

Interview with Faysal Husayni

Faysal Husayni, accused by Israel of being the “head of the PLO in the occupied territories,” was born in Jerusalem in 1940, the son of the Palestinian military leader “Abd al-Qadir al-Husayni. Raised in Cairo, he attended officers’ school in Damascus and Aleppo in the 1960s. In 1980 he founded the Arab Studies Society in Jerusalem, of which he is the director and chairman of the board. He is also a member of the Higher Islamic Council.

The Arab Studies Society—the largest research organization in the occupied territories, employing, together with its affiliates, over one hundred people—was closed for one year by the Israeli occupation authorities on 31 July 1988. Husayni himself has been under administrative detention three times in the past two years: from 13 April to 9 July 1987, from 12 September 1987 to 9 June 1988, and from 30 July 1988 to 30 January 1989.

He was interviewed by JPS in Washington, D.C. on 17 March, 7 May, and 10 May 1989.

JPS—You have emerged, particularly since the uprising, as one of the preeminent leaders in the occupied territories. Why do you think people are seeing you in these terms now?

Husayni: We’ve had a tough time over the last four or five years, and many of our people have been arrested or expelled. Since I carry a Jerusalem identity card, they can’t deport me, which has enabled me to speak out more forcefully and to work more actively in the field than many others; the price of my positions can not be more than administrative detention or prison. So for a certain period, maybe my name was more in the news and maybe I was more talked about for my activities—for my involvement in the Committee to Confront the Iron Fist, for organizing demonstrations and protest meetings, and so on. In Jerusalem, we discovered that it is legal to

hold demonstrations of fifty people or less, which you cannot do in the rest of the West Bank.

But I think people especially started knowing me through my work with the Arab Studies Society, founded in 1980. Through the society, I became active in the meetings called whenever there were important things happening politically in the territories, when representatives from various Palestinian associations—not political organizations, which are forbidden, but things like labor unions, teachers unions, physicians unions, universities, and so on—would meet to discuss and make decisions about the situation at hand. At the same time, the Arab Studies Society started to grow and we created other centers, and the Israelis started trying to stop me from pursuing such activities.

I also think the fact of being in and out of prison may affect how people see you—they begin to think of you as an example, they believe that you won't let them down by submitting.

JPS: Do you think that the legacy of the Husayni family, the fact of being 'Abd al-Qadir's son, may play a role?

Husayni: For the Husayni family, none at all. This thing was finished long, long, ago. Maybe being from a known family even has a negative effect. People can look at you suspiciously and say: "What? we're going back to the days when those old families were ruling us?" And so it is not a positive thing at all. As to being 'Abd al-Qadir's son, that is something else. Some people would like to see a link between the father and the son. But even here it can have a negative effect. Sometimes people say: "O.K., your father was a great fighter. So how come you are working on politics?"

JPS: Can you tell us something about your early political involvement?

Husayni: I have been in political work since I was fifteen and started going to demonstrations and meetings in Cairo, where my family lived. I joined the Palestinian Student League in Cairo in 1959, the same year we changed it to GUPS [General Union of Palestinian Students], and I participated in the first conference. Later I was elected the secretary of the Cairo branch, and in 1964 I joined the PLO office in Jerusalem, just after it opened. Since the Israeli occupation I have always been a part of the movement, getting involved in the events and demonstrations, but until the 1980s it was as an individual. I had nothing to do with making decisions or even with the people who were making decisions.

JPS: You say you have been known especially since founding the Arab Studies Society. How did that come about?

Husayni: It's a long story. At first I wasn't thinking of starting a research center, but about the need to translate into Arabic what was written about the Palestinians in the Hebrew press, where you could often get an idea in advance about what steps the Israelis were planning. So I started translating these articles and sending them to our leaders in the territories, who in those days were mostly the mayors of municipalities, to show them what was being planned so they could take their measures accordingly. And while translating these articles for them, we started keeping files and building up an archive. Later the local Arabic press started translating such articles on their own initiative. They did it better than we did, I think, so it was no longer useful and we stopped.

