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Arab States and the Palestine Problem (1936-199

Harun-or-Rashid, Md.

University of Rajshahi

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Arab States and the Palestine Problem (1936-1993)



Ph.D Dissertation

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Arab States and the Palestine Problem (1936-1993)



Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of
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Certificate

I have great pleasure to testify that the thesis entitled **Arab States and the Palestine Problem (1936-1993)** submitted by Md. Harun-or-Rashid, Assistant Professor in the Department of Islamic History and Culture, University of Rajshahi, Rajshahi is the candidate's own achievement, and is not a conjoint work. In this context it may be mentioned that the thesis was completed under my direct guidance and supervision.

I also certify that I have gone through the final draft of the thesis and found it satisfactory for submission to the University of Rajshahi, Rajshahi in partial fulfilment of the requirements, for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Arts, University of Rajshahi.

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Declaration

I the undersigned do hereby declare that the thesis entitled **Arab States and the Palestine Problem (1936-1993)** submitted by me to the University of Rajshahi, Rajshahi for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy is an original research work, and it has not been submitted earlier wholly or partly elsewhere for any degree or diploma.

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Md. Harun-or-Rashid

Abbreviation

AHC	–	Arab Higher Committee
APG	–	All Palestine Government
DFLP	–	Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine
DOP	–	Declaration of Principles
IDF	–	Israeli Defence Forces
MNF	–	Multi National Forces
NUEF	–	United Nations Emergency Force
OPEC	–	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PDC	–	Palestine Defence Committee
PFLP	–	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
PLO	–	Palestine Liberation Organization
PNA	–	Palestine National Authority
RDF	–	Rapid Deployment Forces
UNIFIL	–	United Nations Interim Forces for Israel and Lebanon
UNSCOP	–	United Nations Special Committee on Palestine
USSR	–	Union of Soviet Socialist Republic

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aroused Arab resentment. The clash of the Jews and the Arabs in the 1920s led the British to publish the Passfield White Paper which expressed the misgivings in the Arab mind and stated that the national home was to be the creation of a Jewish state not the subordination of Arab language and culture in Palestine. The Jews could not accept this policy of British government with good grace. After the 1929 Wailing Wall riots, the British government in its usual fashion appointed a number of commissions, which tried to minimize the tension between the Arabs and the Jews without any fruitful result. This may be attributed to the fact that the conflict between the claims and counter-claims of the Jews and Arabs. The Arab situation over the question of denial of self-government by the British. The Arabs revolted in 1936 and it continued for the second time till the Arab revolt in 1936 aroused consciousness of the Arab people of the surrounding Arab countries.

It should be noted that the Arab countries were at that time under the influence of British and French domination. Nationalist movements took root in those countries for achieving independence. In spite of that, the peoples' perception regarding Palestine question, the Arab states did not hesitate to put emphasis on and participation in the Palestine problem. Since then the Palestine issue has been exploited by Arab statesman in a bid for supremacy in the Arab World. The Arab situation at this stage influenced the British government to give second thought to their policy towards the Arabs in Palestine. This resulted not to the recommendations of the Peel Commission and Woodhead Commission and also the Publication of the British White Paper of 1939 that was to the extent pro-Arabs. The Jews agitated against White Paper of 1939 and the Arabs failed to organize themselves for its implementation. During the Second World War the relations between Arabs and the Jews became very sharp and a civil war ensued for controlling Palestine. The Arab refugees from the neighbouring Arab states also poured into Palestine to support the Palestinian Arabs to face the Jews in the civil war. With the passage

of time, when the British mandatory administration was almost paralyzed the matter was taken to the UNO.

As a result, the fate of Palestine depended - not as the principle of self-determination - demanded on the population of the country, but upon a collection of foreign powers. The UNO though appointed a committee called United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), but it failed to solve the problem because of the division of the recommendation of the committee as well as the deterioration of the relationship of the Jews and the Arabs. Eventually the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 led the outbreak of the Arab-Israel War in the same year. But its effects disheartened the Arabs and the Diaspora took place in reverse. In subsequent times, the Arab states also failed to take concerted actions over some issues regarding Palestine. From the traumatic experience of 1948 up to the mid 1960s, the activities of the bitterly angry Palestinian living in refugee camps consisted of occasional forays into Israel to cause whatever damage they could inflict on it. But these were not so effective. Majority of the Palestinians still believed that the various Arab governments would be able to find a solution to the Palestine problem that would make it possible for them to return to their homes. This illusion was rudely shattered as a result of the failure of the Arab states later on in 1956, 1967 and 1973 when the Arab-Israel Wars took place. In all these wars the Arab states lost to the Jews. It is to be noted that by this time in 1964 PLO was formed to regain the lost territories of Palestine.

This reflected the shifting of the Palestinian orientation from pan-Arab to a more particularistic self-image. This shift in itself was an indication of the loss of faith in the ability of the Arab countries to help the Palestinian cause. The mood accelerated the Palestinian guerilla movement in the mid 1960s under the leadership of Yasir Arafat. At that time the PLO charter included armed struggle against Israel to achieve its cherished goal. This meant that the Palestinians took the matter in their own hands. Though the guerrilla groups were divided ideologically, these have no other alternative but to fight

against Israel. So the Arab-Jews relations deteriorated to a great extent. Afterwards in the 1970s peace making efforts were made under US initiatives through shuttle diplomacy. These proved not so effective. Eventually President Sadat of Egypt took venture and alone pursued the policy of making peace with Israel through reciprocal recognition. Thereupon the Camp David Agreements was signed in 1978. But this development sharply divided the Arab states, which was not congenial for the interests of the Palestinian Arabs.

On the other hand, the PLO under the leadership of Arafat started from the early 1970s to undergo a slow, agonizing, but cumulative learning process in the face of the prevailing realities. This process is distinctly discernible in the resolutions taken by the successive meetings of the PNC. These resolutions have shown an evolutionary process in the reformulation of the objectives of the PLO, away from total liberation, and in their reformulation of the means for attaining those objectives, away from exclusive reliance on the armed struggle. With the passage of time, evolutions took place in the resolutions adopted by the PNC that eventually put emphasis on diplomacy against armed struggle and also for reciprocal recognition. This it did in the Algiers session in 1988.

It is to be noted that as a result of the change of PLO's stand, the USA recognized it as the sole representative of the Palestinians. By this time, after the first intifada of 1987, Jordan withdrew its claim on the West Bank. This congenial situation opened the door for mutual talks between the PLO and Israel. As a result, after much debate and persuasion the Oslo Accord was signed and the question of Palestinian autonomy was accepted in 1993. This also resulted the reciprocal recognition. The main features of the Palestinian Autonomy Accords are the withdrawal of Israeli forces from parts of the Gaza Strip and West Bank, and affirmed a Palestinian right of self-government

within those areas through the creation of a Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority. Palestinian rule was to last for a five-year interim period during which "permanent status negotiations" would commence - not later than May 1996 - in order to reach a final agreement. Major issues such as Jerusalem, Palestinian refugees, Israeli settlements, and security and borders were to be decided at these permanent status negotiations. Israel was to grant interim self-government to the Palestinians in phases. Along with the principles, the two groups signed *Letters of Mutual Recognition* - the Israeli government recognized the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, while the PLO recognized the right of the state of Israel to exist and renounced terrorism as well as other violence, and its desire for the destruction of the Jewish State. The failure of the Arab states led to this sort of Israeli-Palestinian Agreements for the solution of the problem.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Introducing the Subject

Palestine Problem is the most controversial and complex issue in modern times. The root of the Palestine problem lies in the fact that the two peoples – the Palestinian Arabs and the Jews (whether inside Palestine or outside) – claim the right of ownership of the same territory which is known as Palestine to the outsiders, Palestine to the Arabs and *Eretz* Israel (Biblical land of Palestine) to the Jews. Both the groups put their claims over the same land with historical and practical grounds. The Palestine question has been upsetting the political equilibrium in the world for the decades together in the twentieth century. The whole drama goes way back to the early twentieth century when plans and counter plans, pledges and counter – pledges had been going on at the conclusion of First World War to dismember the already decaying Ottoman Empire, and to solve the Middle Eastern Problems by the Europeans and for the Europeans, ignoring the interests of the people concerned, namely the Arabs.

In its origin only the Palestinian Arabs and Jews were involved. But during the First World War, with the publication of Balfour Declaration, the British officially involved in this problem. The Balfour Declaration issued by Britain lies at the root of the plight of the millions of the Palestinians who were driven out of their land so that the wandering Jews could make their home there. The Balfour Declaration has been regarded as the main foundation stone which ushered the problem creating complicity and enmity between the Palestinian Arabs and the Jews. Naturally triangle diplomacy and conflict took place in the development of the Palestine Problem and this continued till the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, when Britain's official involvement came to an end. The Jews intensified their claim through Zionism. Zionism was a socio-political movement that gradually developed among the European Jews in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Although the origin of Zionism was a religious one, it emerged as a national

movement under the leadership of Theodor Herzl and in the Baste programme its objective was defined as "the creation in Palestine of a home for the Jewish people secured by public law".

On the other hand, after the First World War, the fall of the Ottoman Empire led to the emergence of a number of Arab states in the Middle East under the control of some European powers. On the basis of the demand of general masses, the Arab governments of the states like Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iraq did not keep them aloof but from the prevailing situation came forward to handle the Palestine problem for its acceptable solution to the cause of Palestinian Arabs. In the course of the development of the Palestine question, the conference of the Arabs at Bludan in Syria (Sept. 1937) was a land mark in the increasing involvement of the Arab states in the issue. No event of the 1930s captured the attention of the Arab world as did the Arab Revolt in Palestine that took place in 1936. Its progress was eagerly followed in the daily press of Cairo, Baghdad, Damascus, and the Capitals of North Africa. It was also carefully monitored by Arab leaders and regimes. On the one hand, the revolt aroused Arab nationalist sentiments in ways not witnessed in the region since the day of Faysal's Arab Kingdom; on the other, it alarmed Arab rulers who feared its repercussions on politics. The impact of the revolt on the Arab world differed from country to country. It specially aroused nationalist sentiment and idea in those Arab countries though with different grades. Thus a combination of political, socio-economic, and cultural factors had long been at work in leading Arab countries shaping popular opinion about Palestine.

Afterwards in Oct. 1938, the 'World Parliamentary Congress of the Arab and Muslim Countries for the Defence of Palestine' took place in Cairo. The Arab revolt in Palestine (1936-39) which took place as a protest against the pro-Jewish policies pursued by the British and further development of the question of it brought about a radical change in the attitude of the decision – markers of the Arab states towards Palestine. Since then it became impossible on the part of the independent Arab states to ignore the issue of Palestine. So it became imperative and urgently necessary for them to try and

influence events in Palestine. This was indeed a new phenomenon because of the fact that since then consultation between the British Government and the Arab Governments took place over the future status of Palestine.

