



FIGURE 12. Watching a faction's parade. Photograph: Perla Issa.

“Factions Are Forced Husbands”

Physical Representations, Factionalism, and Party Ideology

[Following the beginning of the *thawra*] the splits started. So a faction became four. The Arab front, the PFLP became some ten fronts. Even once we joked: What is this? They should give them birth control pills. They became too many. [Laughter]. They don't know how to stop. Each day they give birth. [Laughter]. Fatah also became several Fatahs.

—UM JIHAD, THAWRA GENERATION, BEDDAWI CAMP, JULY 12, 2011

Don't you hear the expression “your husband is chosen from God”? . . . The factions are forced husbands (*ghasbin 'an al-dunia*). . . . The international community recognizes [the PLO], it's not me who recognizes it.

—ABU FIRAS, THAWRA GENERATION, NAHR EL-BARED CAMP, JULY 26, 2011

Imagining factions as living beings was a common feature of how Palestinians spoke of factions. The PLO was sometimes referred to as a “sick child” and factions as “forced husbands.” These images highlighted two important points. First, factions appeared to have a life of their own. They were pictured as actors, sometimes gendered ones, that could have a particular medical condition and could even spawn other beings. Second, refugees felt they had little choice in their representatives, as if these were forced upon them by some greater power.

This chapter examines how the existence of factions becomes naturalized not only to those considered on the “inside” of factions, but more importantly to those who appear to be on the “outside.” In the previous chapter we saw how the provision of care created the effect of structure, of an impersonal edifice that stood outside and independently of the personal relations that formed its backbone. In this chapter I highlight how the appearance of structure comes into being not only through what may appear as “internal” practices, such as the distribution of aid, but how it creates an “outside,” how it brings into being a position from where we appear to be able to observe, judge, study, and critique factions.

I do so through the examination of two sets of practices, that of physical representation and factionalism. I first examine how the abstract idea of factions take material form through the process of representation. Emblems, flags, posters, pins, stamps, and letterheads: all became the physical embodiment of factions. In particular I look at anniversary celebrations and underline how they enacted a distance between people and factions, a distance that was vital in creating the position of “spectator.” As we will see, anniversary celebrations were criticised and few people ever participated in them. They were rather pathetic displays of the demise of factions, rather than of their health. However, to dismiss them would be to ignore the powerful way in which they consolidated the image of factions as autonomous entities. I then look at factionalism—the way factions compete with each other, at times violently—through the testimony of Um Fadi, a veteran of the PFLP and one of the few Palestinians who told me that she joined the faction based on its stated ideology rather than because of personal ties. Through an examination of how she spoke of the death of her husband at the hands of Fatah and of her relationship with the PFLP I reveal how joining through personal ties or through ideology were not opposites. Rather, they only appeared to be so due to a particular modern rendering of subjectivity where a person is believed to exist outside and prior to power relations. This in turn exposes how our modern understanding of subjectivity as autonomous agents was vital in creating the effect where factions appeared to be structures defined by their ideologies.

PHYSICAL REPRESENTATIONS

We wrote a statement. I remember, we read it in a shelter. We declared that we [Fatah al-Intifada] made a Women’s Union of our own. . . . The shelter was the only place we had available and we used to be afraid of the army. That day journalists came and they published it in newspapers. From that day on we had our own union.

—HANAA, THAWRA GENERATION, SAIDA, DECEMBER 3, 2011

This is an invitation, an invitation from the PFLP. They gave it to us a few days ago. [It states] ‘The lighting of the torch (*ishlāl al-shu’li*). The forty-fourth anniversary of its great launching! The PFLP is proud to invite you to the annual commemoration of the martyrs who fell defending the Palestinian people and cause. Rashidiyeh camp, *Dayr al-qāsi* hall, Friday 3 p.m. Transportation is provided.’ If we went to these people and told them that someone is sick and needs an operation and it costs 5,000 USD and we need your help, they would tell you we don’t have the means. But here it says that transportation is provided. How are you paying for transportation? They provide transportation so that the ‘responsible’ can make a speech and scream. And it’s actual screaming.

—ABU AHMAD, THAWRA GENERATION, RASHIDIYEH CAMP, DECEMBER 8, 2011

Palestinian political factions all have a foundation date. In Arabic, this date was referred to as the *inṭilāqa*, “the launching.” A faction launched itself by declaring its own birth in a public statement. The *inṭilāqa* of each faction was then commemorated every year to mark the number of years the faction had existed, its age. In the Palestinian camps of Lebanon these celebrations took the form of marches or rallies and featured political speeches, Palestinian music, and sometimes *dabka*, Palestinian dance. These celebrations were often the subject of criticism from camp residents, who viewed them as unnecessary spending. While it is easy to dismiss such actions as an additional indication of the corruptness of factions, I argue that these practices played a vital role in bringing factions to life.

At first glance, the process by which factions came into being through anniversary celebrations appears to be straightforward. After all, an anniversary by definition is the celebration of a birth. Birthdays denote life. Having and celebrating a birthday annually is a practice associated with living beings. When I celebrate a friend’s birthday, I am celebrating the number of years my friend has been alive. My friend exists and is breathing regardless of the practice of celebrating his or her birthday. He or she exists outside and prior to the ceremony. Indeed, the practice of the birthday celebration only exists because my friend is alive in the first place. Associating that practice with Palestinian political factions was one way to imbue them with life, with an existence that could be calculated in a precise number of years. Additionally, this life appeared to exist outside and prior to the anniversary celebrations, just like my friend’s life was. However, I contend that anniversary celebrations worked in a much more subtle way, by creating the very position of an “outside,” a position from which a person could even criticize factions and appear to be in opposition to them. Beyond being pathetic displays of the irrelevance of factions, the practice of anniversary commemoration perpetuated and guaranteed the imagination that factions were entities with a life of their own, the crucial technique through which they came to represent “the people” regardless of “the people’s” desires.

Marches

I attended several marches commemorating the birth of factions during my stay in Nahr el-Bared camp. The first one I experienced was the twenty-ninth anniversary of the Palestinian People’s Party (PPP).¹ It was established on February 10, 1982 when it split from the Jordan Communist Party (JCP) by publishing its “Founding Statement and the Provisional Internal Statutes of the Palestinian Communist Party” (Y. Sayigh 1997, 477). On Sunday February 6, 2011, the Nahr el-Bared branch of the PPP commemorated its anniversary with a march through the camp that ended in the martyrs’ cemetery.