But I decided to go on with the archives, expanding it to cover everything about our society. And then one day, by chance, I was searching for something in one of our family houses and I found some documents about the early stages of the Palestinian conflict. And then I began searching everywhere, in private houses, especially those old houses that hadn't changed hands in generations. I would ask people to let me look through their cupboards for old books and documents, and most of the time they let me. So within two or three months we had the beginnings of our organization, and I continued to push in that direction. That was in 1979. In 1980 we decided to change it from a personal association to a non-profit organization named the Arab Studies Society. That was the first center—the library, the newspaper archives, the documentation center. The second center was for statistics. Then we created the Early Childhood Resource Center, which among other things is trying to develop kindergartens, then the Human Rights Information Center. There are a number of sections within the research center, such as Israeli affairs, Palestinian affairs, and the geography section that prints maps and produces atlases.

JPS: To what extent would you say the society has a political role?

Husayni: Through this institution we are helping to build an infrastructure in the territories, especially in Jerusalem. What is happening in Jerusalem is also a cultural struggle—the Israelis want to change the face of the city and make it Jewish, and we are struggling to keep it Arab. One way of doing that is to build up institutions and associations, and to make them strong enough to withstand the Israelis. That is very political.

JPS: Did the society have problems with the authorities before its closure in July?

Husayni: Two years after we set it up, the Israelis put me under house arrest—house arrest by night, town arrest by day. The order was renewed without interruption for the next five years, right up until I was imprisoned under my first administrative detention. All of that was certainly meant to curtail the center's activities. There were also many occasions when the authorities would enter society buildings, provoking employees. They would open investigations about them, sometimes arrest them. When they arrested me in April 1987, they searched the building and confiscated a lot of documents; when our people came to work the next morning, they found the building wide open, unprotected. At times there have been up to fifteen of our employees in prison at once. Concerning the July closure, they made the order out in the wrong name—the Palestinian Research Center—so legally we are not closed. The building is closed—the archives, library, and so on—but our work continues in our other locations. They also confiscated documents a few days after they closed the building, which still haven't been returned.

JPS: You have spent more time in prison than other West Bank leaders—sixteen out of the last twenty-four months. Do you see yourself as having been targeted? And if so, to what do you attribute it?

Husayni: I think it is clear that the Israelis want to stop these institution-building activities. And for the administrative detention two years ago, it's as I said—I was able to speak out, to work more in the field than many others because of my Jerusalem I.D.

JPS: But others from East Jerusalem, such as Hanna Siniora, for example, have also been outspoken and yet have not been arrested.

Husayni: These people may have gotten a kind of immunity because they were in the public eye internationally. You will remember that Hanna Siniora was one of those whose name was proposed to the Americans through the PLO to be part of a delegation from the territories in connection with the peace process. There were others in that situation as well. So the Israelis just couldn't go and arrest them, since they were part of this peace process in which the United States itself was involved.

JPS: How were you treated in prison?

Husayni: I was not treated nearly as badly as others. The worst times were at the Russian compound, Moscobiya, where you are put when you're first arrested and during interrogation. I was there for a month and a half the first time, a month the second, and during my third detention only before and after my court hearings. The interrogation periods were the hardest—interrogations could last up to eight hours, without interruption, with several interrogators taking turns. But I was never tortured or beaten, and they never covered my head with one of those thick, foul-smelling bags that make breathing difficult or chained me semi-suspended for days on end, as they did to many. For myself, I was just put in a dark, damp cell, two meters by two meters, with no fresh air and sometimes with no electricity. The third time I was kept in isolation for almost the entire six months, except for the last fifteen days. I was placed in a cell alone and was not allowed to talk with anyone. Even during the two hours a day I spent in the prison yard, it was in isolation. But while in principle it was forbidden to talk with anyone, in fact the guards usually couldn't prevent me from talking to the prisoners in nearby cells, who were Jewish common law prisoners. In the beginning these prisoners were hesitant or even antagonistic, but after you discuss with them a little while, their attitudes change. Within a few days I was able to build good relations with them, and they provided me with newspapers and information from the outside.

JPS: Was there any difference in prison conditions after the intifadah began?

Husayni: First of all, it was much more crowded. For instance, in the Moscobiya prison, there are cells where they put prisoners who are either waiting to be interrogated or waiting to be transferred to another prison. Before the intifadah started a cell designed to hold twelve prisoners held thirty. During the intifadah, there would be fifty in that cell, all squeezed over each other. The whole space could take thirty mattresses end to end, so with around fifty people, you had about one and a half persons per mattress, and all these pairs of shoes piled up in a corner like a pyramid.

