

Wafa' Jamil, Director of " Hamas under Palestine"

Hamas under Palestine
Wafa' Jamil film By
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The title of the film initially raised questions in my mind about the meaning that it implies. Those who watched the film come out with a clear conclusion that everybody is under Palestine, and Palestine is above all; none of the factions is over the country or above Palestine. So, within the context of disruption that has prevailed in Palestine during the past two years when Hamas won the majority of seats in the second legislative council elections and under the continued Israeli occupation of all of Palestine including control over all outlets for the Gaza Strip, the film highlights the tearing of the social fabric and national struggle under the voice of ugly factional violence at the expense of the homeland and citizens.

Under the torn national flag of Palestinian generations' long years of struggle, the Palestinian struggle has been replaced with the factional flag. Within the context of this sad painting, the toxic winds blow against the homeland and revived conflicts of ignorance within the absence of awareness. This film is a real adventure for Wafa' Jamil while mouths are gagged, pens are censored, and newspapers banned.

Wafa' Jamil in her fourth film, which I watched, has chosen a style that is contrary of that seen in her previous films, "The Lost House", "Roots" or "The Children of Abraham." Before, she was looking for roots and has now moved from roots to the fact. So, did the search for roots and the search for her missing house lead to this bitter reality in which we now live in our homeland?

That is the question, which I thought while watching her 52-minute documentary film. In order to express the events that prevailed in the occupied territories at the time, the director used footage broadcast by the regional satellite stations and accompanied the three major characters in their daily lives. The other minor characters add to this with their reflection that the main beneficiary of the internal conflict is the Israeli occupation.

The use of symbolic images, the mark of Wafa' in her films, leaves the

viewer to capture the meaning behind these scenes. She started her film with these symbolic scenes. The film starts with scenes from the beginning of a working day for the major characters in the film.

Mrs. Taghreed Abu Hamda prepares herself to go out to her work, puts on her makeup and the camera catches the pictures of cosmetics tins with its various colors, as if she wants to say to us that a society could not be of one color, variety gives any society its beautiful face. Then the camera moves to the scene of preparing the coffee in two cups, the coffee is the start of morning for any citizen before going his work.

The camera then moves to the second major character in the film, Mrs. Salwa Hudeib, Deputy of Minister of Women Affairs in the Palestinian National Authority. While crossing the Qalandia checkpoint built by Israel to separate Jerusalem from Ramaallah and the surrounding areas, she passes the crossing as any ordinary citizen - on foot. Occupation does not give special dispensation to reach her car on the other side. The camera then returns to the image of an official as the driver opens the door of the car for her and then turns to drive her to the place of her work as the camera pans the image of the wall that distorts and damages the land. It appears in its grey cement color and the military towers filled with weapons whose bullets do not show mercy to any Palestinian citizen regardless of the color of his factional flag.

Marwan Al-Alan, a painter and writer, is the third major character in the film. We see him at his table drawing the minarets of mosques near the Dome of the Rock.

The camera moves directly to the picture of the citizens practicing their role in legislative elections and the children carrying the flags of the Fateh movement as well as the Palestinian national flag, clapping in the name of Fateh movement. The director then juxtapositions another picture of citizens who are carrying the flags of Hamas and clapping for it but without the existence of any national flag panning to a scene of Hamas men carrying the Hamas flags to raise on the building of the Legislative Council instead of the Palestinian national flag after the Hamas win in the elections. This action led to clashes between supporters of Hamas and Fateh, as if the director says to us that this disruption is reflected on the young and moves to the adults until the whole nation has become divided between two movements which transmits to us the clashes between Palestinian citizens instead of facing the Israeli forces and its military machines. It is a clear symbol that instead of facing the Israeli occupation, we fight each other.

This was the opening of the film. It gives a clear picture about the life we live through in this period of time in which we moved from facing the occupation to facing ourselves. We left the occupation watching us and increase this conflict. Then the director takes the film to a Ramallah covered by snow as Mrs. Taghreed leaves her house to go to her work. A shot of two persons embracing their hands under snow is included as if the director says that although the cold has descended on the hearts and freezes the love, life will continue and the snow will melt and become water as the blood of life. We should put our hands together to be able to return the warmth to hearts.

The director moves us, through the lens of the camera, to watch a dialogue between the character of Taghreed and the participants in the lecture. In several scenes, we see that they represent the various segments of a society; from veiled women to representatives of various organizations including Hamas and Fateh as well as people not connected with any of these organizations coming from various areas such as Jericho, Jenin and Ramallah. We find the same ordinary citizen who refuses this conflict and sees that it is a conflict of an authority under an occupation. The citizen that elected Abu Mazen as president is the same citizen who elected Hamas. So, he elected two contradicted programs and sees that other political forces have no real role. Then we move with her to the streets to witness the acts of setting fire to the institutions and shops of the Hamas movement and its members. The citizens and the president both condemn these criminal operations and the question that should be asked is who is behind these acts that damaged the economy and increased the differences between the two parties. The sense of citizen stays through the idea that our identity is a national one and not an identity of Palestinian political parties.

