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What Now: On Palestine, Freedom, and Our Global Future

By: Tareq Baconi · November, 2026

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In a moment of genocide, we have no revolutionary leadership at the helm of our struggle. This is, perhaps, one of the most painful truths we have to contend with in this chapter of our ongoing Nakba. This is our biggest and most urgent challenge as Palestinians. Resuscitating our struggle from the ashes of the past three decades, from the failures of partition and negotiations, and the ensuing horror of genocide and genocidal reconstruction. We are (re)building our revolution. We must.

The vacuum on the level of the leadership has not prevented the emergence of an expansive popular movement that has sustained our struggle. This movement is nurtured by a persistent, historical, and deeply revolutionary narrative that informs our everyday politics as Palestinians, and that transcends all the scripts imposed on us. It is a narrative that is grounded in our thawabet, the fixed principles that define our cause: namely the right of all refugees to return home; the right of self-determination in the whole of Palestine, with Jerusalem as our capital; and the right to resist in all forms necessary. These principles, articulated and enshrined in

the Palestinian National Council in 1977, the heyday of the Palestinian revolution, were aimed at providing strategic guidelines for our struggle and elucidating the political parameters through which the PLO could operate. They enjoyed wide consensus among our people and the various political factions, and similarly to other revolutionary movements elsewhere, were aimed at ensuring that any strategic decisions would be guided by ideological "red lines." Fundamental to the thawabet is the principle of rejecting concessions that are imposed on Palestinians by our adversaries and that are aimed at pacifying the struggle.

Paradoxically, this knowledge is both a consensus—most Palestinians would naturally adhere to and believe this narrative, even if it is articulated in different forms—and absent from our "official" politics. Over the years since 1977, and especially after the launch of the peace process and the domestication of Palestinian politics, the PLO, the front bearer of our revolution, became subsumed into the body of the Palestinian Authority, an entity that pacifies our resistance and protects the settlers. The very institutions of struggle were dismantled, methodically and systematically, by despots who favored their own political careers and who were supported and enabled by the Zionists and their Western allies. Couched in the language of international law and governance, our revolutionary goals were diluted by "pragmatic concessions," and ultimately entirely replaced by objectives that helped sustain the "status quo" of stability—i.e., Israeli domination.

The discourse of the thawabet today has been reduced to mere sloganeering and empty rhetoric. These principles of struggle, our practices of resistance, the core tenets of our revolution, have been fatally compromised on the level of our political ecosystems. They have been severed from our political institutions—whether from factions, the PLO, or the Palestinian parties in '48. They have instead been relegated to the realm of "civil society," which holds on to these

narratives and red lines but lacks the authority and political power to enact them. Our domestic politics today have no strategic direction, and even when seeking to advance victories, in the arena of international law primarily, these efforts fail to feed into a revolutionary politics that can adequately move us toward decolonization and Palestinian sovereignty. Official Palestinian politics today represents a self-perpetuating dynamic that is more interested in the survival of neocolonial political institutions than in securing our liberation.

But look beyond the vacuous nature of our political institutions today, and most Palestinians, whether "in the movement" or otherwise, would still articulate a political sensibility that is grounded in our thawabet. We desire our land back in its entirety; we think of Haifa and Acre as Palestinian cities, just as Nablus and Ramallah are, if not more so. We understand that our struggle, with its multifaceted nature and its dynamic and ever-changing forms, converges toward the singular goal of undoing our Nakba. No matter how differently we perceive the various tactics of our resistance, we all understand our motivations and believe in the justness of our cause, and our determination to undo Zionism. We know ourselves to be a people fighting foreign conquerors, and from this positionality we ally ourselves with others committed to fighting domination and injustice. In that way, our intrinsic Palestinian-ness, the identity of our struggle, is a far stronger unifying force than anything that Zionism has done to fragment us.

This consensus has important strategic implications for our struggle. Our thawabet animate our collective politics in their purest form. They are the principles we stand for as a people. They form our national consensus, even if they have been neutered in our political institutions. Our challenge today, as we stare into the abyss, is the same one we have faced for years and decades: How to take this consensus we all individually know to be true and reconstitute it into a political project that can move us forward, into (re)constructing a revolution that speaks the same language we whisper in our private spaces?

Revolutions cannot be built the same way houses can. They cannot be preplanned and methodically constructed. They will erupt, spontaneously, energetically, as they have repeatedly done in our history. But while we cannot predict or anticipate our revolution, we can prepare the scaffolding that can support it when it does erupt. We can strengthen, also, the foundation from which it will emerge. For the hope is that our revolution births a political project, institutions of struggle, that can capture its successes and turn them into political breakthroughs.

Even in the absence of an inclusive, democratic, and revolutionary leadership, our struggle for a Free Palestine is expanding globally. It is imperative that we build on this incredible ferment, so that our struggle is not limited to popular mobilization and pronouncements of justice, or to sporadic outbursts that fizzle out, failing to accumulate into greater gain. Instead, our movement must coalesce, begin to secure power, shift the balance of forces, and have a material impact. We must therefore resuscitate, expand, and politicize our collective consensus and protect it from an adversary who consistently seeks to funnel us away from this strategic clarity. We must reach back into the past century and turn our revolutionary principles, so clearly articulated and actioned prior to the path that led us to the Oslo Accords, into a base from which our people can mobilize with purpose and eventually (re)build institutions of national liberation that can strategically guide us forward.

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