Also, the way the prison guards treated the detainees during the intifadah was terrible. They would beat them whenever they could, taking them to the yard outside and beating them up for nothing. They did not usually do these things to us, the old prisoners. Sometimes they even separated the two groups, because they knew the security prisoners had clear political positions and were prepared to accept the consequences, but they didn't know the intifadah prisoners and wanted to impress on them an atmosphere of fear.

JPS: Was April 1987 the first time you were in prison?

Husayni: No, I spent a year in the Damun prison in Haifa from November of 1967 to October of 1968. It was there that I learned Hebrew. It was like a school for me—prison gives you the opportunity to know more about the other side, to talk to them, to start reading their language. You could say that prisons are the higher academic institutes of the Palestinian revolution.

JPS: What were you arrested for?

Husayni: For possession of arms. They searched my house and found two disassembled weapons.

JPS: Does this possession of weapons reflect a position on your part vis-à-vis the armed struggle?

Husayni: When there is an occupation, people have the right to fight it by any means they can, including the armed struggle. But it is not a must. If it is necessary it can be used at a certain period, but it is not an end in itself. I believe that at this stage, other means will work better. I am not saying that we should renounce the armed struggle, but now we are not using it. The armed struggle is only part of the political struggle.

JPS: What about your own involvement in the military aspect of the cause?

Husayni: I joined the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA) in 1966 and then went to officers' school in Syria, first to Aleppo, then Damascus. When the June War started, I was a minor officer, less than a lieutenant, and I was sent to train Palestinian fighters in Lebanon—it was the first military camp the Palestinians set up in Lebanon legally. I entered Beirut on 8 June 1967, and stayed a month at that camp before going back to Damascus. I hadn't been in Jerusalem since 1966, and with the defeat I decided to go back to see the situation there. So I entered Jerusalem for a week, and decided that the best thing was for all Palestinians to go back, including the members of the PLA, because the borders were half-open and we could enter. So I came back, and was telling others in the PLA that the most important thing was not to get in arms but rather to get in people. I said that this was the time to get as many as we could inside—soldiers, officers, politicians—and that once inside we could build, gradually, and that within a few years this would help us in any fight, whether political or military. I talked a lot about that

before I came back, but I didn't find much response, so I decided to come back to Jerusalem alone.

JPS: What did you do, once you got there?

Husayni: I started to live my life, and to make contacts with others, especially those from the PLA who were already in Gaza. So we had all these meetings, discussing what we could do. For my part, I was thinking that it was not the time to start shooting. I thought more about the need to build a political structure or organization and then, after that, we could go on to the armed struggle if necessary. But it didn't work.

JPS: So even at that stage, immediately after the war, you seemed to be stressing alternatives to armed struggle, despite the fact that you had been a military officer. . . .

Husayni: Or, because of that fact. . .

JPS: How did you happen to have those weapons in your house?

Husayni: I had met Mr. Arafat, by chance, in Ramallah when he entered the occupied territories secretly after the war. Through a conversation about building a political structure with a military wing, I agreed to keep these pieces and to try in the future to train people for a military wing to be used only in an emergency situation. And then I was arrested.

JPS: You mention Arafat. You are often accused of being Arafat's man in the West Bank. What is your relationship with him?

Husayni: I have known Mr. Arafat from the old days, since I was a child. I first remember meeting him in 1949, when I was nine years old and he came to our house in Heliopolis, Egypt. He was a student activist in Cairo at the time. I met him several times over the years.

So, yes, I know him. But the important point is simply that I am a Palestinian who believes that the PLO is the sole representative of the Palestinian people, and as the chairman of the PLO Mr. Arafat is our representative. And because I have been saying this over and over, especially since 1982, and repeating that any solution must be through the PLO, the Israelis got the idea that I am his man. But I am no one's man:

I am simply like any other Palestinian fighting the occupation and believing that Arafat is the leader of the Palestinian people.

JPS: How do you feel about accusations that Arafat has gone too far in making concessions, that he is giving too much away?

Husayni: I do not believe this. If you look at the resolutions of the 19th PNC in Algiers, you will find that Mr. Arafat is just reading them, just following what was decided there. He did not go farther—he said Israel had the right to exist within secure and recognized borders. That's it.

JPS: But what about the renunciation of terrorism?