A festival in the headquarters of the president (Almoqataa) in which the president makes an important speech is the next venue. Those attending raise the Palestinian flag and the flag of Fateh movement. Mrs. Salwa Hudeib attends and talks with another woman in the crowd about the performance of Hamas movement criticizing it strongly. She talks about the trials of this new situation which is creating oppression of others based on their party and religious affiliation.

The scene cuts to Marwan Al-Alan who begins to talk about his beginning in AlBaqaa refugee camp in Jordan and his experience there with the Muslim Brotherhood movement and his eventual affiliation to the extremist current inside it that was connected to the methodology of

Sayed Kutub. He stays with them until the matter reaches a critical point in which Marwan Al-Alan and his faction go to the Muslim faction that are labeled by the Kutub faction as “the disbelievers and migration” group. This event made him leave the Brotherhood because he could diagnose the concept of Hamas from the heat of the dispute that he witnessed. During his story, the director employed the paintings of Marwan Al-Alan, which carry direct symbolism, as he draws the mosques and the Dome of the Rock together with astonished faces who are shedding tears of blood. These scenes are interspersed with Taghreed leading workshops that are conducting various dialogues to diagnose the situation and search for a solution.

Marches in the streets confirm the Palestinian situation calls for prohibiting the internal fighting and depriving the Palestinian blood, it is the feeling of religious and non-religious, the citizen who eats Falafel because of a terrifying economic crisis, salaries of employees suspend in PNA institutions and at the same time this citizen makes demonstration asking for the sovereignty of law, he stops on checkpoints against the Jewishing of Jerusalem bearing oppression, he realizes that enemy is the sole beneficiary from this conflict and should be stopped. Facing the procedures of the occupation at the same time, the Palestinian flag is raised over all factions.

Wafa' Jamil, through her characters, gives us an idea of how Hamas reached authority, won the elections, and how the situation became after that. Through observing factional use of oppression and anti-oppression and the use of military force to impose one opinion, she transmitted the pulse of the street with its pains and the situation of the country. The interviews with citizens and officials, such as Abu Ali Shaheen who survived an assassination attempt that he blamed on Hamas, analyzes how Hamas reached power while citizens clearly demonstrate that what is happening is not related to religion or the homeland. The ordinary citizen prays and abides by religion but refuses to use religion for factional aims and refuses to use the homeland for the same. This leads to the discussion between Taghreed and the thinker Mahmoud Al-Alem in Cairo. She reflects on how the Arabs have been affected by the inaccurate portrayal of what is happening in Palestine by the mass media.

Throughout the film, the director uses symbols. During interviews, the director cuts to other scenes such as the military checkpoints and the wall repeatedly as if to say to the viewer, we have been fighting for power that is under the occupation and then cuts to a scene of a raised torn Palestinian flag as if to remind us that we are the ones who tore the

country with our differences although the country will remain, through the national flag which is raised over all. In another scene there is a digital painting of a lift and a picture for Falafel pot with the oil boiling in it. Falafel is the food of the majority of people but especially the poor and the people have been boiling like oil. The lift scene highlights the numbers as they move from zero up to the top one by one as if the director says to us we have returned to zero in our history so let us get out of it and go up again. In the another scene there are the three monkeys that represent Indian wisdom which says, is it required from us not to see or hear or talk? In Cairo, where Taghreed arrives to register to pursue her PH.D, we see the pyramids in the background which symbolizes a civilization which leaves its print on history and not blood. The plains and olives of Palestine shown before the end of the film symbolizes, for Wafa', the eternity of the homeland.

Wafa' employs music in a distinguished manner as she uses the tunes of Basil Zayed in his play "Civil war" as a background for the scenes that witness fighting and conflict while the music "My Homeland" by the artist Raed George, underscores the scenes that emphasize the country and at the end a selection from Um Kalthum singing, "Why do we lose our life journey to fight while we could create a beautiful life." The end of the film ends with a dramatic graphic of painting in blood in the shape of an X sign in English dripping blood with a soundtrack of bullets being fired, feels pain on the sound of bullets, as the drops of blood become smaller Xs; a clear indication that the spilling of blood takes us into the unknown.

Wafa' closes the film with the dream of the third legislative elections in which she sees the expected solution. She imagines a girl wearing the Palestinian flag representing Palestine and in front of her a ballot that begins with the name of state of Palestine with its capital Jerusalem followed by the list of names of other political forces. She checks the box for electing Palestine with its capital Jerusalem and when she puts it into the elections box the soundtrack is "My Homeland." It is a clear call for the citizens to be with Palestine as the country. It is the idea that inspired the title of the film; all factions are under Palestine and not above it.