where the accord is implemented now, you can say that the situation is very bad. If you consider the Israeli troops, they made a redeployment, they are still in the Gaza Strip.

Still there are settlements and the settlers, so what's the difference?

**EIR:** What about the projects, for schools, housing, and so forth?

**Nazzal:** There's nothing. The only thing the Palestinian Authority did was to clean up the city. There is nothing. There are no projects, because they are waiting for the donors' money, and what can the donors give the Palestinian Authority?

Suppose they give them money, they will give them salaries for policemen and employees. But I don't think there is a possibility to make projects.

**EIR:** You have not been to Gaza.

**Nazzal:** Me? No. But we have our brothers there, reports coming from there, so we know the situation very well.

**EIR:** Thirty million dollars were recently disbursed for proj-

ects in Gaza, not for police salaries.

**Nazzal:** We don't know. We make evaluations on the basis of what we see, not on what lies in the future. We don't know what will happen in the future.

**EIR:** What about the transfer of authority to the Palestinians, the control over education, etc.?

**Nazzal:** There were education programs before. But, you know, the main thing we are struggling for, what the Palestine Liberation Organization was struggling for, was freedom and independence. Did they get freedom? Did they get independence? The Palestinians were not struggling for money, but for these things.

**EIR:** One year ago, you said Hamas would resist the accord with armed means, continuing the Intifada. Now, your position has changed. Can you explain this change?

**Nazzal:** I told you that the resistance would continue and it has. There is no Intifada in the Gaza Strip because, of course, it is a new situation. But we still have operations, we are still resisting, so nobody can tell Hamas or anyone else to stop these operations.

**EIR:** What is your new position on participation in the Palestinian National Authority, on the upcoming elections?

**Nazzal:** Hamas will not participate in the Palestinian Authority. We rejected an offer from Yasser Arafat. As for elections, in principle, we support general elections. But what is the problem of these elections? They will not be political elections to elect a Palestinian leadership, they will elect a council to be part of this accord.

The reference [sic] of this authority will be Yitzhak Rabin. You can say the actual leader of this authority will be Rabin. This is the point.

**EIR:** Hamas will not take part in the elections, then.

**Nazzal:** I don't think Hamas will participate.

**EIR:** Will you call for a boycott of the elections?

**Nazzal:** It is possible that we will call for a boycott, or that we will leave the Palestinians to decide for themselves whether to participate or not. But Hamas will not participate with candidates.

**EIR:** The elections are scheduled for December.

**Nazzal:** Nobody knows. They promised elections many times, but postponed them. I don't think they can do it. We have only three months. It's very difficult for them to do it. They will have to hold them in Gaza and the West Bank, but the Palestinian Authority has no power in the West Bank. They [the Israelis] didn't transfer the facilities and rule in the West Bank.

So do you think they [the Palestinians] can hold elections in the West Bank? If they hold them in Gaza in three months,

they will not be for Palestinians because there are Palestinians also in the West Bank. I think they will postpone the elections.

**EIR:** What is the correlation of forces between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority?

**Nazzal:** There are two powers in the Gaza Strip and West Bank: the Palestinian Authority and its supporters (of course most of the Fatah people support the Authority), and Hamas. There is a balance between two powers. If there were free, general elections and Hamas participated, I think Hamas would win.

**EIR:** What kinds of activities is Hamas involved in otherwise?

**Nazzal:** Hamas has many activities in the social and humanitarian field, in education. It is a comprehensive movement, in all community areas. This is why the popularity of Hamas is increasing.

We have credibility among the Palestinians because they see us working for them and supporting the poor people. We have universities, we have charitable associations—all these give us credibility.

**EIR:** How do you support these activities financially?

**Nazzal:** These activities do not belong to Hamas, officially. The associations get money from donations, locally and from outside. They have investments. There are many means to support these activities.

**EIR:** What outside groups support you?

**Nazzal:** Businessmen, merchants, Palestinians, Arabs, Muslims, many people see this not only as a local cause. Many Palestinians think this is their cause. Arabs, Muslims, even some other people who believe in liberation for the human being, for independence for Palestinians.

**EIR:** What is your situation here in Jordan? You had some problems with the authorities here.

**Nazzal:** Here in Jordan, of course, we are not a Jordanian party. So we are not working under Jordanian rules, under the constitution. We have no movement here. We are symbols, representatives of Hamas, but we have no organization in Jordan.

**EIR:** Why did the Jordanian authorities withdraw your passports?

**Nazzal:** At the time, Rabin was under pressure domestically to act against Hamas. Rabin was in a critical position among Israelis, and tried to deflect the internal crisis by an external crisis. They held a political conference in Israel, where they said it was not good to let the Hamas leaders, like me, talk or threaten the security of Israel. But now the situation is good. We got our passports back.