It may therefore be evident from the fact that the rejection of the British Government of the Report of the Peel Commission's recommendation regarding the partition of Palestine into Arab and Jewish areas was nothing but the outcome of intimation received from the independent Arab states which emphasized that such a solution would be acceptable to them or to the people of the Arab World. The degree of this involvement further increased in the early months of 1939 when an international conference of Palestinian Arabs, Jews and Arab Governments' representatives was held in London in March 1939. The solution imposed by the British Government according to the White Paper of 1939 was promulgated after consultation with the Arab representatives present in the conference. New dimension took place in the issue during the Second World War and after especially with the establishment of the Jewish state of Israel in 1948. The Arab states did not accept the state of Israel with good grace. Thenceforth they continued their endeavours to nullify and even to erase the Jewish state of Israel. Naturally enmity developed to a great degree, and this ultimately led to the outbreak of the Arab-Israel Wars in 1948, 1956, 1967 and later on in 1973. Thus with the gradual development of the Palestine problem the involvement of Arab states became visible and active. In the later part of the 1960s an important development was added to this problem. The new development after June 1967 was the rise of a Palestine Arab nationalist movement whose objective was not peace, but total destruction of the Jewish state and of its Zionist manifestation. Several guerrilla or commando organizations undertook forays into occupied territory and undertook terrorist acts against Israeli civilians. The Arab state had no other alternative but to support and endorse all these organizations in the Cairo conference of 1969.

But early in 1970s changes took place in the Arab attitudes toward Israel. In Egypt especially there was indication of willingness to seek a compromise peace settlement. This was really needed for stabilizing the relationship between these two antagonists. They came forward to accept the concept of two states – Palestinian Arabs and Israeli Jewish as the basis for a

solution with the recognition of Israel's existence. So is the case with Israel where it was urgently felt to accept Palestinian and Israeli co-existence. The Arab states took part actively in the peace process, undertaken later on from the Camp David Agreements to the Palestinian Autonomy Accord in 1993. But till now the Arab states failed to play desired role in solving this thorny problem in favour of the Palestinian Arabs though they urgently felt for its solution. In the course of events that took place over the years and the actual role played by the Arab states especially Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Saudi Arabia needs special attention to study in greater depth. The present study, therefore, seeks (a) to analyze the course of events that took place over the years till 1993; (b) to study the repercussion on the common masses of the Arab World; (c) to investigate into the course of their failure to solve it.

The involvement of the Arab states or governments since 1930 onwards led to the outbreak of a number of wars in between the Arab states and Israel. But the Arab states' involvement did not produce any fruitful result to the cause of Palestinian Arabs. Naturally the Palestinian Arabs organized themselves under the banner of different guerrilla groups to fight against Israel to achieve their goal i.e., to establish their desired Palestinian state. The role of the Arab states during the period under study is noteworthy. The topic being an international nature deserves thorough investigation.

Objectives and Utility (Justification of the study)

The topic is a suitable subject for Ph.D research. Palestine Problem is a burning issue since its inception. In addition to the Palestinian Arabs and Jews, the Arab states, the big powers and even the UNO are involved in solving this problem. But it has not yet been solved. In the long course of development of the Palestine Problem, the role of the Arab states is immense. Their role is to be examined categorically during the period under review. The topic is interesting and if the research work is done many unknown facts will be unveiled.

Since the topic has an international bearing and all the universities of Bangladesh offer courses on it, it carries more value. The theme is specially related to the Departments of Islamic History and Culture, Department of

History and the Department of International Relations of the different Universities (Public and Private) of Bangladesh, and as such the concerned departments will be benefited. This work on completion may come to the use of the general and advanced students as well as to the researchers and persons interested on the subject.

Review of Some Selected Sources

The Arab-Israeli Wars, London, Arms and Armour Press, 1982, written by Chaim Herzog is a well published and well documented book which covers the chronological history of Arab-Israeli wars of 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973. The book is divided into six chapters excluding preface, prologue, conclusion, select bibliography and index. All the chapters put emphasis on the nature, course and implication of the wars between Arab states and Israel. It mainly deals with the circumstances leading to the outbreak of wars mentioned above, involvement of the Arab states and its implications and to some extent evaluation of the role of the Arab states towards the solution of the thorny problem. The book covers the partial approach of our present research. So invariably this book will be of much help for the completion of the research.

Palestine, the Arabs, and Israel, the search for justice, London: Longmans, 1969 is a fundamental work of Henry Cattan. This book is divided into four major chapters, mainly origin of the Arab-Israeli conflict, two decades of tension (1948-1967), the Arab-Israeli war (1967), in search of solution. All the chapters are divided into sections. All these chapters put emphasis on chronologically the origin and development of the Palestine problem, role of the British and the U.N.O., the question of the Palestinian refugees, the exodus or the background of the Arab-Israeli wars till 1967 and endeavours for possible and acceptable settlement with the avowed aim of establishing peace in the area. The book is also crowned with appendices. It contains a good number of information and sources with regard to our research. In spite of that there are some loopholes in connection with our present research. It does not categorically touch the role of the Arab states to tackle and solve the problem. Nevertheless, this book invariably will be of much help for the completion of the research.

The Middle East Today, New York, Praeger special studies, 1983, written by Don Peretz. This book is a well published and well documented book which deals with general information regarding the history of the Middle East today. Culling materials from many original and secondary sources as well as for year's together personal experience in the region, the writer has intended to present before the readers some general observations about the area as a whole. It includes acquiring the specific designation of the area, nature of some of the general characteristics, fundamental internal differences. In addition to tracing the Islamic and Ottoman back-grounds and influences are common to most of the countries of the region. Some of the principal countries are examined separately in an attempt to show how it acquired its contemporary image and to present that image as truly as possible. The fourth edition of the book contains 1982 crisis in Lebanon and its impact on the region, the Regan peace plan, new political orientations within the PLO, and the extensive effects of the 1978 revolution in Iran. The book is divided into eighteen chapters excluding preface, list of maps, selective bibliography and index. The book specially touches the origin and development of Zionism and also the course of the history of the Israel. The book carries some important information regarding our present research.

Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East: A documentary Record: 1914-1956, Vol. II (Princeton, Van Nostrand, 1956) is a complementary book compiled by J.C. Hurewitz. It has included in itself the pacts and treaties signed during the period mentioned above. It is a valuable document for the treaties to examine the nature of the decline of the Ottoman Empire and the nature of imperialism of the twentieth century. It is an original piece of work which may add new elements to the subject of study.

Survey of International affairs, 1925, Vol. I, The Islamic Period since the Peace Settlement (London, Oxford University Press, 1927) is a noteworthy book written by Arnold J. Toynbee. It is a valuable piece of work which is specially helpful for examining the course of Palestine history after the First World War.

John Marlowe, Rebellion in Palestine, London, the Cresset press 1946, is a well documented and well published book. It is divided into fifteen chapters having an appendix. It contains the theme of historical setting of the

Palestinian crisis, the role of the Palestinian Arabs and Jews, involvement of the Big Power like Britain and the ambiguity over the question of decision-making by the British, reaction of the Arabs against the British decision over the question of future status of Palestine. It also covers the background of the Arab rebellion in 1936 and role of the British and to some extent of Arab states. Since the book contains some relevant information it is helpful to present study.

Sydney Nittleton Fisher, the Middle East a History, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960, 1971, is a book worth mentioning. The book is divided into four parts having forty two chapters. The first part entitled the rise and spread of Islam, the second part, the Ottoman Empire, the 3rd part, European imperialism in the modern Middle East and the part four, contemporary Middle East. First and second chapters of the book lay beyond these parts. The attempt of this book has been to present a brief account of the contemporary Middle Eastern scene so that it can be easily placed the area in its proper setting or perspective. After a short introduction, the book starts with the life of the Prophet and the revolutionary changes that he made upon the society of his time. Since then the narration has been carried forward changing the central focus of this scene from Medina to Damascus to Baghdad to Asia Minor, Istanbul and back to the Arab Lands as the fortunes of the area have developed. It also contains overall gradual development of the Arab countries including the origin and development of the Palestine problem. The book is helpful for understanding the general and detail problems throughout ages of the Middle East. Since the book has been the result of the consultation of diverse sources, it is primarily helpful to the course of our present research.

Pamela Ferguson, Martin Brian D O Keeffe, London 1973. The Palestine Problem, This book is well documented and authentic in connection with the Palestine problem - which deals with Arab nationalism, Jewish nationalism, and Palestinian resistance struggle against Israel and so on. This book is divided into eighteen chapters without introduction, epilogue, bibliography and index. It is a remarkable document which is especially helpful for analyzing the course of Palestine problem.

Guyle Strange, Palestine under the Moslems, 1965 Khayats, Beirut,.

This book is translated from works of the Mediaeval Geography of G. Strange. The book is divided into nine chapters excluding introduction, appendix and index. The book bears a lot of information such as expedition of crusaders, Roman and Byzantine invasions, and the occupation of the Muslim rulers. It is also primarily helpful to the course of our present study.

Albert M. Hyamson, Methuem and Co. Ltd. London, 1950, Palestine

Under the Mandate 1920-1948. This is divided into XVI chapters in addition to preface and index. The book deals with the history of Palestine from 1920 to 1948. The book clarifies the position of Jews national home and the British mandate in Palestine. The book contains a good number of information and sources which will be helpful for our current research.

Feasibility and output of the Research

Feasibility of research depends greatly on the availability of adequate materials - primary and secondary. So far searched and traced there is no dearth of materials either archival or secondary to reconstruct the history of the subject understudy. It is therefore presumed that in depth study of the materials culled from various sources can be instrumental in achieving the goal for which this research is meant. Materials for this work could be searched in the various institutions of Bangladesh and the neighbouring country like the libraries of Dhaka University, Rajshahi University, Chittagong University, Jahangirnagar University, Islamic University, British Embassy library, UN information Centre, the British Council library, the American Centre, the library of the Palestine Embassy, the libraries of the Arab Countries available in Bangladesh, and National Library, Calcutta. In addition, the Seminar libraries of the Department of Islamic History and Culture of all public Universities of Bangladesh have been consulted in this regard. The Internet and website have also been searched for the relevant materials. Hence no question arises as to its feasibility, rather an appreciable result could be hoped for.

Methods and Methodology

From the culling of the materials till the completion of the work historical method fits well in its entirety. It includes the collection of materials leaving no gap in the connected aspects of the study, the scanning of the materials, their systematization and synchronization so that clear vision becomes apparent to complete the dissertation. Moreover, this method also covers, while writing the thesis, the arguments in favour of and against the problem raised and then substantiation of cogent opinion with convincing evidences and arguments. Hypothesis and imaginative assumption have no role to play in this regard.