It was a sunny Sunday. I mostly stayed home that day, as Sunday was the only day of the week when all family members would be home at the same time. After a joyful family lunch, Mahmud left to prepare for the march. At the time he was

the head of the DFLP scouts, and he said that this was a good opportunity for the youngsters to practice being in a marching band in preparation for the DFLP's own anniversary, some twenty days away. Ahmad, who was also planning on joining the march, stayed a little longer at home with us, leaving just a few minutes before the march's starting time.

While I was trying to decide if I should join the march myself, Um Muhammad convinced me to watch it from the kitchen balcony. She told me that they would start the march on the street right below us and then walk towards the camp's martyrs' cemetery. When I asked her how she knew the route, she explained that they always went the same way. The third floor balcony did indeed give me a perfect view of the march from above. Um and Abu Muhammad decided to join me, so I took three of the kitchen plastic chairs onto the balcony while Um Muhammad made tea and Abu Muhammad prepared his usual Sunday afternoon *narghile*.

Mahmud soon appeared, walking down the main street with his marching band. Um Muhammad explained that the marching band was coming to join the rest of the participants, who had started to gather below our building. The band was already in formation. Three young girls, probably around eight or nine years old, led the band holding up the Palestinian and the DFLP flags. Following them were about five children, slightly older, probably in their early teens, playing drums, and two girls holding clash cymbals. Behind them were three young boys, again holding a combination of the Palestinian and DFLP flags. Most of the children, whether boys or girls, veiled or unveiled, were wearing black berets. With the exception of the head attire there was little resemblance in their clothing. Mahmud walked between the children, trying to get them to walk in three straight lines, stopping every few minutes to give them a chance to get back in formation. They walked in this fashion until they reached our building, at which point they stopped. Ahmad soon joined them with a group of about five young men. Another group of about ten men also walked towards the meeting point. Um Muhammad mentioned that these men "are Fatah." And soon the march was in formation.

The DFLP scouts led the march. Next came two young men holding a banner with the PPP emblem reproduced in triplicate. Behind them were a group of about twenty young children holding a mixture of the Palestinian and the PPP flags. Following them were two young men holding another banner stating on top, in red, "29th anniversary of the establishment of the Palestinian People's Party"; below this, in black, was the phrase "National unity is the way to liberation, independence and return." Finally it was signed by the Palestinian People's Party, again in red. The youth in this initial portion of the march were well separated from each other, making this section of the march the longest, about twenty meters. The second portion of the procession was the adults. About forty men stood behind the young children. The men at the forefront of the group stood in a well-formed line. The rest of the men followed, with the younger men grouped towards the back. About twenty women were a few meters behind. Some were carrying infant

children in their arms, others were holding their toddlers by their hands, and two women were carrying the PPP flag. Finally, behind the women were two young men, holding another banner with the PPP emblem reproduced in triplicate. That completed the procession. They soon started marching and we could hear the beating of the drums. The march then took a right turn towards the martyrs' cemetery, at which point I could no longer see them. Ahmad came back home not long after that. I looked at my watch; forty minutes had elapsed from the time he left the house to the time he returned.

In total about one hundred people participated in the march, a third of whom were young children, even though at least four different factions were present: the DFLP, Islamic Jihad, and Fatah, in addition to the PPP. Few people watched the march from their balconies or windows, and people in the street paid little attention, sometimes stopping for a few minutes to watch but not joining in. I thought that the whole event was indicative of the PPP's inability to mobilize people. Um Muhammad and Abu Muhammad, sitting next to me, did not give the march much attention either, other than pointing to their children when they first appeared on the street on their way to join the march. They were more interested in speaking about their fears for their children. In particular, Abu Muhammad expressed his fear that his children would make the same mistakes as him. I could feel a mixture of pride but also regret about his previous life choice of joining the *thawra*. He explained that his siblings who had not followed his path were in a much better legal and financial situation. He concluded by saying that "factions were worthless."

Rallies

The other form taken by the annual commemoration of the establishment of factions is a political gathering marked by speeches. On Friday February 25, 2011, I was in Nahr el-Bared camp when a car with loudspeakers drove through the camp announcing the celebration of the DFLP anniversary in the Jal al-Amar hall that same evening. I decided to attend.

Palestinian camps typically have several halls, which are privately owned and run as a business. The primary use of these halls is wedding celebrations, but political factions also rent them to conduct rallies and conferences. After Nahr el-Bared's destruction in the 2007 war, all of the halls were damaged; the Jal al-Amar hall was one of the first to be rebuilt after the refugees' return to the camp. Jal al-Amar was an area of Nahr el-Bared camp situated to the west of the old camp and the Bared River. However, the Lebanese military had restricted access to the old camp. Therefore, like any resident of Nahr el-Bared wanting to cross from the Eastern side of the camp to its Western side, I had to walk around the old camp, instead of through it.

It was a dark, rainy day as I set out to walk from the home of the Talal family to the Jal al-Amar hall. I did not know the exact location of the hall but decided to walk to Jal al-Amar and to ask for directions once there. I walked along the main

road of Nahr el-Bared until I reached the army checkpoint blocking the entrance of the old camp. A couple of soldiers in rain gear were standing by the metal gate that had been painted red and white, the colours of the Lebanese flag. I turned left and walked past a huge sign advertising all the donors contributing to the reconstruction of the old camp. I kept going until I reached the southern edge of the old camp, at which point I turned right into an alley. The alley was deserted, as few people had returned to this street and most of the buildings were still partially destroyed, with collapsed roofs and perforated walls. Little light reached this narrow alley, making it dark and eerie. As I reached the end of it, I turned right onto the dirt road that ran along the Bared river. I was back in daylight. I had reached the southwest end of the old camp and I was walking north along the river to reach the main road again. To the right was a series of fully collapsed buildings, still untouched. To left was the Bared river, swollen by the rains, and surrounded by wild green vegetation. This was a sharp contrast to the narrow and dark alley I had just walked through. Large parts of this road had turned into puddles with the rain pouring down. As I was making my way, trying my best to stay on dry land, a car passed by and slowed down. Two young men asked me if I would like a ride. I gladly accepted the offer.

Upon reaching the hall I saw the head of Najdeh (a DFLP NGO) in Nahr el-Bared camp and another man, whom I did not know, standing at the door. They were greeting people coming into the hall. I said hello quickly and walked into the hall. Loudspeakers were playing nationalist songs that made discussion with people difficult. To the left of the entrance was a group of highly energetic young men holding a large number of DFLP flags and congregating around a loudspeaker. They would raise their voices above the sound of the songs and chant about Palestine, freedom, return, and the DFLP.