Husayni: Like every other people engaged in a national struggle, at certain times some Palestinians used terror. We have to say that certain of the operations could not, scientifically speaking, be called acts of war. Arafat said what he did because he was speaking about the entire Palestinian people, and if such acts were committed here and there by some, it had to be said. So now we are renouncing these things.

JPS: And this is not going beyond the PNC?

Husayni: —No, I do not believe so.

JPS: What about the relationship between the Palestinians inside the territories and the Palestinians outside?

Husayni: The Palestinians inside are living in part of the Palestinian forest. It is true that it is an important part, but still, it is only one part. We can see trees and leaves and twigs, but we cannot see the forest as a whole. For this reason, the crucial decisions cannot be made except by those who can see the entire forest, and that means the leadership of the PLO. For sure, those of us who live in the midst of the trees can make daily, tactical decisions, but not the large ones.

JPS: What about when the state is founded?

Husayni: After the establishment of the Palestinian state, there will be no Palestinians outside, only Palestinians inside in the sense that there will be one country. The Palestinians who choose to stay abroad will play a

supportive, encouraging role. Those who choose to come back will be full participants in the state-building process.

JPS: But those from the outside don't know the problems of those living inside.

Husayni: I, also, do not know their problems. The Palestinians who return will have their own problems. The government will be for both groups equally.

JPS: How will the roles be defined?

Husayni: I believe that the leadership of the PLO is the leadership of the Palestinian people. With a peaceful solution, this leadership will automatically be transferred from the outside to the inside, and the existing administrative apparatuses inside and outside will be linked. There already are some links, for instance between the Higher Education Council outside and the Higher Education Council for the universities inside, but the organizational structure will have to be changed to complete this linkage.

Moving from the stage of revolution to the state-building stage, new skills will be needed. During the struggle, you need leaders who can face the occupation and who are ready to go to jail and to fight as long as necessary, who can hold firm. But in building a state, you need people who are efficient in administration and who know how to govern. Someone like me, Husayni, may have an important role in the present stage of the struggle. But if you appoint me minister of agriculture, for example, it could be a very costly mistake—I could destroy it! Maybe some of the people who are well known now will not be in the government, while others who are just ordinary residents now will be important in the government. It's a question of skills and specialization.

JPS: In planning for a Palestinian state, what about the right of return?

Husayni: The right to return to the Palestinian state is not negotiable. It's a natural right for every Palestinian to return to the Palestinian state, because the very idea behind creating the state is the establishment of a homeland where the Palestinian people can feel secure, where they can fulfill their goals, hopes, and national aspirations. Any Palestinian who lives in exile who wants to come to the Palestinian state, where he can raise his children in an Arab Palestinian atmosphere, must be able to do so.

But if there are Palestinians who wish to return to the places they left in 1948, let us leave that to the negotiating table. The possibility of some of them [Israelis] wanting to live in our state and some of us wanting to live in theirs should be discussed later. Both of us—Palestinians and Israelis—should pledge not to impose any measure that could seem to threaten the security or sovereignty either of the Palestinian state or the Israeli one. All such questions should be left to negotiations. But the issue of the right to return to the Palestinian state is not one of those questions.

JPS: You seem to be taking the two-state solution for granted, but many Israelis feel that Palestinians propose it only for tactical reasons, as a stage, and that their real goal remains a democratic secular state.

Husayni: The Jews must understand that this is only a beautiful dream that some of us have, just as they have theirs. We both have a right to our dreams, but as I have told the Israelis more than once, if we want peace, we must both leave aside our dreams because what are beautiful dreams to one side are nightmares to the other. If we live with our nightmares we will not advance towards peace, and if we remain attached to our dreams we will not advance either. So we should leave these aside and start talking about reality, about how we can coexist with it.

As to the future—who can say? Who can guarantee that our children or grandchildren fifty years from now will not ask why we haven't chosen the democratic, secular state? Maybe some day both sides will want unity between the two peoples. But this could never be achieved by force. What I mean is that it is our right, as it is theirs, to dream. But we must see the dreams for what they are, without trying to impose them on each other.

For now, I believe that the two-state solution is not only good for the Palestinians, but also for the Israelis. I believe that there is now a historic opportunity for all peoples and states in the Middle East to try to enter the twenty-first century on better terms than before.

JPS: Your contacts with the Likud politician Moshe Amirav were widely talked about at the time. Who started these contacts, you or him?