If the research work is successfully completed, it is believed, it would clarify all the hazy and unearthed points of Palestine problem in connection with the Arab states and the domination of the British power and the establishment of Israel, later on Arabs-Jews conflicts.

Concluding Remarks: The subject of study as outlined above seems to be an appropriate topic of research for Ph.D degree. So far worked and searched I am hopeful that the materials would not stand as hindrance on the way of completing the dissertation. This work on its completion, will come to benefit of researchers and scholars interested in the study of the Middle Eastern history especially of the Palestine and the background of the Modern Israel, Arab-Jewish conflicts and its development till 1993.

It is evident that with the passage of time claims and counter claims made by the Jews and Arabs on the same land created a problem generally known in history as the Palestine problem.

The problem outlined above has been organized in several chapters. It is to be noted that the work is based on diverse sources – primary and secondary – consisting mainly of Arabic and English works. Works of modern scholars have freely been consulted in order to be acquainted with their ideas in the field of study. These have been thoroughly utilized as source materials to enrich the qualitative value of the thesis.

In the first chapter of the thesis a brief statement of the problem or synopsis introducing the subject, objectives and utility (justification) of the study have been deeply outlined. Some books relating to the subject of study have also been properly reviewed. In addition, feasibility and output of the study, methods and methodology, brief survey of the chapters including concluding remarks have been discussed.

In the second chapter of the thesis a brief geo-physical aspects and historical survey of the land of Palestine over the years have been discussed for having a clear picture of our need.

The third chapter of the thesis deals with the emergence of the Arab states as a result of dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire after the First World War. This is in conformity with the necessity of evaluating the role pursued and played by the Arab states in the course of the Palestine problem for years together.

The fourth chapter of the thesis puts emphasis on the origin and development of Palestine problem. It seems that the demographic picture including claims – and counter claims made by the inhabitants of Palestine i.e., the Arabs and the Jews played a very vital role in shaping the course and intensity of the problem during the period under study and after.

The fifth chapter of the thesis deals with the role or involvement of the Arab states in the Palestine problem before the emergence of the state of Israel more specifically since the Arab revolt of 1936. It is to be noted that though the Arab states were initially under the European domination, the pressure of the public opinion of the Arab countries, changing perception of the Arab leaders to maintain the interests against Jewish mechanism and economic consideration played a very vital role in moulding the stand of the Arab countries towards the Palestine problem. Thus a combination of political, socio-economic and cultural factors contributed to a great extent in shaping popular Arab opinion against the Jews and formulating policies of the Arab states to the cause of Palestinian Arabs. It will be seen that though the Arab countries differed on some political matters yet the rulers and governments of the Arab states presented more or less a unified stand on the Palestine issue. The Palestine issue thus acted as a plea to hold the Arab states together.

The sixth chapter of the thesis analysis the role of the Arab states since the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 till the conclusion of the Camp David Agreement in 1978. It will be seen that the Arab states reacted sharply when the state of Israel was established in 1948. To nullify this state the neighbouring Arab countries invaded Israel in 1948. But having no experience of modern warfare the Arab states did utterly badly in the Arab-Jewish war of 1948. The Arabs had to loss to the Jews in the subsequent Arab-Jewish wars that took place in 1956, 1967 and in 1973. In course of the Arab-Jewish conflicts the Jews being backed by the USA gained more. The humiliating defeat of the Arab states in the Palestine war brought about a tremendous impact in the Arab World. It also created a vast refugee problem. The refugees used to live in the refugee camps in sub-human conditions. The question of the refugees created a vexatious problem for the countries of the Arab Middle East. It became imperative for the Arab states to resettle the refugees for the time being with the ultimate aim of solving their problem to the cause of their interests. The inglorious role played by the Arab states in the Palestine problem led the refugees to organize resistance groups to carry incursion against Israel. Eventually the PLO was formed in 1964 and it was recognized by Arab states subsequently. The role of the Arab states will be dealt with all the events relating to it. In addition, it also puts emphasis on the peace making process in the 1970s with special reference to the Camp-David Agreements. It will be seen that as a prelude to the peace making process for concluding the Camp David Agreements the US diplomatic role was no doubt noteworthy. But in spite of that the peace making process was not effective.

The seventh chapter of the thesis shows the development after the Camp David Agreement till the conclusion of the Palestinian Autonomy Accord, 1993. During this period in the 1980s the Palestine resistance movement (Intifada) added fuel to the flame. This also created some sort of mutual understanding between the Arabs and Jews over the question of solving the problem. With the passage of time, the subsequent development i.e., the declaration of the Palestinian state by the PNC, the Algiers Conference, the Madrid peace talks, the Oslo peace process and the Palestinian Autonomy Accord, 1993 are considered to some extent positive

development towards the solution of the Palestine problem. In all these events the role and views of the Arab states are not unified and coordinated. Hence, a thorough study will be made in this chapter to examine the nature of the role pursued by the neighbouring Arab states of Palestine.

The chapter eighth is the concluding chapter of the thesis. It contains the gist of the thesis keeping in view the findings of the research to address the nature of development and to show the role of the Arab states towards the acceptable solution of the Palestine problem for creating congenial atmosphere of democratic system needed for the greater interests of the people of the area.

Chapter 2

The Land of Palestine in History

The area of Palestine may perhaps best be defined, by extending it from the Mediterranean on the west to the Arabian Desert on the east; and from the lower Litani (Leontes) River in the north to the Gaza Valley in the south. Its northern and southern limits would thus correspond roughly with the proverbial extent of the Holy Land, from Dan to Beersheba.

The area is small, about 150 mi. long and 80 mi. wide, but its strategic importance is immense as though it passes the main roads from Egypt to Syria and from the Mediterranean to the hills beyond the Jordan. On a broad view, Palestine incorporates a part of the high edge of the Arabian Plateau and it contains some chief physical features which are distinct from place to place. Palestine consequently includes a number of regions of very distinct geographical character.

The Land of Palestine is situated in west Asia. The term of 'Palestine' is the Greek version of 'Phalestina', and was the name of only "a part of the coast, and thence spread inland to the desert". The original home of the Philistines may still be in doubt; as to whether did they hail from Crete or Cyprus. They give evidence of being a maritime people, perhaps un-Semitic. Whichever island they came from, the Philistines seem to have arrived on the coasts of the Land of Canaan about the same time as the Israelites were arriving after crossing the desert.¹ Palestine is really "the north or north-western end of the great Arabian Peninsula, of which they call the southern end" the *Yemen*. Hence, the other direction came to be called *Sham* – the former on the right, the latter on the left. But there came a time when *Philistia* encroached on *Sham*, while ultimately the Philistines succeeded in giving their name to the whole land mass lying between the border of Egypt – to which their Gaza has always been gateway—and south of a line drawn roughly from Sidon to

¹ The balance of opinion seems to veer towards Crete, possibly in closer text with Egypt. The inhabitants of a place near Gaza called 'Jabalia' are obviously not pure Arab, and till the end of the Mandate cut off, the only method of visiting being riding through sand, inches deep.

Damascus. These Philistines must have been known to other tribes early in Near Eastern history. The Assyrians were aware of the *Pilistu* (or *Palastu*). The adjective seems to have the meaning of 'stranger', occurring several times in I Maccabees, with 'Philistines' in the text and 'strangers' in the margin of the Revised Version.² The term is not of Semitic origin, though some have tried to discover a trilateral root. But probably 'Philistine' is the name they gave themselves on their migration from Caphtor, according to a tradition common to Deuteronomy and the book of Amos.³ Careful consideration of the details points to the origin of this people being Mediterranean, using Egypt as a corridor to the shore lands of Canaan, along a route perhaps not far from where the railway came to be built nearly half a century ago.⁴ Deuteronomy says that they destroyed the inhabitants of villages as far as Gaza and "dwelt in their stead".⁵ The Philistines thus did from one direction of invasion very much what the Israelites did from another, including (for them) a 'Semitization' from the local inhabitants, linguistically and perhaps religiously. The Israelites, too, tended to "yield to the manner of the gods of the land"⁶—and with far less reason and excuse than the Philistines.

In connection with this some words of George Adam Smith in 1894 may be summed up

the strange parallel which (Philistine history) affords to the history of Israel... Both Philistines and Hebrews were immigrants into the land for whose possession they fought through centuries. Both came up to it from Egypt. Both absorbed the populations they found on it. Both succeeded to the Canaanite civilization, and came under the fascination of the Canaanite religion. Each people had a distinctive character of his own, and both were at different periods so victorious that either humanly speaking, might have swallowed up the other. Indeed, so fully was the Philistine identified with the land that *his name has for ever become its name* a distinction which Israel never reached.⁷

² Cf. George Adam Smith, *Atlas of the Historical Geography of the Holy Land* (London: Hodder, 1st edn, 1894), p. 169 n. *Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible*, III, 844.

³ Deuteronomy 2:23. Amos 9:7, Cf. Jeremiah 47:4.

⁴ "They moved up the coast from Egypt". G.A. Smith, p. 171. But this does not mean an Egyptian origin.

⁵ Deuteronomy 2:23.

⁶ The prophets having to deal with the tendency to follow pagan cults.

⁷ G.A. Smith, pp. 175 f.

There may be further comparisons and contrasts today to be added to the judgments of George Adam Smith, but the issue for the moment is confined to the conclusion that 'his name has for ever become its name. It is true that the other Old Testament references are scanty. The song of Moses mentions that "pangs have taken hold on the inhabitation of Philistia ("Palestina" in the A.V).⁸ First Isaiah has an oracle, with two reference, very much in anticipation of an Assyrian invasion, and (somewhat unlike the current situation) offering a refuge in Zion for the afflicted inhabitants of Philistia.⁹ This is a distinct advance on the outlook of the Books of Samuel, and in some quarters of more modern times. The other 'prophetical allusion' is in Joel 3:4 as clear a decline from Isaiah of Jerusalem as the references in Ezekiel,¹⁰ which betray the more ordinary Semitic attitude of recompense and revenge.

Over and above its geographical location at the junction of two continents, almost of three, Palestine has been made the corridor of armies and the outpost of empires, Egyptian, Assyrian, Persian, Greek and Roman, apart from the galaxy of smaller nations, Hivites, Hittites, Perizzites and all the rest, making its international debut at the dawn of recorded history. Palestine alone of the Near eastern countries has the right to be called "the land of three faiths". There were per-monotheistic cultures in the country antedating the arrival both of the Israelites and the Philistines.