At about forty by twenty meters, the hall was bigger than I had expected. The walls, which were painted with different landscape scenes, such as birds flying in a blue sky, or a sunset, had been covered with red banners proclaiming different slogans calling for national unity and the reconstruction of Nahr el-Bared. Across from the entrance was the podium, decorated with a banner of what appeared to be DFLP martyrs, a combination of Palestinian and DFLP flags, as well as a large picture of Nayif Hawatma, the chairman of the DFLP. Plastic chairs had been lined up in two separate columns and were filling up with women and children on the left and men and a few children on the right.

I saw many of the women I had met at Najdeh and decided to sit next to them. Soon the proceedings started. The first speaker, a former member of Parliament from Akkar, was introduced. The speaker began by saluting the audience and congratulating the DFLP on its anniversary, but I soon lost track of the content of the speech, of the actual sentences being said. He was speaking in formal Arabic and in such an elevated voice that I found it hard to focus on the speech. Rather, my attention was diverted to watching the audience. A man was holding his young

daughter in his arms and poking her nose, which amused her greatly; an Najdeh employee was videotaping the ceremony; a woman was standing by the entrance greeting latecomers; and the woman sitting next to me was silent, looking at the speaker with an expressionless face.

Nevertheless certain words rang in my ears as the speaker elevated his voice, stressing them: the inalienable right of return, the fight for liberation, the illegal occupation, the heroism of political prisoners, the expansion of illegal settlements, the sacredness of Jerusalem, the need for national unity and PLO reform, the condemnations of American policies (especially the practice of vetoing UN Security Council resolution condemning Israeli aggression), the demand for civil rights for Palestinians in Lebanon, the rejection of naturalization (*tawḥīn*), and the need for a quick reconstruction of Nahr el-Bared camp. The group of young men by the entrance would sometimes interrupt the speaker by chanting “Freedom! Freedom! We want freedom!” At this point the speaker took a moment and then continued his speech in an even louder voice, raised above the chants. This continued for about ten minutes and then the next speaker was introduced, this time a member of the Lebanese Communist Party. The same scenario was repeated with what seemed to be a reiteration of the same topics. The group of young men burst out in chants: “Justice! Freedom! DFLP!”²

In total, four different speakers took turns on the podium in a replay of the above-described scenario until the last speaker was introduced, but this time over music. He was the head of the DFLP in Northern Lebanon, Arkan Bader. While the other speakers appeared to be speaking at the top of their voices, Arkan Bader was literally screaming. I remembered a friend who had told me that he always had his mouth open; I now understood what she meant. Arkan Bader shouted for about twenty minutes, double the time of the previous speakers but repeating the same key words. At the end, after a long list of salutations, as he was uttering the words “may peace be upon you” (*al-salām ‘alaykum*), everyone got up and began to leave. The sudden ending of the ceremony took me by total surprise. I was still in a daze induced by the series of loud speeches. The swiftness of the audience in getting up and heading for the exit startled me. I soon got up and followed some of the participants to the nearby cemetery, where we visited tombs under the watchful eyes of Lebanese soldiers. We did not remain long, as it started raining, at which point everyone went their own way. I began to walk back home, but when a car pulled up next to me and asked me if I wanted a ride, I again gladly accepted.

While more people participated in the DFLP rally than the PPP march, the staged nature of the ceremony was very clear. The group of young men clapping and chanting intermittently was meant to remedy the audience’s general lack of interest in the proceedings. The loud voices of the speakers were meant to dissuade people from chatting. The silence of the audience did not indicate any interest on their part as their faces remained expressionless, even though the topics of the speeches, the return to Palestine and self-determination, were certainly of interest

to them. Finally, the speed of the exit led me to believe that most participants preferred to be somewhere else than this rally. This was a disappointing performance for what was supposed to be a strong faction of Nahr el-Bared. Najdeh, the DFLP's NGO, was one of the largest in the camp, if not the largest, with four different offices in Nahr el-Bared alone. It was also one of the first NGOs to come back to the camp after its destruction and had fought hard with the army in order to get access to different areas in the camp. But still, what was clear from this forty-third anniversary celebration was that the DFLP was unable to mobilize people.

These ceremonies were also the target of criticism by camp residents. They were seen as unnecessary spending when money, if available, would be better spent on meeting people's needs. People would point to the money spent on hall rentals and transportation (often factions provide buses to take people from different camps to the celebration hall) and argued that this would be better used on more essential needs such as providing medical help for the sick. A friend even pointed out that, at the PFLP anniversary, they had served food. He specified that there were fruits of all kinds, such as apples, bananas, and even kiwis. He insisted that there were also two huge cakes, each being one and half meters by one meter, with the PFLP slogan written on one of the cakes and the PLO slogan written on the other. Fresh fruits were out of reach for most camp residents; therefore a display of such fruits, not to mention large cakes, aroused his indignation.

Others would criticise these events by pointing out that young Palestinians often participated in these proceedings in order to obtain financial assistance from the factions. They argued that the heads of factions noticed an absence and penalized the absentee at the end of the month. However, trying to determine whether people's participation in these ceremonies was genuine, instrumental, or a combination can distract us from looking at what these proceedings actually accomplished. Building upon the work of Timothy Mitchell, I suggest that the proceedings, while failing in terms of a popularity test, succeeded in constructing Palestinian political factions as entities with a life of their own, separate from the very people and the very practices that brought them into being. The rituals employ three crucial techniques: creating the position of an "outside observer"; drawing the line between the "inside" and the "outside"; and finally giving life to factions through a process of representation.

Drawing Lines: The Creation of an "Outside"

One of the crucial features of these celebrations was that they were public. Indeed anniversary celebrations were not conducted behind closed doors among party members; rather they were meant to be watched. Sitting on a balcony, peering out of a window, stopping in the street, hearing the sound of the drums, or of the advertisement for a rally, were all positions that seemed to put the authors of such actions "outside" the practice of anniversary commemoration. They seemed innocent in themselves. However, it was precisely this innocuous position that enacted

a distance between “spectators” and “factions.” The physical distance that existed between the balcony and the procession represented my own separation from the PPP in particular and from factions in general. I felt I was standing outside, looking at the physical embodiment of factions go by.