Husayni: After my release from my first administrative detention in July 1987, a number of Arab and Jewish politically active persons came to visit me. Initially, they were from among the leftist political groups we had worked with in the past, such as Ratz and Mapam, but later some groups from various Israeli political parties began to come. Through them, I

learned that some Israeli politicians wanted to meet with me. It was at that time that Moshe Amirav asked to meet with us to show us a proposal he had prepared. We held several meetings with him that led to the development of new proposals. We advised him to go discuss them with Arafat, but then I was arrested and he was dismissed from the Likud. Later I met with him, not as a member of the Likud but as a member of Shinui, and he organized a meeting between us and members of the Shinui movement.

In fact, the important political meetings took place over three days. The first was with one wing of the Labor alliance, the second with another wing of the alliance, and the third was with Shinui. So during this period we covered the Israeli political map from Shinui on the right to Peres on the left.

JPS: Were you worried about criticism from Palestinian elements?

Husayni: You have to realize that these meetings were not a product of a personal desire, but rather of a Palestinian decision to explain our political positions to all Israeli political elements. Some of the meetings, for instance the one with Beilin of the Peres group, took place in the presence of all active Palestinian groups; eight of us attended. What was interesting in these lower level meetings was that it was as if these people were hearing our positions for the first time: they were surprised at what we said, which was the opposite of what they had been told by their leaders. This is because the agenda of previous meetings between the Israelis and Palestinians had been dominated by Shamir, Rabin, Peres, and so on. They were the ones who conveyed to the media what happened at the meetings, misleading not only the Israeli journalists but also other Israeli politicians. They used to claim that the Palestinians did not want the PLO and were tired of the intifadah but were afraid to say so in public but said it behind closed doors. So it was important to talk directly to those Israeli personalities to make our positions clear.

JPS: And since your release this past January?

Husayni: Since my last release I have been making more high level contacts with Labor party people. And, of course, we are continuing to have meetings and exchanges in the West Bank with all groups: we are willing to talk to any Israeli who is willing to listen. We are not willing to negotiate with anybody, however, because this is the job of the PLO. But for

instance, when there are meetings for Oriental Jews who support the Likud, we talk to them. Why not?

JPS: Two years ago young activists became very upset by such meetings.

Husayni: That is true, because we were weak two years ago. When you are weak you can not do anything because you have nothing to back you up. Now we have strength behind us. We are relying on the intifadah. We can now face the Israelis and say what we want. If they ask us to stop the intifadah we will say no. Before, when we met with them we had nothing to say, only to beg. I do not want to beg. I want to go with my head high. Only those who feel strong and confident are capable of offering peace proposals. The weak can offer nothing. Now we are strong.

JPS: In fact, many are asking that you end the intifadah, in exchange for certain concessions or compromises from Israel.

Husayni: These demands are heavy on the Palestinians and easy on the Israelis. They ask the Israelis to release prisoners and reopen schools. The intifadah did not begin in order to bring about the release of prisoners or the reopening of schools, but in order to end the occupation. Consequently, any talk about putting an end to the intifadah should be matched by talk about ending the occupation.

For me, the intifadah is the movement of the Palestinian people towards rebuilding the infrastructure of a Palestinian state. It's a new morality, a state of mind that is not going to stop. The fourteen points* raised by the intifadah since its beginning must be addressed. What is most important is for Israel to start negotiations with the PLO and to commit itself truly to the peace process. This might create a new atmosphere and new circumstances which might also require the Palestinians to make new decisions.

JPS: What sorts of decisions? Can you elaborate?

Husayni: We have already had over a year of violent confrontation against the Israeli oppression. We must protect the intifadah. We must seize every

*These include compliance with the Fourth Geneva Convention, cancellation of the policy of expulsion, an end to settlement activity and land confiscation, the return of confiscated lands, cancellation of restrictions on political freedoms, and so on. See Special Documents section, *JPS* 17, no. 3 (Spring 1988): 63–65.

opportunity to gain more control over our institutions and to face the oppression at any price. That price might be the closure of more institutions, more killings, more arrests. But we should not be seduced by any attempts to minimize the pressures of occupation here and there. We have to deal with these things with extreme caution and precision. At the same time, we should not go on saying “no” to everything. Whenever we see real opportunities, we should face them with real actions.

JPS: How do you see the elections in these terms? Do they constitute one of these opportunities?