Thus it is to be noted that the land of Palestine is highly esteemed for its being the sacred place of three major monotheistic religions of the world - Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Jesus Christ lived and taught there. Palestine was named after the Philistines who captured the southern coastal part of the country in the 12th century B.C. The area, first called Philistia, gave its name in the second century A.D. to Syria Palestina, the southern portion of the Roman province of Syria. The name Palestine was revived as an official title when the British were given a mandate for the government of the country after its release from Turkish rule during the First World War.¹¹

⁸ Exodus 15:14

⁹ Isaiah 14:29 ff.

¹⁰ The Ezekiel references (25:15 f) are to the philistines, not to Philistia.

¹¹ *Encyclopaedia of Britannica*, Vol. 19, p. 155.

Being situated on the East Coast of the Mediterranean and West Jordan and to the south of Lebanon, the territory of Palestine covers around 10,435 square miles of land area. The rest is water, half of the Dead Sea. No accurate official census is available. But it is said that at the end of the 1918 there were 700,000 people living in Palestine. They were divided into 574000 Muslims, 70,000 Christians, and 56,000 Jews. Almost all the Palestinian Christians are Arabs while the rest Jews. In between 1800 and 1945 the Jewish populations of Palestine increased from approximately 25,000 to 600000. Finally it has crossed 33 percent of the country's populations.

It has also been said that the name of Palestine is derived from the Philistines who lived in the southern coastal part of the country in the 12th century B.C. In the 20th century B.C. the Canaanites started to settle in the plains and on the coast. Gradually they developed their own culture. In the Bible the country is called the land of Canaan.¹² The Palestine Arabs are the actual inhabitants of Palestine. The Moslem Arab conquest of Palestine in A.D. 637 was not the starting point of their occupation of the country. The Arabs are a pre-Islamic people. They lived in Palestine and other parts of the Middle East before the advent of Islam. In fact, the number of the invaders at the time of Moslem Arab conquest of Palestine in the seventh century was small and the indigenous inhabitants assimilated them.¹³

In addition there lived in Palestine the Cannanites and the Philistines. The former belonged to the Semitic race, and probably came from Arabian Desert, the original homeland of the Semites. The latter's ethnic origin is not known, but they came from the southern part of Asia Minor and from certain Mediterranean islands chiefly Crete. After the Cannanites and the Philistines, the Hebrews ruled over Palestine. The times of the Cannanites, the Philistines and the Hebrews were the golden age of the ancient civilization of Palestine.

¹² Henry, Culton LLM. *Palestine, the Arabs and Israel*, Longmans, 1969, London. p.3.

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 6.

It is necessary at the outset to correct a current misconception. The Israelis were not the earliest inhabitants of Palestine. They were invaders.¹⁴ Palestine for some centuries was under the domination of the Semitic-speaking Canaanites who came in contact with the neighbouring Babylonians. The Hittites and the Egyptians nourished a rich culture. In course of time their culture became more prosperous as a result of their mixing with the Philistines and the Hebrews. In conformity with the opinion of historians that the original homeland of the Hebrews was the desert of Arabia, one of their groups left the desert to settle in the north-west of Mesopotamia - the land between the Tigris and the Euphrates. About 1800 B.C. the Hebrews under their leader Abraham left Mesopotamia and came to Palestine to settle there.¹⁵

Ismail, son of Abraham, stayed in Arabia, and Ishaq another son, settled in Palestine. Under the leadership of Ishaq's son Yaqub a branch of the Hebrews started making habitation in Palestine. In the Bible Yaqub is known as Jacob. His another name is Israel. After the name Israel his followers are known as the Banu Israel or the Israelites (children of Israel).¹⁶

Yaqub's favourite son Yusuf, as a result of his stepbrother's conspiracy had to leave Palestine for Egypt. Rayyan bin-Walid, Pharaoh of Egypt, appointed him the treasurer of the kingdom for his acumen in financial matters.¹⁷ About 1600 B.C. an appreciable number of the famine hit Hebrews of Palestine which made their habitation in Egypt. The oppression of the Pharaohs drove them to slavery. They had to bear the oppression of the ruling power for long. After much suffering they found in Musa a deliverer who took them to Sinai Peninsula about 1300 B.C.¹⁸ Musa was a prophet and preacher of monotheism. In the Bible he is known as Moses. By his eloquent speeches he succeeded in uniting the different tribes of the Hebrews. These people,

¹⁴ Henry Cattan, LLM *op.cit.*, p. 3.

¹⁵ Will Durant, our oriental Heritage, Vol.1 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), pp. 300-301; James Henry Breasted, *Ancient time A History of the early world* (Chicago: The oriental institute, the University of Chicago, n.d.), p. 226.

¹⁶ Abu al Fida, *Kitab al-Mukhtasar fi Akhbar al-Bashar*, Vol-I (Bayrat, Dar Lebanania, n.d.), p. 23.

¹⁷ Al-Quran, Surah al-Baqarah, 46.

¹⁸ Will Durant, *op.cit.*, Vol-I, pp. 300-302.

later on, played a vital role in the conquest of Palestine. After Musa's death misfortune befell on the Hebrews as the former did not leave any capable person to take the leadership.

The occupation of Palestine was the long-cherished desire of the Hebrews. To them Palestine was their promised land flowing with milk and honey. They tried several times to occupy Palestine, but they failed to capture any important place of the country except some arid vallies due to the strong opposition of the Cannanites. During this time they faced another and far more dangerous enemy - the Philistines, who coming from southern Asia Minor and some Mediterranean islands, occupied the country. As valiant warriors they drove the Hebrews to hilly regions. To combat all these adverse situations they forgot their internal dissension and stood united against the common foes. About 1205 B.C., a war broke out between the Hebrews led by Talut, and the Philistines headed by Jalut. In course of the war when it was undecided Daud, a young chap entered the battle field and turned the tide infavour of the Hebrews. Jalut was killed by him. As a result the whole Palestine came under the control of the Hebrews and their leader Talut became their king for the first time in their history. In the Bible and in the annals of European history Talut is known as Saul.¹⁹

During Saul's reign the scattered Hebrew tribes got united and they gained every strength to defend their country against external forces. His daughter was married to Daud. After Saul's death his son-in-law Daud inherited the ruler ship of Palestine in 10th century B.C. In the accounts of European historians he is known as David.²⁰ He was a prophet, warrior and political leader. He united the Hebrew tribes into a strong nation, made Jerusalem his capital and speedily subjugated the Philistines. A promising kingdom was now established, the strongest in the region of Palestine-Syria Daud ruled for long 40 years.

¹⁹ Will Durant, *op.cit.*, Vol.I, pp. 304-305.

²⁰ Henry S. Lucas, *A Short History of Civilization* (Washington Magraw-Hill Book Company, 1953), p. 86.

Palestine reached the height of its glory during the reign of David's son, Sulayman who became king in 935 B.C.²¹ Sulayman was also a prophet and he was famous for his wit, sharp intelligence, uncommon wisdom and fair justice. Under his able leadership Palestine's political authority extended to Mediterranean in the west and Yemen in the south. He divided his kingdom into twelve districts for effective administration and for breaking the tribal boundaries. By this measure he intended lessen the clannish separatism of the tribes, and to unite them into one people.²²

He also raised forts and stationed garrisons at strategic points of his realm to cheek external invasion and internal revolt. He took special interest in the material prosperity of his kingdom. He became one of the leading patrons of trade in the Near East. In the Red Sea, he owned a fleet of mercantile vessels in partnership with the Phoenician king, Hirman of Tyre.²³ Under him Jerusalem became one of the busiest markets of the Near East and he was the richest potentates of his time. Living in oriental luxuries, he loved display and built in his capital Jerusalem a magnificent palace for himself and splendid temple of Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews²⁴ Sulayman's fame as a great king reached far and wide. He compelled and directed Queen Bilqis, ruler of Saba (Sheba in the Bible) of Yemen to acknowledge his authority and to accept the oneness of God. During this time Sulayman's authority was established in Yemen. After the death of Sulayman the glory of Hebrew kingdom of Palestine passed away. His weak successors could not maintain the solidarity of the kingdom. Towards the close of his son Rohbon's 17 years reign all the Hebrew tribes except Juda and Benjamin rose in rebellion and set up to the north of Jerusalem a rival kingdom, with Banu Amin as its first king.

This northern kingdom, of which Samaria afterwards became the capital, was known as the kingdom of Israel. The south of which Jerusalem remained the capital was called the kingdom of Judah and its first king was Sulayman's grand son Abyab.²⁵

²¹ Al-Yaqubi, *Tarikh-al-Yaqubi*, Vol.I (Bayrat: Dar Sador, 1960), pp. 57-59.

²² Will Durant, *op.cit.*, Vol.I, p. 306.

²³ Will Durant, *op.cit.*, Vol.I, p. 306.

²⁴ T.W. Wall Bank and A.M. Taylor, *Civilization past and present*, Vol.I (New York: Scott Foreman and Company, 1949), pp. 79-80

²⁵ Philip Van Ness Myers, *General History* (Boston: Ginn and Company, n.d.), p. 36.

The northern Hebrew kingdom, Israel, came to an end in 722 B.C., when the Assyrian king Sargon II captured its capital Samaria and carried away 10 influential tribes of Israel into captivity. They are known as the lost ten Tribes of the Hebrews. The southern kingdom, Judah, was wiped out of its existence by Bhakhte Nasr (Nabucadnezzar), king of Babylon (604-561 B.C.).²⁶ He forced the Hebrews to conclude a treaty with him. It was agreed in the treaty that the Hebrews would rule their country and would pay tribute to Nubucadnezzar and allow a representative of him at their capital, Jerusalem. The treaty did not last long, since a certain Hebrew one day killed the royal representative. In retaliation, Nebucadnezzar attacked Jerusalem, razed it to the ground, killed a large part of its population and carried away the rest into Babylonian captivity.²⁷ Jerusalem became a ruined and desolate city. One day Jerusalem became a populous and prosperous city. By this time Nebucadnezzar died and Babylon came under the control of the Persian king Cyrus.

Cyrus was kind to the Hebrews. He set them free from their Babylonian captivity, allowed them to return to Jerusalem and under his direct care Jerusalem speedily regained its lost prosperity. Under Cyrus and other rulers of his dynasty, Jerusalem, nay the whole of Palestine was a Persian protectorate. Persian Suzerainty over the Palestine ended when the Greek emperor Alexander conquered it in 332 B.C. After the fall of Greeks Palestine came under Roman rule in 63 B.C. As the Hebrews revolted against Roman rule and as they oppressed and killed Hazrat Isa (Jesus in the Bible), the Roman governor of Palestine in 40 A.D. plundered Jerusalem, killed many Hebrews and drove the rest out of the country. During this time the Hebrew Kingdom of Palestine came to an end and it became a province of the Roman Empire. Following the Jewish rebellion against the Romans, Titus destroyed Jerusalem in 70 A.D. From the 4th until the 7th century of Christian era, Palestine came under the Christian influence. Emperor Constantine I built the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.²⁸ The king of Persia invaded the country and captured Jerusalem in 614 A.D. In 628 Heraclius of Byzantine (Romans)

²⁶ Henry Lucas, *op.cit.*, p. 87.