Being on the “outside” also allowed Palestinians to criticize factions, as Abu Muhammad did. While this position may have seemed to be in opposition to factions, it actually served to reify them. Writing about corruption in India, Gupta (1995, 376) highlights how “the discourse of corruption turns out to be a key arena through which the state, citizens and other organizations and aggregations come to be imagined.” He adds that “instead of treating corruption as a dysfunctional aspect of state organizations” he sees it as “a mechanism through which “the state” itself is discursively constituted.” By stating that “factions are worthless,” Abu Muhammad was distancing himself from the factions but in the process acknowledging their existence as entities. Two of his sons were in fact participating in the proceedings that he was criticising. He was therefore entangled in the network of relations that factions were. Yet through his criticism, Abu Muhammad placed himself on the “outside,” which in turn helped create the image that factions were bounded structures instead of loose networks brought together by personal relations.

Just as watching or hearing a parade go by placed the individual outside the factions, so too did walking in the parade, attending a rally, hearing the speeches, or otherwise directly participating in the proceedings located the person as a faction member. A simple example can illustrate this process. When I was sitting on the third floor balcony watching Mahmud participate in the parade, I spontaneously thought that Mahmud was in fact a member of the DFLP. I registered this note in my head, in juxtaposition to the previous confusion I felt when he told me that he was only “in principle” with the DFLP. At the time I found his choice of word of “in principle” to be confusing, but when I saw him walking in that parade as the head of the DFLP scouts I settled the matter in my head: Mahmud was in fact part of the DFLP. Positioning myself “outside” the practice of anniversary commemoration, I pictured factions as edifices and positioned Mahmud inside of its walls. However, as I spent more time in Nahr el-Bared and saw the development of Mahmud’s relationship with the DFLP I realized that that relationship was more complicated (chapter 4). As we have seen, faction membership is better understood as a relationship between individuals than a relationship between an individual and a building that a person entered or left. Whereas a person must necessarily be either inside or outside an edifice, a relationship with an individual carried with it ambiguity and varying degrees of cohesion. Therefore, attempting to define that relationship in terms of being inside or outside the faction failed to take into account the complexity of that connection. Yet, from the vantage point of the balcony that ambiguity disappeared, factions appeared as bounded structures, and Mahmud seemed to be clearly positioned on the “inside.”

Physical Representations

Mahmud did not only appear to be “inside” factions but, along with his fellow comrades, appeared to represent those factions. Mitchell (1988, 60) argued that “the techniques of enframing, of fixing an interior and exterior, and of positioning the observing subject, are what create an appearance of order, an order that works by appearance. The world is set up before an observing subject as though it were the picture of something.” Sitting on the balcony we were made to believe that the children, men, and women walking down the street were the representation of factions instead of just a particular instance of people marching. The refugees who were present in the procession and those who spoke in the rally no longer represented just themselves, but appeared to be representative of the immaterial abstract idea of factions.

Additionally, Mitchell (1988, 7–10) argued that the practice of representation created the effect of a reality that existed prior and outside of that very representation. For example, if I accepted the idea that Mahmud was a representative of the DFLP, that means that I accepted the idea that the DFLP existed, and in turn the DFLP’s existence seemed independent of Mahmud, and of my acceptance of him as a representative of the faction. Once we accepted the concept of representation, we accepted the idea that there were two separate entities: the “thing” and the representations of the “thing.” The “thing” is never in itself visible, it is just represented, but we remain certain that it exists precisely because it is represented. These material forms appeared to be “giving a visible exterior to the invisible ‘inner structure’” (59). The representations of the “inner structure” were material; we could see them and touch them; however, the “inner structure” of the faction in itself was immaterial. In other words, once we accepted that something stood for something else, we took for granted that this something else existed.

Representations could only work if they had an audience that seemed to be positioned outside of them and that recognized them. Hence the importance of positioning those watching the parade as being “outside” factions became apparent. Watching anniversary celebrations and acknowledging them as representations was imbuing life to factions. Yet we did not realize that it was our acceptance of the idea of representation that created them. When I saw a PPP flag, I thought that I was seeing a representation of the PPP. I believed that the PPP existed and that this flag represented it. Yet in actuality, it was the practice of representation that was actually effecting the appearance of a reality underneath, of a life prior to and outside of the representation. Similarly, when the Lebanese government, UN agencies, or the media treated factions as entities, as representative bodies, they were involved in the very process of erecting a structure. By accepting to treat certain individuals as “representative” of factions, they were bringing factions to life. This was the paradoxical nature of the method of representation: factions acquired the appearance of a life outside and separate from their representations when it was those very representations that brought them into being. In other

words, factions appeared as a framework that existed separately from the particular people and practices it enframed.

However, it is important to realize that the power of these methods did not lie in making us believe that these representations were accurate. Indeed, the claim that factions were representative of the Palestinian people was highly contested, with numerous individuals, campaigns, publications, and studies demanding “real” or “true” representation.³ But the ability to represent was never in itself contested and the particular methods used to enact such effects were never questioned.

We grasp the importance of these practices when we realize that factions participated in each other’s anniversary commemorations, yet they seldom joined in advocacy campaigns or protests. Anniversary collaborations crossed ideological lines, with Islamic Jihad, nationalist Fatah, and the Marxist DFLP joining the communist PPP in its commemoration. It also cut across political positioning; Fatah and the PPP advocated a two-state solution and the continuation of negotiations with Israel, while the Islamic Jihad called for the establishment of a single state through resistance. Palestinians often referred to the factions’ mutual participation in each other’s anniversary celebrations as “social visits” (*ziyārāt ‘ijtimā’iyya*). This appellation stressed the fact that a given faction attended the celebrations of another faction expecting that in turn the other factions would participate in its own anniversary. While this cooperation failed to translate into a mobilization of a significant number of people, it succeeded in effecting the appearance of a structure, an entity that existed outside and prior to the very practice that brought it into being. It underlined that all factions had a stake in maintaining this system as it allowed them to act as the representatives of the “people.”