Husayni: About the elections, the Israelis are trying to shift the entire agenda from the central issue of occupation to the marginal issue of elections. And they have succeeded, at least in the West, where the word “elections” acts like magic. Everyone in the West is dazzled by “elections” and “democracy,” but they should not imagine that democracy and occupation can converge. What is the purpose of elections? If they are supposed to find out who is the leadership of the Palestinian people, with or without elections everyone knows this already, including the Israelis.

We, too, believe that elections are important—within our national movement, democracy has always been important. We have elections in the student unions, labor unions, in the women’s committees—everywhere. But we are against the conditions Shamir has imposed and against the conditions surrounding the elections, which is occupation. We cannot believe that democracy is possible under occupation, so we cannot allow ourselves to participate in such elections. In any case, this whole business is just a political game, a maneuver that the government is using to divert attention from the occupation and the intifadah.

JPS: So if these elections are unacceptable, what are some of the opportunities you mention that the Palestinians might be able to respond to?

Husayni: Look, even for the elections, if they were part of a package deal, if they would be the first in a series of steps at the end of which we would have our state, it would be another story. In that case we would ask for international guarantees and maybe we would agree to elections, even under the occupation.

But if they would not be part of a package deal, for sure we will refuse. If there is a peace process, either it is with preconditions or without preconditions. If there are no preconditions, fine, we can start talking. If

they have their preconditions, such as these elections, then we must have our preconditions, too, and our preconditions are either that the occupation ends first or that the elections are part of a package deal.

JPS: What about the comment that refusing the elections amounts to stalemate, and that a stalemate is extremely dangerous for the Palestinians?

Husayni: First of all, there is no stalemate, because we are moving. People talk as if the Israelis are offering the initiatives or opportunities and that we Palestinians are just standing there waiting, either to accept or not accept. This is not so. We are on the move, we are fighting on the land. And a stalemate is dangerous for them, too. They cannot go on with this situation—just look at their economic situation, their political situation, look at the morale of the Israeli army, where young soldiers feel they are fighting an unacceptable and unjust war. This has an effect on them, too. So there is nothing to call a stalemate.

JPS: Some people fear that if the Israelis really wanted to, they could crack down on the intifadah.

Husayni: That day could come and we have to be ready for it. We have lost a lot and sacrificed a lot, but we have to remember that other peoples sacrificed far more and nonetheless achieved victory—we have suffered one-tenth of what the Vietnamese did. I am not trying to underestimate the suffering of our people, but we have to be willing to pay the price that others have paid. It is a mistake to believe that we can recover our rights easily. We have already paid a lot over a long period, but if we have to pay more, we have to be ready.

JPS: What about the relationship between the political leadership in the territories and the Unified National Command of the Uprising?

Husayni: It's like the relationship between the Palestinian people and the PLO. The PLO is both an idea and an institution. All the Palestinian people are the PLO in the sense of the idea, yet at the same time there is the institutional structure. It's the same for us in the intifadah—there is the institution, which is the Unified National Command, and then there is the idea, which is the whole people, including us, the political leadership.

JPS: So you don't distinguish between the political leadership and the people?

Husayni: No. We, the visible political leadership, simply represent them. We give expression to their will. The decisions, the directives—all that comes from the Unified National Command.

JPS: *Then what exactly is required of the visible political leadership?*

Husayni: During my second detention, I found myself in the same prison block with old friends I hadn't seen for many years. We used to know each other before 1967, and then everyone went his own way, to his own activities and political directions. So here we all were together in prison, and it was a great opportunity, and we would sit and talk as we hadn't had the chance to do over the last years. Just before I was to be released, in June 1988, I sat with them and we talked about what we could do outside. What we decided was that we could not throw more stones than the others, we could not physically add any more power to the intifadah. The most important thing we could do was not to disappoint our people. They look to us as leaders, so we must keep this thing going and not give in, not submit, not let the other side move us from the line our people are fighting for, not ever for one moment lose sight of the final goal we are working towards. Our role, more than anything, is to serve as a good example, to face the occupation and refuse it. This is the minimum we can do.

JPS: *One last question. Once the state is established, how do you see yourself?*

Husayni: My first thought would be to go on as director of the Arab Studies Society, of which I am very proud. But maybe when we have a state I may not be the person most qualified to run it—since it is a research center, maybe it would require someone with a more academic background. So I think what I would like to do is continue my work with the Human Rights Information Center, and continue my struggle in the Palestinian state to protect human rights.