²⁷ Abu al-Fida, *op.cit.*, p. 23.

²⁸ Henry Cattan LLM, *op.cit.*, p. 4.

recovered Palestine and subsequently restored the True Cross to Jerusalem. In 637 the Arab Muslims Conquered Palestine and their rule and domination sustained till 1558 A.D with a little break. Then it came under the Mamluks. In 1517 Ottoman Turks conquered Palestine and its remained four centuries under their control until 1917 A.D. When the Allied powers i.e. the British occupied it during the First World War.

Under the Ottomans, the Jews were organized and they appealed to handover Palestine to them. In continuation of this endeavour, in 1882 a Bilu group (a group of Russian Jews) in Constantinople issued a manifesto demanding a home in Palestine.²⁹ They proposed that they should beg it from the Sultan of Turkey, in whose empire Palestine laid. In 1897 Theodore Herzl found and advocated for an autonomous Jewish state at the Bastle congress. He recognized as the founder of political Zionism. At Bastle programme in Switzerland (1897) Jewish sentiment and awareness of nationalism was to be strengthened, and efforts were to be made to raise the necessary founds for achieving the Zionist movement that grew up of this congress. By the outbreak of First World War, Zionism had grown from Herzl's visionary idea to a strong, organized world-wide movement.³⁰ In 1902 Herzl met with Jews Multi - millionaire Lord Rosch Child. They decided that under the British flag Jews colony would be established in Palestine. In 1903 Zionists united in their six Congress and determined to create a Jewish state whose name would be Palestine. When the Turkish Empire was destroyed by Allied forces in the 1914-18 war new possibilities of getting there 'home' or state in Palestine opened up before the Zionists. In the years 1915-16 Husain-McMahon Correspondence encouraged the Arab nationalists to hope that at end of the First World War, they would consider a greater Arab kingdom and Palestine was to be internationalized. The expectation was disappointed for a result of the Sykes - Picot agreement. In October 1916 Zionists submitted a memorandum to the British government for getting a dwelling land in Palestine.

²⁹ Europa Publication Limited, The Middle East And North Africa 1976-77, Twenty Third edition, 1976, p. 418.

³⁰ Don Peretz, The Middle East Today (New York: Praeger, 1978 3rd Edition), p. 260.

Influential Zionists, notably Dr. Chaim Weizmann, saw their opportunity to press Britain for a commitment to provide a home for the Jews in Palestine and secured the help of Judge Louis Brandeis, a leading United States Zionist and principal adviser to President Woodrow Wilson, in bringing the U.S. into the war on the side of the Allies in April 1917. In November 1917 Arthur Balfour, British Secretary of State for foreign affairs, addressed a letter to Lord Rothschild, promising British support for the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jews people on the understanding that nothing shall be done which may be prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine.³¹ Jerusalem was captured by British forces under the command of Gen. Sir Edmund Allenby in December 1917 and the rest of the country was occupied by the British by October 1918. A British military administration was set up after the capture of Jerusalem and general international framework existed for Britain in article 22 of the covenant of the League of Nations signed in June 1919. This article recognized the provisional independence of the former Ottoman Arab provinces subject to the assistance of the mandatory power in whose selection the wishes of the communities themselves were to be consulted. In July 1919 a General Syrian Congress, held in Damascus and attended by Palestinian delegates passed resolution electing Amir Faisal, son of Husain, king of a united Syria (including Palestine) and rejecting the Balfour Declaration. King Faisal was, however, deposed by the French in July 1920.

The British involvement in Palestine with the publication of Balfour Declaration, the Jewish immigration thereafter with the avowed aim of establishing a state and Arab opposition led to the acceleration of bad relationship and emergence of the Palestine Problem, the controversial and complex one in the history of the World.

³¹ *Encyclopaedia of Britanica*, Vol. 17, p. 168.

Chapter 3

Emergence of the Arab States Neighbouring Palestine

At this stage it is cogent to throw light on the emergence of some neighbouring Arab states of Palestine. This may be attributed to the fact that these neighbouring Arab states of the area under study played a very vital role since the inception of the establishment of the state of Israel more specifically since the Arab revolt of 1936. But they failed to take concerted action over the question of Palestine and against Israel with the ultimate result of producing anything fruitful for the Palestinian Arabs during the period under review.

Egypt

Egypt occupies a unique position in the Arab World. It constitutes the north-eastern part of Africa and is linked to the Asian continent by the Sinai Peninsula. Consequently Egypt forms a natural bridge between the western and eastern sectors of the Arab World.¹ Geography has influenced the history of Egypt from the earliest times. Throughout history, Egypt has depended on the Nile flood and this remains true today, even though dams and irrigation works have removed much of the old in security.²

Egypt's relative isolation, with the majority of the population living in the Nile Valley and the Nile Delta, with desert on either side, has produced a high degree of cultural individuality. Pharaonic Egypt lasted from the end of the fourth millennium BC until conquest by the Assyrians in 671 BC. The building of the pyramids and other works in the third millennium BC indicate a powerful monarchy commanding great resources. After the rule of Rameses II (c-1300-1234 BC), Egypt passed into a decline but, after the Assyrian conquest in 671, native rule was soon restored until 525 BC, when Persia conquered Egypt.³

¹ A.I. Dawisha, *Egypt in the Arab World The Elements of Foreign Policy* (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1976), p.1.

² P.M. Holt, *Egypt and Fertile Crescent 1516-1922 A Political History* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1966), p.1 (hereafter P.M. Holt, *Egypt and Fertile Crescent 1516-1922*).

³ Europa Publications Limited, *The Middle East And North Africa 1976-77*, Twenty Third edition, 1976, p. 275 (hereafter EPL, *The Middle East And North Africa 1976-77*)

The Persian kings patronized the religion of their subjects and were officially regarded as pharaohs. Another change occurred in 332 BC when the Persian satrap surrendered to Alexander the Great, who was recognized as a pharaoh and founded the city of Alexandria.⁴ After Alexander's death Egypt fell to his general, Ptolemy, and his dynasty was Greek in origin and outlook.⁵ On the death of Cleopatra in 30 BC Egypt came under Roman rule and became a province of a great Mediterranean empire. Christianity was introduced, and the Coptic church of Egypt clung to its Monophysite beliefs in the face of Byzantine opposition.⁶

Till 671 BC Egypt was ruled under different independent dynasties and made tremendous developments in various fields.⁷ Except for a brief Sasanian (Persian) invasion in 616 BC, Egypt remained under Byzantine rule until, with the birth and advance of Islam in the seventh century AD, during the Caliphate of Hazrat Umar I, the Arab army under Amr ibn al-As invaded Egypt from Syria. The conquest was virtually completed by 641, but for some centuries Egypt remained an occupied rather than a Muslim country. The Copts, who disliked Byzantine rule, had not opposed the conquest. In course of time, however, Egypt became an Arabic speaking country with a Muslim majority, but there remained a Coptic Christian minority. It is to be noted that at the outset, Egypt was Arab only in the sense that it formed part of an empire headed by an Arab ruler, the Caliph. The political and military elite were Arabs. Garrisons of Arab tribe's men were established here and there in the conquered lands in camp-cities such as al-Fustat.⁸ For over two centuries Egypt was administered as part of the Abbasid caliphate of Baghdad, but the Tulunid and Ikshidid dynasties functioned in virtual independence of the caliph between 868 and 969. Ikshidid rule was ended in 969 by a Fatimid invasion from Tunisia. The Fatimids were Shi'a Muslims and Egypt was to remain under Shi'a (as opposed to orthodox Sunni) rule until 1171.

⁴ Safiuddin Joarder, *Adhunik Madyaprachya* (2nd Volume) (*The Middle East in Modern Times*) (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1987), p. 305 (hereafter S. Joarder, *Adhunik Madyaprachya* (2nd Volume)).

⁵ EPL, *The Middle East And North Africa 1976-77*, *op.cit.*, p. 275.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ S. Joarder, *Adhunik Madyaprachya* (2nd Volume), *op.cit.*, p. 305.

⁸ P.M. Holt, *Egypt and Fertile Crescent 1516-1922*, *op.cit.*, p. 10.

Under the early Fatimids, Egypt enjoyed a golden age. The country was a well administered absolute monarchy and it formed the central portion of an empire which, at its height, included, North Africa, Sicily and western Arabia. The city of Cairo was developed and the mosque of Al-Azhar founded. But, by the long reign of Al-Mustansir (1035-94) decay had set in, and when the Kurdish Salah al-Din known to Europe as Aaladin, rose to prominence as he opposed the Syrian Crusader states in the twelfth century, he was able to become sultan over Egypt and almost the whole of the former Crusader territory.⁹

When Saladin died in 1193, his Empire was divided amongst his heirs, one branch of which the Egyptian Ayubids reigned in Cairo. Louis IX of France led an attack on Egypt in 1249, but was stopped at the battle of Al-Mansura in 1250. Thereafter Egypt was ruled by Mamluk sultans until the Ottoman advance at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Under the Mamluks Egypt became a centre of Muslim civilization. The Caliphate was re-established in Cairo under the Mamluk rule. Egypt earned economic development at that time for its location on international trade route.¹⁰

By the beginning of the sixteenth century the Ottoman Turks had made dramatic advances. Constantinople was captured by them in 1453, and early in the sixteenth century the Turks were threatening Vienna. In their expansion southwards the Turks defeated the Mamluks at the battle of Marj Dabiq north of Aleppo, in 1516, and overthrew the last Mamluk sultan at a second battle, outside Cairo, in 1517, Egypt became a province of the Ottoman Empire, but the Turks usually interfered little with the Egyptian administration. From time to time Mamluk grandees were virtually sovereign in Egypt.¹¹

At the end of the eighteenth century Egypt became a pawn in the war between France and England. Napoleon wanted to disrupt British commerce and eventually overthrow British rule in India. He landed at Alexandria in 1798, but in 1801 the French were forced to capitulate by a British and Ottoman force but French interest in Egyptian affairs and Egyptian culture continued

⁹ EPL, *The Middle East And North Africa 1976-77*, *op.cit.*, p. 276.