It is hard to end this discussion without also pointing out that anniversary celebrations did not only appear to be material representations of factions, but they also served to portray what proper politics was about. The marches or rallies were carried out in specific, almost scientific ways. Children in black berets walked in straight lines separated into three columns, men formed a straight line, women were several meters back, the procession started and ended with young men holding flags, and the same route ending at the martyrs’ cemetery was taken year after year. The rallies also followed a specific script. First, speakers who were not part of the birthday faction addressed the audience; their names and positions were explained. They each had ten minutes to give their speeches, interrupted from time to time by chants. Finally, a representative of the DFLP addressed the audience for double the time. The timing and number of the speakers might vary from rally to rally, but the pattern remained the same. Additionally, watching the DFLP rally, I felt a need to write down the names of the speakers and their positions, as if knowing that information would allow me to better understand the DFLP. The third speaker I noted was the lawyer Abdel Nasser al-Masri of the Organization of the Lebanese People. I had never heard before of this organization and wondered who they were. This missing piece of information made me feel

ignorant, unknowledgeable in the proper conduct of politics. I felt compelled to conduct research on that organization to become politically educated. When I missed the name of the fourth speaker due to the high volume of the chants, I was even more upset.

The form and content of the speeches also projected an image of the appropriate way of conducting politics. They all followed the same format and highlighted the same topics. The exact content of the speech seemed less important than the form and the manner in which they were delivered, with high volume interrupted by energetic chants. What these proceedings did was project an image of the proper way of doing politics. Politics became a specific field of knowledge and practices separated from the everyday practices of Palestinians. Knowledge of party ideology, literature, and platforms defined what “political knowledge” was. It became disassociated from other forms of knowledge, or other ways of learning. “Political knowledge” became something that certain people grasped while others may “know nothing about it.” As factions became separated from people, so did politics become separated from everyday life through the development of a particular expertise. Next, I expand on this idea and look at how party ideology opened up a space of separation between factions and people, which, similarly to anniversary celebrations, brought about a position that appeared to be on the “outside” of factions. Additionally, I show how our conventional understanding of factions as structures defined by a particular ideology relies on a certain modern rendering of personhood as existing outside and prior to power relations.

FACTIONALISM AND PARTY IDEOLOGY

The nature of Palestinian society is tribal. To live in the camp you need to be supported by a faction. This is essential, you understand? You have to have a back (a protection)—(*ilik dahir*)—if you get into a problem, if you need a university scholarship. [By being in a faction] you have a following (*imtidād*). Additionally, your parents before you [may be affiliated]. The nature of Palestinian society is factional. . . . It is rare to go into a home and not find it following a faction.

—RANIA, YOUNG GENERATION, NAHR EL-BARED CAMP, JULY 28, 2011

Comments like Rania’s were common in Nahr el-Bared. Indeed, the fact that Palestinians joined factions due to personal relations, instead of choosing an ideology, sometimes created a sense that Palestinians joined factions for the “wrong reasons.” Following personal ties (most often kin ties) instead of relying on a personal evaluation of the different ideologies of the factions was seen as “tribal” or “backward.” Writing about the beginning of the *thawra*, Rosemary Sayigh (2007, 13) underlines how political ideology and consciousness were considered “the supreme good.” She explains how the *thawra* generation believed “they had to be guided by a correct political ideology, which could only be the product of consciousness.”⁴

In this section I ask: Is joining political factions through personal ties, rather than through a personal evaluation of the ideologies of the factions, a tribal, backward, or un-modern behavior? In doing so I investigate the role of party ideology in appearing to define factions and in creating a position on the “outside” of factions, a position from where a person is able to study and choose factions “freely.” We have already seen how joining factions through personal ties did not mean that Palestinian refugees were blindly following their relatives, friends or neighbors (chapters 3 and 4). It was clear in several examples, like that of Abu Ali who hit the Lenin statue with his shoe over a dispute of Russian politics, and his son Rabieh who disagreed with the PFLP leadership over their stand in the Nahr el-Bared conflict of 2007. Palestinian refugees were not putting their faculty of reason on hold. Rather, they were actively engaged in thinking about and debating different policies and events and their ramifications on the Palestinian struggle and their lives.

However, I argue that this provides only a partial picture of the interplay between personal relations and party ideology. I explore the intricacies of this relationship through the example of Um Fadi, a veteran of the PFLP and one of only two Palestinians who told me that she joined the *Jabha* based on its stated ideology and not due to personal ties.

Um Fadi

Um Fadi was in her late fifties and hid a mixture of stubbornness and resilience underneath a frail body and a wrinkled face. “What type of circus is this?” was how she referred to the chaotic weekly organizational meetings for the May 15, 2011 march to the southern Lebanese border, which she never missed, travelling two hours from her home in Beddawi camp to Beirut in each direction. Meeting her in her home several months later, I had the chance to discuss her longstanding relationship with the PFLP, which helped me understand how death and party ideology interplay to give life to factions. Here, I recount the major events in her life, to give the context through which we can better understand the relation between party ideology and personal relations.

Directing me to her house in Beddawi camp, Um Fadi explained that I should go to the commercial street behind the UNRWA school and ask “anyone” for directions to her home. Sure enough, once I arrived I went into a grocery store where the owner took me a few meters down the street and introduced me to her son Fadi, who was sitting outside the PFLP office. Fadi was in his early twenties, and did not ask what I wanted or who I was; he just led me through the narrow alleys of the camp to his family’s home. It seemed he had done this before. Lying on a hill, Beddawi camp was a dizzying labyrinth of concrete alleys and staircases, which Fadi guided me through until we reached his home. This was situated on the first floor of a corner two-story building. We went up an open-air concrete staircase to reach the apartment door. Fadi slipped off his shoes in a seemingly effortless motion, went through the cracked-open door, and called his mother.

Um Fadi came to the door and welcomed me into the house. I stepped into what appeared to be a hallway turned into a sitting area, but she did not motion me to sit there. Instead, she went straight into another room with more stylish couches and invited me to sit. This room had couches on three sides and a bookcase on the fourth. I sat in the corner of a sofa facing the only window in the room. The window gave onto the alley I had just walked up. The wall of the adjacent house was a mere two meters away, which allowed little light to come into the room. It was the end of July, the weather was hot and humid, and we spent the next few hours alternating between opening and closing the window in a desperate attempt to determine what was more bearable: the stifling heat, or the incessant noises coming from the alley. A fan turned from side to side, giving us some momentary relief from the heat.

The bookcase to the right of me contained a number of books and papers. On the top right shelf stood an old black and white picture of a young man in a silver frame. Um Fadi explained that this was her father. The picture, she added, was taken three months before he was killed by an Israeli commando operation in Beddawi camp. Below it was a picture of Che Guevara and to the left a picture of Nasrallah, the current Secretary-General of the Lebanese political party Hezbollah.