¹⁰ S. Joarder, *Adhunik Madyaprachya* (2nd Volume), *op.cit.*, pp. 305-306.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 309-310 ; EPL, *The Middle East And North Africa 1976-77*, *op.cit.*, p. 277.

without any break. The French occupation of Egypt opened the door of the East for the West. During this time, French schools and libraries opened by Napoleon introduced contemporary western ideas and helped to sow the seeds of Egypt's intellectual reawakening. The country received its first printing press with Arabic type; the library of the Egyptian Institute (established between 1798-1801) introduced many Egyptians to the French writings on science. French became the second language of the Middle class.¹²

The expulsion of the French was followed by a struggle for power in which the victor was an Albanian officer in the Ottoman forces, Muhammad Ali. In 1807 he defeated a British force which had occupied Alexandria, and between 1820 and 1822 his army conquered most of northern Sudan. Being master of the country he concentrated to strengthen his own position by centralizing the regime in Cairo.¹³

In 1824 Muhammad Ali sent his son Ibrahim with an Egyptian force to help the Sultan to suppress the Greek struggle for independence, but European intervention in 1827 led to the destruction of the Turkish and Egyptian fleets at Navarino. On the rejection by the Sultan of Muhammad Ali's demand that he should be given Syria in recompense, Ibrahim invaded Syria in 1831. Ibrahim was eventually defeated and Muhammad Ali's dominion was restricted to Egypt and the Sudan, but his governorship was made hereditary. He died in 1849, having been predeceased by Ibrahim. Muhammad Ali introduced many features of Western intellectual life into Egypt, and a Western educated class began to emerge. Muhammad Ali was succeeded by his grandson, Abbas I (1849-54), under whom westernization was reduced, and he by Said (1854-63), Muhammad Ali's surviving son. Neither Abbas nor his successor in 1854, Said inherited the dynamism of the founder of modern Egypt, and gradually the government, economy and social life sank into a torpor and corruption.¹⁴

¹² Don Peretz, *The Middle East Today* (New York: Praeger, 1983, 4th edition), pp. 202.203.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 207.

In 1854 Said granted a concession to a French engineer, Ferdinand de Lesseps, to build the Suez Canal, but work did not begin until 1859 and the canal was opened in 1869. After the Suez Canal was opened, Egypt became a focal point of European diplomacy. The country was in constant danger of foreign intervention.¹⁵ By this time Said had been succeeded by Ibrahim's son Ismail. Ismail (1863-1879) extended his Sudanese dominions, built railways and constructed telegraph lines. Moreover, his personal expenses were high, and between 1863 and 1876 Egyptian indebtedness rose from 7m, to nearly 100m. In 1875 Ismail staved off a financial crisis by selling his Suez Canal shares to the British Government for some four million pounds. As the Ottoman Empire, Egypt was bound by the Capitulations treaties with European powers giving European communities in Ottoman territories a considerable degree of autonomy under the jurisdiction of their consuls, and under conditions of indebtedness and the necessity of loans from the European powers, financial control by outsiders increased.¹⁶

Ismail was succeeded by his son Muhammad Tawfik (1879-1892), who ostensibly governed through a responsible Egyptian ministry, but strict financial controller. Meanwhile a nationalist outlook was developing among those Egyptians who had been touched by Western influences, many of whom regarded the Khedive, Tawfik, as a puppet maintained by France and Britain. He continued in his office under strict Anglo-French control. In 1881 a group of army officers, led by Urabi Pasha, forced Tawfik to form a new ministry and to summon the Chamber of Notables, a consultative body originally set up by Ismail. France opposed any concessions to placate Egyptian opinion, and Britain concurred in this, Feelings in Egypt hardened, and in 1882 the Khedive had to appoint a nationalist ministry with Urabi as minister for war. France and Britain sent navalsqsdrons, but France subsequently withdrew support and a British expeditionary force landed at Ismailia and routed the Egyptian army at Tel el Kebir. Cairo was occupied and Tawfik's prerogatives were restored, to be subsequently exercised under British control.¹⁷

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 208.

¹⁶ S. Joarder, *Adhunik Madyaprachya* (2nd Volume), *op.cit.*, pp. 361-366.

¹⁷ S. Joarder, *Adhunik Madyaprachya* (2nd Volume), *op.cit.*, p. 377; EPL, *The Middle East and North Africa 1976-77*, *op.cit.*, p. 279.

Britain hoped to set Egyptian affairs in order and then withdraw, but Egypt's financial difficulties contributed towards Britain for prolonging its stay. From 1883 to 1907 the Egyptian Government was dominated by the British Agent and Consul-General, Sir Evelyn Baring, who in 1891 became Lord Cromer. Tawfik was succeeded by his son Abbas II in 1892. He resented Cromer's authority and a new nationalist movement developed under Mustapha Kamil, a young lawyer. A series of puppet governments preserved a façade of constitutionalism, but educated youth turned increasingly to opposition. British officials increased from about 100 in 1885 to over 1,000 in 1905, and were out of touch with the growing strength of nationalist feeling.

Cromer was succeeded in 1907 by Sir Eldon Gorst, who established better relation with the Khedive, and Gorst was in turn followed by Lord Kitchener in 1911. When Turkey entered the First World War in November 1914 on the side of Germany, Egypt was still nominally a province of the Ottoman Empire. As soon as the war broke out the British declared their protectorate over Egypt and a British High Commissioner was sent.¹⁸ Britain also assumed responsibility for the defence of the Suez Canal. In December Abbas II was deposed and the British Government offered the title of Sultan to Husain Kamil, the brother of Tawfik. When Husain died in 1917 he was succeeded by his brother Fuad. The nationalist movement flourished under wartime conditions, and in November 1918 the nationalist leader Saad Zaghlul presented the High Commissioner, Sir Reginald Wingate, with a demand for autonomy, which Britain refused. The nationalists became known as the Wafd (Delegation), but a negotiated settlement was not forthcoming and on 28 February 1922 Britain unilaterally abolished the protectorate and recognized Egypt as an independent sovereign state.¹⁹ Britain, however, reserved to itself the security of the Suez Canal and the defence of Egypt. In March 1922 Fuad took the title of King of Egypt.

¹⁸ S.N. Fisher, *The Middle East A History* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, First Published 1960, Reprinted, 1966, Second edition, 1971), p. 448.

¹⁹ S. Joarder, *Adhunik Madyaprachya* (2nd Volume), *op.cit.*, p. 451; EPL, *The Middle East and North Africa 1976-77*, *op.cit.*, p. 281.

The years between independence and the Second World War brought a triangular struggle between the King, the Wafd and the British Government. The Wafd wanted a revolution, but the King owed his throne to the British. Elections usually gave the Wafd a majority, but a Wafd ministry was unacceptable to King Fuad, who normally had the concurrence of the British Government. In 1935 Fuad was succeeded by his son Farouk, and in 1936 an Anglo-Egyptian treaty of 20 years duration was signed which terminated British occupation but empowered Britain to station forces in the Suez Canal Zone until the Egyptian army was in a position to ensure the security of the canal.²⁰

During the Second World War Egypt was a vital strategic factor as the British base in the Middle East. Egyptian support for the Allied cause was by no means total. The Wafd favoured co-operation with the British, and Britain forced Farouk's acquiescence in the formation of a Wafdist government under Nahas Pasha in 1942. Nahas became increasingly enthusiastic about Arab unity and was instrumental in setting up the Arab League. In 1944 his government fell.

Egypt along with Iraq, Syria and Jordan took military action against Israel following its emergence in May 1948. But the failure of the Arab states in the Arab-Jewish war of 1948 resulted in the decline of Egyptian King's early popularity. The Muslim Brotherhood, a puritanical religious body, had become a threat, and communism had gained new adherents. The discredited regime made a last bid for royal and popular support when Nahas, again in power, abrogated the 1936 Treaty. Terrorism and economic sanctions were then employed in an attempt to force the British forces to withdraw from the Canal Zone. With passage of time, *coup d'etat* took place in Egypt in 1952 and as a result of which the monarchy was replaced by republic in 1953.²¹

Syria

Before 1918 the term Syria was regarded as the geographical Syria which implied Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan. Syria lost its entity following the First World War when the Ottoman Empire was dismembered. From the

²⁰ S. Joarder, *Adhunik Madyaprachya* (2nd Volume), *op.cit.*, pp. 456-457.

²¹ S. Joarder, *Adhunik Madyaprachya* (2nd Volume), *op.cit.*, p. 478.

earliest times, Syria has experienced successive waves of Semitic immigration — the Canaanites and Phoenicians in the third millennium BC, the Hebrews and Aramaeans in the second, and, unceasingly, the nomad tribes infiltrating from the Arabian Peninsula. This process has enabled Syria to assimilate or reject, without losing its essentially Semitic character, the alien invaders who, time and again, in the course of a long history, have established their domination over the land.²² Before Rome assumed control of Syria in the first century BC, the Egyptians, the Assyrians and the Hittites, and, later, the Persians and the Macedonian Greeks had all left their mark in greater or lesser degree. Damascus is claimed to be the oldest capital city in the world, having been continuously inhabited since about 2000 BC, and Aleppo may be even older. Under Roman rule the infiltration and settlement of nomad elements continued, almost unnoticed by historians, save when along the desert trade routes a Semitic vassal state attained a brief importance as, for example, the kingdom of Palmyra in the Syrian desert, which the Emperor Aurelian destroyed in AD 272 or, later still, when the Byzantines ruled in Syria, the Arab state of Ghassan, prominent throughout the sixth century AD as a bulwark of the Byzantine Empire against the desert tribes in the service of Sasanid Persia.²³

When, after the death of the Prophet Muhammad in AD 632, the newly-created power of Islam began a career of conquest, the populations of Syria, Semitic in their language and culture and, as adherents of the Monophysite faith, ill-disposed towards the Greek-speaking Orthodox Byzantines, did little to oppose the Muslims, from whom they hoped to obtain a greater measure of freedom. The Muslims defeated the Byzantine forces at Ajnadain in July 634, seized Damascus in September 635, and, by their decisive victory on the River Yarmuk (August 636), virtually secured possession of all Syria. From 661 to 750 the Umayyad dynasty ruled in Syria, which, after the conquest, had been divided into four military districts or junds (Damascus, Hims, Urdun, i.e. Jordan, and Palestine). To these the Caliph Yazid I (680-83) added a fifth, Kinnasrin, for the defence of northern Syria, where in the late seventh century,

²² EPL, *The Middle East And North Africa 1976-77*, *op.cit.*, p. 654.

²³ *Ibid.*

the Mardaites, Christians from the Taurus, were making serious inroads under Byzantine leadership. Under Abd al-Malik (685-705), Arabic became the official language of the state, in whose administration, hitherto largely carried out by the old Byzantine bureaucracy, Syrians, Muslim as well as Christian, now had an increasing share. For Syria was now the heart of a great Empire, and the Arab army of Syria, well trained in the ceaseless frontier warfare with Byzantium, bore the main burden of imperial rule, taking a major part in the two great Arab assaults on Byzantium in 674-8 and in 717-18.²⁴

The new regime in Syria was pre-eminently military and fiscal in character representing the domination of military caste Arab warriors, who governed on the basic assumption that a large subject population, non-Muslim and non-Arab in character, would continue indefinitely to pay tribute. But this assumption was falsified by the gradual spread of Islam, a process which meant the progressive diminution of the amount of tribute paid to the state, and the consequent undermining of the fiscal system as a whole. In theory, conversion meant for the non-Arab convert (Mawla; in the plural. Mawali) full social and economic equality with the ruling caste, but in practice it was not enough to be a Muslim, one had to be an Arab as well. The discontent of the Mawali with their enforced inferiority expressed itself in an appeal to the universal character of Islam, an appeal which often took the form of religious heresies, and which, as it became more widespread, undermined the strength of the Arab regime.²⁵

To the ever present fiscal problems of the Arab state and the growing discontent of the Mawali was added a third and fatal weakness: the hostility between those Arab tribes which had arrived in Syria with or since the conquest, and those which had infiltrated there at an earlier date. The Umayyad house strove to maintain a neutral position over and above the tribal feuds; but from the moment when, under the pressure of events, the Umayyads were compelled to side with faction to oppose the other (Battle of Marj Rahit 684), their position was irretrievably compromised.²⁶

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 655.

When in AD 750 with the accession of the Abbasid dynasty the centre of the empire was transferred to Iraq, Syria, jealously watched because of its association with the former ruling house, became a mere province, where in the course of the next hundred years, several abortive revolts, inspired in part by the traditional loyalty to the Umayyads, failed to shake off Abbasid control. During the ninth century Syria was the object of dispute between Egypt and Baghdad. In 878 Ahmed ibn Tulun, Governor of Egypt, occupied it and, subsequently, every independent ruler of Egypt sought to maintain a hold, partial or complete, over Syria. Local dynasties, however, achieved from time to time a transitory importance, as did the Hamdanids (a Bedouin family from northern Iraq) who, under Saif ad-Daula, ruler of Aleppo from 946-967, attained a brief ascendancy, marked internally by financial and administrative ineptitude, and externally by military campaigns against the Byzantines which did much to provoke the great Byzantine re-conquest of the late 10th century. By the treaty of 997, northern Syria became Byzantine, while the rest of the country remained in the hands of the Fatimid dynasty which ruled in Egypt from 969. Fatimid control remained insecure and from about 1027 a new Arab house ruled at Aleppo—the Mirdasids, who were soon to disappear before the formidable power of the Seljuq Turks. The Seljuqs, having conquered Persia, rapidly overran Syria (Damascus fell to them in 1075) but failed to establish there a united state. As a result of dynastic quarrels, the Seljuq domination disintegrated into a number of emirates: Seljuq princes ruled at Aleppo and Damascus, a local dynasty held Tripoli and, in the south, Egypt controlled most of the littoral.²⁷

This political fragmentation greatly favoured the success of the First Crusade which, taking Antioch in 1098 and Jerusalem in 1099, proceeded to organize four feudal states at Edessa, Antioch, Tripoli and Jerusalem but did not succeed in conquering Aleppo, Homs, Hama, and Damascus. From the death of Baldwin II of Jerusalem in 1131, the essential weakness of the crusading states began to appear. Byzantium, the Christian state of Lesser Armenia, and the Latin principalities in Syria never united in a successful resistance to the Muslim counter-offensive which, initiated by the energetic

²⁷ *Ibid.*

Turkish general Zangi Atabeg of Mosul, developed rapidly in the third and fourth decades of the century. He also seized Aleppo in 1128, and the Latin state of Edessa in 1144. His son Nur ad-Din succeeded him in 1146. Nur ad-Din captured Damascus in 1154 and recreated in Syria a united Muslim power. On Nur ad-Din's death in 1174, the Kurd Saladin, already master of Egypt, assumed control of Damascus and, in 1183, seized Aleppo. His victory over the Crusaders at *Hittin* (July 1187) destroyed the kingdom of Jerusalem. Only the partial success of the Third Crusade (1189-92) and, after his death in 1193, the disintegration of Saladin's empire into a number of separate principalities, made it possible for the Crusaders to maintain an ever more precarious hold on the coastal area of Syria. The emergence in Egypt of the powerful Mamluk sultanate (1250) meant that the end was near. A series of military campaigns, led by the Sultan Baibars (1260-77) and his immediate successors, brought about the fall of Antioch (1268) and Tripoli (1289), and, with the fall of Acre in 1291, the disappearance of the crusading states in Syria.²⁸

Before the last crusading states had been reduced, the Mamluks had to encounter a determined assault by the Mongols until, in 1260; the Mongol army of invasion was crushed at the Battle of Ain-Jalut, near Nazareth. The Mongol Il-Khans of Persia made further efforts to conquer Syria in the late 13th century, negotiating for this purpose with the papacy, the remaining crusader states and Lesser Armenia. In 1280 the Mamluks defeated a Mongol army at Horns; but in 1299 were themselves beaten near the same town, a defeat which enabled the Mongols to ravage northern Syria and to take Damascus in 1300. Only in 1303, at the Battle of Marj as-Suffar, south of Damascus, was this last Mongol offensive finally repelled.²⁹

The period of Mamluk rule in Syria, which endured until 1517, was on the whole one of slow decline. Warfare, periodical famine, and not the least, the plague (there were four great outbreaks in the 14th century, and in the 15th century 14 more recorded attacks of some severity) produced a state of affairs which the financial rapacity and misrule of the Mamluk governor and the devastation of Aleppo and Damascus by Timur (1400-01) served only to aggravate.³⁰

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

The ill-defined protectorate which the Mamluks asserted over Cilicia and considerable areas of southern Anatolia occasioned, in the late fifteenth century, a growing tension with the power of the Ottoman Turks, which broke out into inconclusive warfare in the years 1485-91. When to this tension was added the possibility of an alliance between the Mamluks and the rising power of the Safavids in Persia, the Ottoman Sultan Selim I (1512-20) was compelled to seek a decisive solution to the problem. In August 1516 the battle of Marj Dabik, north of Aleppo, gave Syria to the Ottomans, who proceeded to ensure their continued hold on the land next by conquering Egypt (1517).³¹ Turkish rule, during the next three centuries although unjustly accused of complete responsibility for a decay and stagnation which appear to have been well advanced before 1517, brought only a temporary improvement in the unhappy condition of Syria, now divided into the three provinces of Damascus, Tripoli, and Aleppo. In parts of Syria the Turkish pashas in reality administered directly only the important towns and their immediate neighbourhood; elsewhere, the older elements — Bedouin emirs, Turcoman chiefs, etc. were left to act much as they pleased, provided the due tribute was paid. The pashas normally bought their appointment to high office and sought in their brief tenure of power to recover the money and bribes they had expended in securing it, knowing that they might, at any moment, be replaced by someone who could pay more for the post. Damascus alone had 133 pashas in 180 years. As the control of the Sultan at Constantinople became weaker, the pashas obtained greater freedom of action, until Ahmed Jassar. Pasha of Acre, virtually ruled Syria as an independent prince (1485-1804).³²

The nineteenth century saw important changes. The Ottoman Sultan Mahmud II (1808-39) had promised Syria to the Pasha of Egypt, Muhammad Ali, in return for the latter's services during the Greek War of Independence. When the Sultan declined to fulfil his promise, Egyptian troops overran Syria (1831-33). Ibrahim Pasha, son of Muhammad Ali, now gave to Syria, for the first time in centuries, a centralized government strong enough to hold

³¹ Safiuddin Joarder, *Adhunik Madyaprachya* (History of Modern Middle East, part one) (Dacca: Bangla Academy, First edition, 1978), p. 348 (hereafter S. Joarder *Adhunik Madyaprachya* (part one).

³² EPL, *The Middle East And North Africa 1976-77*, *op.cit.*, p. 655.

separatist tendencies in check and to impose a system of taxation which, if burdensome, was at least regular in its functioning. Ibrahim Pasha invited representations of European Powers to Damascus and devoted himself to the revival of commerce and industry.³³ Simultaneously, he increased taxes and in 1834 ordered a conscript levy on all the inhabitants of the country, a move which led to widespread uprisings and But Ibrahim's rule was not popular, for the land-owners resented his efforts to limit their social and political dominance, while the peasantry disliked the conscription, the forced labour, and the heavy taxation which he found indispensable for the maintenance of his regime. In 1840 a revolt broke out in Syria, and when the Great Powers intervened on behalf of the Sultan (at war with Egypt since 1839), Muhammad Ali was compelled to renounce his claim to rule there.³⁴

Western influence, working through trade, through the protection of religious minorities, and through the cultural and educational efforts of missions and schools, had received encouragement from Ibrahim Pasha. The French Jesuits, returning to Syria in 1831, opened schools, and in 1875 founded their University at Beirut. The American Presbyterian Mission (established at Beirut in 1820) introduced a printing press in 1834, and in 1866 founded the Syrian Protestant College, later renamed the American University of Beirut. Syria also received some benefit from the reform movement within the Ottoman Empire, which, begun by Mahmud II, and continued under his successors, took the form of a determined attempt to modernize the structure of the Empire. The semi independent pashas of old disappeared, the administration being now entrusted to salaried officials of the central government; some effort was made to create schools and colleges on Western lines, and much was done to deprive the landowning classes of their feudal privileges, although their social and economic predominance was left unchallenged. As a result of these improvements, there was, in the late 19th century, a revival of Arabic literature, which did much to prepare the way for the growth of Arab nationalism in the twentieth century.³⁵

³³ Raphael Patai, *The Kingdom of Jordan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958), p. 29.