Um Fadi sat next to me and began almost without prompting to recount her life story. She was born in the mid-1950s and was exposed from a very young age to both the Lebanese government's repression of Palestinians and Palestinians' resistance against that repression. She began our discussion by telling me that her father had been working in the Palestinian resistance underground before the official start of the *thawra* in 1965. She remembered her father being imprisoned for six months by the Lebanese government, during which time she visited him and saw him performing hard labor. She attributed her later resistance activities to this early moment in her life. "That created something in my unconscious that I only felt later when the revolution started," she said. At the age of eleven she started going to the *ashbāl* of Fatah.⁵ Although her father was socially conservative, he nonetheless encouraged her. She explained that she participated in Fatah events but did not become a member.

Um Fadi later married a member of the PFLP, but explained that she "kept an independent personality." She insisted that she did not join the PFLP just because her husband was a member. She further highlighted that point, and her husband's acceptance of her decision, by telling me that her oldest daughter went to the Fatah *ashbal* and that her husband would take her in his PFLP jeep whenever it rained. Um Fadi's perceived "independence" from her husband and the PFLP is a point I will come back to later.

Um Fadi went on to tell me that in 1978 her husband was killed "at the hands of Fatah." She explained:

At that time Nayif Hawatma [the Chairman of the DFLP] proposed the idea of a state [in any part of Palestine] and Fatah adopted it.⁶ The PFLP then formed the

rejection front,⁷ supported by Iraq, so of course Fatah does not accept this, it wants to impose its project. So they hit their main location in the north and my husband was martyred.⁸

...
 It was a political decision [by Fatah to close the PFLP office]. . . . Now my husband was the one responsible for military affairs. He sent a letter to the *Hakim* [the Chairman of the PFLP George Habash] because the PFLP has a rule that says that the blood of a Palestinian is sacred, it is forbidden [to fight a Palestinian] under any circumstances. They told him that the mood is not normal; that the camp is in a state of military alert that is unusual with the rental of over seventy-five offices just in this camp. I was very distressed at the time; my family is Fatah and my husband PFLP. I was very tired. He came and showed me the reply from the *Hakim*, he told me, look: self-defense is allowed just inside the office. Anyone who goes out of the office area and fights will get prosecuted in a civilian court. It is forbidden to fire a gun in the camp, even if the office gets demolished. He [the *Hakim*] sent another letter stating, this is our people, that we get killed is not a problem but the important thing is that nothing happens to the camp. So they stayed in that office. And at that time, there were three girls and thirteen guys in the office; the battle lasted from seven at night until seven in the morning.

Following the killing of her husband, Um Fadi, twenty-four years old and mother of four, secluded herself. After confining herself to her parents' home for a year and a half, she decided to visit Palestine for the first time. Her uncles had remained in their original village of Shafa 'Amr in Palestine after the 1948 *Nakba* and were able to get a permit for her and her four children to visit them for three months. Her trip to Palestine reinvigorated her, she explained:

I returned [to Lebanon from Palestine] energized and replenished. I was more attached to the *thawra*. At the beginning I entered because of the mood of the house, but when I went and came back I returned with a full awareness/consciousness (*wa'ī kāmīl*) of the importance of Palestine, of how they live in it and outside it and that the return must happen. We should all be convinced of it.

Um Fadi explained that it was at this time that she joined the PFLP and started working full time in the PFLP radio communications department. She was proud to be working and providing for her children. In the 1980s her responsibilities increased and she took charge of the PFLP's "women's affairs" in Beddawi camp. She was a highly energetic woman who worked, along with other women, to provide food and vital supplies to the many fighters who were in the camp. (The number of fighters substantially increased in 1982 due to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon).

This work caused her to be well known in the camp, which explained how I could walk into any store on a busy commercial street and ask for directions to her home. She was also involved in creating economic opportunities for women. She once organized an exhibition to sell women's homemade products such as thyme mixtures (*za'tar*), pickles, dried cheese (*kishik*), and herbal teas (*zuhūrāt*). She

explained that when the PFLP leadership refused to provide money for the exhibition, a sum of 250,000 Lebanese pounds (about 167 US dollars), she borrowed the amount from a friend, carried through her idea on her own, and with the sale of the products made enough money to pay back her friend. Throughout our conversation Um Fadi was highly critical of the leadership of the PFLP and of her comrades in Beddawi camp. She was particularly upset at the financial crisis that the faction was facing which meant that she could not implement any projects or help those in need. In light of her heavy criticism of the leadership and her comrades in the PFLP, I asked her to describe her relationship to it. I quote her answer at length, as it reveals the complexity of her affiliation with the faction and drives my analysis.

Perla: What do you feel towards the PFLP? How would you describe your relationship with it?

Um Fadi: I told you the organization (*tanẓim*), I respect it and I entered it out of conviction, without pressure and after a long time. And I don't forget that there are people who invested a lot in me, who helped me get the skills I have, who trained me, in the PFLP. People who were martyred. And this is what makes it hard. I feel it is a heavy load on me.

Perla: That they gave this much.

Um Fadi: Yes, and that we have to continue regardless of the problems and obstacles.

Perla: And they were from the PFLP?

Um Fadi: Yes, they were like a father or a brother to me. In the time when I was secluding myself, they were the family that took me in, at the height of my crisis. I remember mostly one person. I consider him like a father to me, Abu Mustapha Rashid of Nahr el-Bared; he was martyred in the internal killing.⁹ Damn it!

Perla: In 1983?

Um Fadi: Yes, he was taking food to people or taking people to a shelter. He was killed in the street, a bomb killed him. When I used to go out in the morning, leaving my kids behind—you know they were young, it was a big responsibility, I had to work and leave them at home—I would be worried and upset. I would find him standing outside. When he would see me—his hair was greyish—he would ask me: What is wrong today? Why are you upset? I felt he was like my father, I felt he *was* my father. . . . I started bringing books to read, I wanted to read the books of the PFLP. One of the first things I read was the proceedings of the fourth conference of the PFLP. [Abu Mustapha Rashid] saw me, he told me, anything you need I am willing to help. I started discussing things with him; you know the person who is inside something is not like the person who is about to enter. I felt like he encouraged me, like he protected me, he gave me back the confidence I had lost. . . . Once a young man was martyred. I was very upset about it, I was with [Abu Mustapha Rashid] in a car going to Tripoli—he had many friends there—to get donations. He put the recorder on a PFLP song: 'It is not important if we are alive, it is not

important if we die in the cry of war, if we find someone who carries the gun and continues the struggle.’ He would say, when you are upset, listen to this recording. So this affected me the most. . . . What keeps me attached [to the PFLP] is that there are people who were martyred knowing that there are people behind them continuing the journey. They were martyred for convictions and principles that *made* the PFLP. So I have to continue with the same principles that they died for, even if the whole community wants to outcast me I don’t care, because people gave their blood for this.

This passage is very powerful and reveals several important points. It highlights how sacrifice gave life to the PFLP by associating it with the ideals that people had died for. It shows how through these ideals the faction became an immaterial conceptual structure that we learn about through studying its stated ideology and became separated from the very people and practices that brought it into being and from Um Fadi, who positioned herself “outside” of the PFLP, looking at it, studying it and then deciding to “join” it. However, we will see that this position was ultimately untenable, as by her own words it became apparent that trying to place Um Fadi as “outside” or “inside” the PFLP did not properly describe her relationship to it.

Giving Life to Factions

When Um Fadi recounted the story of her husband’s killing and when she spoke of Abu Mustapha Rashid, she stressed the fact that both men gave their lives for the principles of the PFLP. This was very clear in the way she recounted the story of her husband’s death. In particular she highlighted the two letters that the Chairman of the PFLP George Habash wrote to her husband, explaining that the PFLP did not engage in internal fighting and forbidding her husband from fighting Fatah unless it was in self-defence and confined to the PFLP’s office premises. Um Fadi also highlighted how her husband abided by these principles (“they stayed *in that office*”) even if it ended up costing him his life. Um Fadi related another incident that further underlined this point. She explained that her brothers, who were with Fatah, wanted to protect her husband and proposed to take him outside of the camp. However he refused and according to Um Fadi one of her brothers asked him: “What, the office is Jerusalem?” and he replied “This office will get me to Jerusalem, you can only get me out of it dead.” This again highlighted his resolve to uphold PFLP principles, even if it meant his ultimate death. Similarly, Abu Mustapha Rashid not only abided by PFLP principles of not engaging in internal fighting, but he was killed in the indiscriminate bombing during an internal battle that he did not partake in. Rather, according to Um Fadi, he was trying to help others.

According to Um Fadi, her husband and her close friend and mentor, Abu Mustapha Rashid, died to uphold the principles of the PFLP, and by doing so they

gave life to the PFLP. Um Fadi explained that “They were martyred for convictions and principles that *made* the PFLP. So I have to continue with the same principles that they died for even if the whole community wants to outcast me I don’t care, because people gave their blood for this.” For Um Fadi, the PFLP was “made” of principles; it was no longer “made” of people. Additionally, Um Fadi revealed that sacrifice gave life by creating a commitment in the minds of survivors to honor the ideals for which their comrades fell.¹⁰ This point was highlighted by the song that Um Fadi mentioned, and that Abu Mustapha Rashid introduced her to in order to console her over the death of a young man. Um Fadi repeated a few of its lines: “It is not important if we are alive, it is not important if we die in the cry of war, if we find someone who carries the gun and continues the struggle.” After looking up the song, I found that it ended with the following sentence: “If we find others [who continue the journey] then we did not die.” It’s clear that Um Fadi felt an obligation to continue with those same principles that the PFLP now stands for: otherwise her husband and friend would have died in vain. This was what she referred to as “a heavy load” at the beginning of her testimony.

Associating a faction with its stated ideology also separated it from the people currently in the faction. Um Fadi was not happy with the current state of affairs in the PFLP. She was critical of the leadership when they did not support her efforts to create economic opportunities for women in the camp through the sale of homemade products, even with a minimal sum. She voiced her discontent repeatedly throughout our discussion, pointing out that she was unable to help those in need. In the past, she explained, she used to help the sick, or if parents were about to take a child out of school due to lack of funds, she would collect enough money to prevent that. But now there is no money and she was secluding herself again at home. She asked me, “What should I do? Go and watch the sick? Especially when it is known that I am responsible for this. This is what is depressing me the most.” The situation was making her uncomfortable with the current state of the faction, but for her to leave the PFLP was like letting down the people who had sacrificed their lives for it. She insisted that one must go on “regardless of the problems and obstacles” because those who sacrificed their lives died knowing that others will “continue the journey.” Her sense of commitment and loyalty to the principles for which her husband and friends sacrificed their lives not only gave life to the PFLP, but also separated it as an entity from the current people and practices engulfed in it.

For Um Fadi, the PFLP was an entity that she learned about through its stated ideology. Ideology, in this sense, opened up a distance, a space of separation that made it possible to “learn about” and “enter” the PFLP apart from the relationships that brought her to it. She explained that upon her return from Palestine she became interested in learning more about the PFLP, which she did through reading its literature, including its conference proceedings. She added that Abu Mustapha Rashid was eager to help her, stressing that “the person who is inside

something is not like the person who is about to enter” (*yalli dākhil al shī mish mitl yalli baddu yidkhul ‘alayh*). Here we get the image of the faction as a structure, as an entity (*shī*) that people enter. Additionally, a person’s knowledge of the literature of the PFLP becomes a measure of the supposed depth of their membership. Other Palestinians also referred to this separation of the faction, which now exists at the level of ideas, from the people currently in it. In particular, it occurred most often with Fatah. It was common for Palestinians to say that “Fatah is not about Abu Mazen,” “this is not the real Fatah,” or “Fatah is not about those people.” For many Palestinians “Fatah” no longer stood for its current leadership or its current members, but for past ideals for which their close friends or family members had fought.

Finally, what was particularly interesting about Um Fadi’s case was that this apparent separation of the factions, which now existed at the ideational level, from their people also caused her to attempt to portray herself as being “outside” the PFLP, “about to enter” it upon her return from Palestine. Throughout our conversation Um Fadi was insistent on portraying her involvement with the PFLP as being the result of her own “conviction,” which occurred “without pressure and after a long time.” This was also emphasized by her initial mention of having an “independent personality” from her husband. Um Fadi was eager to explain to me that her involvement with the PFLP did not stem from her marriage to a PFLP member, but rather it was due to her own reflection and decision. Um Fadi’s own portrayal of herself was linked to how the subject was seen to exist as an autonomous moral agent outside of power relations and society (Hindess 1996, 146–51; Mahmood 2005, 5–11). In this case “for an individual to be free, her actions must be the consequence of her “own will” rather than of custom, tradition, or social cohesion” (Mahmood 2005, 11). This stands in line with Um Fadi’s attempted depiction of herself as choosing to join the PFLP out of “conviction” and not “out of pressure.” This was again reflected in Um Fadi’s description of the change she went through due to her visit to Palestine. She explained that she returned “with a full awareness/consciousness” (*wa’i kāmil*), which she contrasted with her attachment to the *thawra* prior to her trip, which stemmed from “the mood of the house” (*jaw al bayt*).

However, Um Fadi’s self-positioning as being “outside” the PFLP, “about to enter it” two years after her husband’s killing, was untenable by her own admissions. First, she had explained that she was privy to high-level discussions between her husband and the PFLP Chairman George Habash. This alone suggests the amount of information that Um Fadi had access to while her husband was alive. Second, her statement that she joined the PFLP due to her own “conviction” about its principles, and that this was not related to her association through marriage to a PFLP member, was also untenable. As explained earlier, what gave those principles their importance was precisely her husband’s and Abu Mustapha Rashid’s deaths. This was perfectly illustrated in Um Fadi’s initial response when

I prompted her to describe her relationship with the PFLP. The critical part of her statement was:

I told you the organization (*tanẓim*), I respect it and I entered it out of conviction, without pressure and after a long time. And I don't forget that there are people who invested a lot in me, who helped me get the skills I have, who trained me, in the PFLP. People who were martyred. And this is what makes it hard. I feel it is a heavy load on me.

Um Fadi began her answer by talking of the *tanẓim* and her respect for “it” and stressing that she “entered it” out of her own free will. Again the faction appears as a structure that a person “enters” “out of conviction” and not an ongoing and ever-changing relationship built out of association with other people. However, her second sentence betrays the image of factions as structures defined by their stated ideologies that was drawn in the first sentence. Here, she discussed her strong relationship with the *people* in the PFLP who were martyred, an obvious reference back to her husband and Abu Mustapha Rashid. Here her relationship with the PFLP was defined by her relationship to those close to her, who were killed upholding the PFLP principles. This showed how sacrifice gave life to the PFLP by associating it with ideals that people appeared to have died for. Through ideology the PFLP obtained a life of its own separating it not only from the people currently inside of it (its leadership and fellow PFLP members in Beddawi camp) but also from the people (Um Fadi's husband and Abu Mustapha Rashid) and the practices (their killing) that brought it into being.

There is no disputing that Um Fadi took her own decision to join the PFLP, but none of this happened while she was “outside” of the faction. There was no “outside” or “inside,” but human relations. Nowhere did a person stand outside others and develop his/her own ideas. Of course a person could disagree with a certain political idea and stance, like Abu Ali did by hitting the bronze Lenin statue with his shoe, or his son Rabieh by handing over his gun when the PFLP decided to stand on the sidelines in a war that shattered his community, but none of their thoughts existed on their own, outside of the practice of interacting with others. Again, I am not arguing that Um Fadi had no ability to think on her own, or that she was predestined to join the PFLP simply by marrying a PFLP member. What I am saying is that Um Fadi was already entangled in the PFLP, which should be seen as a network of people, rather than a structure. She actually formed parts of it herself. We can only see her as being “outside” if we look at factions as structures existing separately from people. However, if we look at factions as people and practices then we can see how Um Fadi was already positioned within the PFLP web and that the line she “crossed” upon her return from Palestine, when she formally joined, was a line drawn internally, by specific practices that served to divide the world between the politically affiliated and the non-affiliated. Party

ideology, as a form of knowledge, gave Um Fadi the appearance that she could stand “outside” the PFLP and grasp it in its entirety.

. . .

I end this discussion with one last example from Um Fadi’s life that illustrates my argument that factions appeared to be defined by their stated ideologies while they were constituted by personal relations. In 1983, five years after the killing of her husband, and a few months after the killing of Abu Mustapha Rashid, Um Fadi’s younger brother Ziad was kidnapped by Fatah al-Intifada for his perceived involvement with Fatah. Such kidnappings were dreaded and family members had only a few hours to try to secure the release of their loved ones before they would be transported inside Syrian territory. Once they crossed the border “God can’t return them,” as Um Fadi explained. I let Um Fadi recount the remainder of the story in her own words:

One day they came to Ziad’s house and took him. My mother was crying. I asked her: Who took him? She said I don’t know; they just took him. And you should see my brother, he is so sweet. I lost my mind. I went outside barefoot, running, I went to the [Fatah al-]Intifada office, running, asking, where is my brother Ziad? They said not here, one of the guys said: you are asking about your brother? But they [Fatah] killed your husband! . . . I took him by his shirt and I pushed him onto the wall. [I told him:] ‘I don’t need someone like you to come and tell me such things and you know full well that my brothers had nothing to do with it, and if I knew who [killed my husband] I wouldn’t wait for someone like you to talk to me like that.’ I left. As I was going to the office of the Armed Struggle, I saw an ambulance go by and there was someone in it, I felt that it was Ziad. . . . I remembered that I knew one man who was with my father in the naval base, Abu Nash’at. He was with Fatah; he was from Jordan. They told me that he was with the Intifada now. . . .

When he saw me, he stood up and said to me, Leila—he knew me from when I was a little girl—he said to me, what are you doing here? I told him, Abu Nash’at, they took my brother, and I want to bring him back now, I will not go back and tell my mother that I did not find my brother. I cannot. I prefer to die. I cannot imagine my mother like that. He wrote a letter and gave it to the guy driving me, he told him, take her to this place and let her see Ziad.

This story is powerful because it shows how ideology and personal relations interplay. Ziad (who at the time of research was a football coach in a secondary school in Tripoli) was taken because of his association with Fatah, for appearing to be a member of a structure defined by its ideology, by its political positioning, and in this case also characterized by the killing of Um Fadi’s husband. However, what saved Ziad’s life, beyond his sister’s courage and quick thinking, was an old friendship between his long-deceased father and a comrade dating back more than twenty years. Um Fadi stressed the strength and longevity of the family’s relation

with Abu Nash'at by emphasizing that he called her "Leila" and not "Um Fadi," which indicated that he knew her prior to her marriage and to Fadi's birth. This example demonstrates both how factions, which were based on personal relations, appeared to be defined by their stated ideologies, and how that appearance was quite unstable and could quickly break down again when confronted with a personal relationship. That was precisely what Um Fadi did when she went to see Abu Nash'at in person. But this example also shows how powerful this appearance of separation could be when Palestinians engaged in internal fighting. Instances of violent factionalism were truly the hardest traumas for Palestinians to overcome, and this was precisely because they knew full well that people joined factions based on personal relations but would then be associated with a structure defined by its ideology and a certain political position, causing compatriots to fight each other.