³⁴ EPL, *The Middle East And North Africa 1976-77*, *op.cit.*, p. 656.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

By 1914 Arab nationalist sentiment had made some headway among the educated and professional classes, and especially among army officers. Nationalist societies like Al Fatat soon made contact with Arab nationalists outside Syria especially with the army officers of Iraq serving at that time in the Ottoman army.³⁶ The Husain-McMahon Correspondence (July 1915-January 1916) encouraged the Arab nationalists to hope that the end of the First World War would mean the creation of a greater Arab kingdom. This expectation was disappointed for as a result of the Sykes-Picot Agreement, negotiated in secret between England, France, and Russia in 1916, Syria was to become a French sphere of influence. At the end of the war and in accordance with this agreement, a provisional French administration was established in the coastal districts of Syria, while in the interior an Arab government came into being under Amir Faisal, son of the Sharif Husain of Mecca. In March 1920 the Syrian nationalists proclaimed an independent kingdom of Greater Syria (including the Lebanon and Palestine); but in April of the same year the San Remo Conference gave France a mandate for the whole of Syria, and in July, French troops occupied Damascus.³⁷

By 1925 the French, aware that the majority of the Muslim Population resented their rule, and that only amongst the Christian Maronites of the Lebanon could they hope to find support. Had carried into effect a policy based upon the religious divisions so strong in Syria. The area under mandate had been divided into four distinct units; a much enlarged Lebanon (including Beirut and Tripoli), a Syrian Republic, and the two districts of Latakia and Jebel Druse. Despite the fact that the French rule gave Syria a degree of law and order which might render possible the transition from a medieval to a more modern form of society, nationalist sentiment opposed the mandate on principle, and deplored the failure to introduce full representative institutions and the tendency to encourage separatism amongst the religious minorities. This discontent, especially strong in the Syrian Republic, became open revolt in 1925-26, during the course of which the French twice bombarded Damascus (October 1925 and May 1926).³⁸

³⁶ S. Joarder, *Adhunik Madyaprachya* (part one), *op.cit.*, pp. 380-391.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 427; EPL, *The Middle East And North Africa 1976-77*, *op.cit.*, p. 656; Patrick Seale, *The Struggle for Syria A Study of Post-War Arab Politics 1945-1958* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 7.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 442-450; *Ibid.*, p. 656.

The next 10 years were marked by a hesitant and often interrupted progress towards self government in Syria, and by French efforts to conclude a Franco–Syrian treaty. In April 1928 elections were held for a constituent assembly, and in August a draft constitution was completed; but the French High Commissioner refused to accept certain articles, especially Article 2, which, declaring the Syrian territories detached from the old Ottoman Empire to be an indivisible unity, constituted a denial of the separate existence of the Jebel Druse, Latakia, and the Lebanese Republic. After repeated attempts to reach a compromise, the High Commissioner dissolved the Assembly in May 1930 and, on his own authority, issued a new constitution for the State of Syria much the same as that formerly proposed by the Assembly, but with those modifications which were considered indispensable to the maintenance of French control. After new elections (January 1932) negotiations were begun for a Franco- Syrian treaty, to be modelled on that concluded between England and Iraq in 1930, but no compromise could be found between the French demands and those of the nationalists who, although in a minority, wielded a dominant influence in the Chamber and whose aim was to limit both in time and in place the French military occupation, and to include in Syria the separate areas of Jebel Druse and Latakia. In 1934 the High Commissioner suspended the Chamber indefinitely. Disorders occurred early in 1936 which induced the French to send a Syrian delegation to Paris, where the new Popular Front Government showed itself more sympathetic towards Syrian aspirations than former French governments had been. In September 1936 a Franco-Syrian treaty was signed which recognized the principle of Syrian Independence and stipulated that, after ratification, there should be a period of three years during which the apparatus of a fully independent state should be created. The districts of Jebel Druse and Latakia would be annexed to Syria, but would retain special administrations. Other subsidiary agreements reserved to France important military and economic rights in Syria. It seemed that Syria might now enter a period of rapid political development; but the unrest caused by the situation in Palestine, the crisis with Turkey, and the failure of France to ratify the 1936 treaty were responsible, within two years, for the breakdown of these hopes.³⁹

³⁹ EPL, *The Middle East And North Africa 1976-77*, *op.cit.*, p. 656.

In 1921 Turkey had consented to the inclusion of the Sanjak of Alexandretta in the French mandated territories on condition that it should be governed under a special regime. The Turks alarmed by the treaty of 1936, which envisaged the emergence of a unitary Syrian state including, to all appearance, Alexandretta, now pressed for a separate agreement concerning the status of the Sanjak. After long discussion the League of Nations decided in 1937 that the Sanjak should be fully autonomous, save for its foreign and financial policies which were to be under the control of the Syrian Government. A treaty between France and Turkey guaranteed the integrity of the Sanjak and also the Turco Syrian frontier. Throughout 1937 there were conflicts between Turks and Arabs in the Sanjak, and in Syria a widespread and growing resentment, for it was clear that sooner or later Turkey would ask for the cession of Alexandretta. The problem came to be regarded in Syria as a test of Franco-Syrian co-operation, and when in June 1939, under the pressure of international tension, Alexandretta was finally ceded to Turkey, the cession assumed in the eyes of Syrian nationalists the character of a betrayal by France. Meanwhile, in France itself, opposition to the treaty of 1936 had grown steadily; and in December 1938 the French Government, anxious not to weaken its military position in the Near East, declared that no ratification of the treaty was to be expected.⁴⁰

Unrest in Syria led to open riots in 1941, as a result of which the Vichy High Commissioner, General Dentz, promised the restoration of partial self government; while in June of the same year when in order to combat Axis intrigues the Allies invaded Syria, General Catroux, on behalf of the Free French Government, promised independence for Syria and the end of mandatory rule. Syrian independence was formally recognized in September 1941, but the reality of power was still withheld, with the effect that nationalist agitation, inflamed by French reluctance to restore constitutional rule, and by economic difficulties due to the war, became even more pronounced. When at last elections were held once more, a nationalist government was formed with Shukri al-Kuwatli as president of Syrian Republic (August 1943).⁴¹

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* p. 657.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

Gradually all important powers and public services were transferred from French to Syrian hands; but conflict again developed over the Troupes Speciales, the local Syrian and Lebanese levies which had existed throughout the mandatory period as an integral part of the French military forces in the Levant, and which transferred to the Syrian and Lebanese governments, would enable them to form their own armies, Strongly supported by the newly created Arab League, Syria refused the French demand for a Franco-Syrian Treaty as the condition for the final transfer of administrative and military services which had always been the main instruments of French policy. In May 1945 disturbances broke out which ended only with British armed intervention and the evacuation of French troops and administrative personnel. The Troupes Speciales were now handed over to the Syrian Government, and with the departure of British forces in April 1946 the full independence of Syria was at last achieved.⁴²

Lebanon

Lebanon, a land of the Levant, is known for its forests where fruits and timbers are available. The outsiders like the Egyptians, Assyrians, and Persians etc extended their covetous eyes towards this land for exploiting all the natural resources. The area was also mined for its iron and copper in the time of the Ptolemies and the Romans. Gradually Lebanon came to have a distinct history of its own, for the mountainous character of the region prevented any complete subjugation to outside authority. It is probable that the Arab conquest of Syria did not include the 'Mountain', to which fled all those who, for one reason or another, were opposed to the Arab domination. The Caliph Mu'awiya (661-80) made some effort to assert a greater control, but the resistance of the native Aramenian Christians was reinforced by the arrival of the Mardaites from the fastnesses of the Taurus and the Amanus. These Christian nomads, led by Byzantine officers, made determined advances into Lebanon, late in the seventh century, and seem to have united with the Maronite Christians who were later to become a Uniate Church of the Roman Communion and to have a predominant role in the history of Lebanon.

⁴² *Ibid.*; S. Joarder, *Adhunik Madyaprachya* (part one), *op.cit.*, pp. 477-478.

The Caliph Abd al-Malik (685-705) paid tribute to Byzantium in return for a withdrawal of most of the Mardaite forces; but it is clear that the 'Mountain' had begun to assume its historic function of providing a sure refuge for racial and religious minorities.⁴³

Lebanon maintained its Christian character until the ninth century when, amongst other elements, the Arab tribe of Tanukh established a principality in the region of al-Gharb, near Beirut, and acted as a counterpoise to the Maronites of northern Lebanon, and as a bulwark against Byzantine threats from the sea. Gradually, Islam and, more slowly still, the Arabic language penetrated the 'Mountain' where, however, Syriac lingered on in the Maronite districts until the seventeenth century (it is still spoken in three villages of the Anti-Lebanon). In the ninth and tenth centuries Muslim sects began to take root in the 'Mountain' as, for example, the Shi'i, known in Lebanon under the name of Mitwali, and, in the 11th century, the Druze faith, which won a firm hold in southern Lebanon.⁴⁴

The Crusaders established in this area the County of Tripolis and the lordships of Gibelet and Batton, which enjoyed considerable support from the Christian population of northern Lebanon and were protected by a network of fortresses, the most famous of which is Hisn al-Akrad (Crac des Chevaliers). In the Mamluk period the rulers of Lebanon continued to practice the art of political manoeuvring, thus maintaining for themselves a considerable degree of autonomy. The Tanukhid amirs, after a long period in which they had played off the Crusaders against the Islamic amirates, had eventually taken the Mamluk side. In northern Lebanon the Maronites, under their bishop, maintained contact with the Italian republics and also with the Roman Curia. Less fortunate were the Druzes and the Mitwali who, in the last years of the thirteenth century, took advantage of the Mamluk began with the Mongol threat from Persia and began a protracted revolt which led to widespread devastation in central Lebanon.⁴⁵

⁴³ EPL, *The Middle East And North Africa 1976-77*, *op.cit.*, p. 488.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

In the sixteenth century the Turcoman family of Assaf and, after them, the Banu Saifa rose to prominence in the area from Beirut to the north of Tripoli; while in the south the Druze house of Ma'an supplanted the Tanukhid amirs. After the conquest of 1516-17, the Ottoman Sultan Selim I had confirmed the amirs of Lebanon in their privileges and had imposed only a small tribute; yet not infrequently there was open conflict with the Ottomans, as in 1584-85 when, after an attack on a convoy bearing the tribute from Egypt to Constantinople, the Sultan Murad III sent a punitive expedition to ravage the lands of the Banu Saifa and of the Druses.⁴⁶

The power of the House of Ma'an now reached its zenith in the person of Fakhr ad-Din II (1586-1635), who by every possible means bribery, intrigue, foreign alliance, and open force set out to establish independent power over the whole of Lebanon and parts of Palestine to the south. To this end he entered into close relations with the Grand Duke of Tuscany, negotiating in 1608 a commercial agreement which contained a secret military clause directed against the Sultan. In 1613 a naval and military expedition sent from the Porte compelled Fakhr ad-Din to seek refuge with his Tuscan ally; but, returning in 1618, he rapidly restored his power and within a few years was virtual ruler from Aleppo to the borders of Egypt. The Sultan, heavily engaged in repressing revolt in Anatolia, and in waging a long struggle with Persia, could do no more than recognize the *fait accompli*. Fakhr ad-Din now embarked on an ambitious programme of development for Lebanon. He sought to equip a standing army with arms imported from Tuscany. Italian engineers and agricultural experts were employed to promote a better cultivation of the land and to increase the production of silk and olives. The Christian peasantry was encouraged to move from northern to southern Lebanon. Beirut and Sidon flourished as a result of the favour he showed to commerce, and religious missions from Europe Capuchins, Jesuits, Carmelites - were allowed to settle throughout Syria, a development of great importance for France which strove to assert a 'protectorate' over all the Catholic and other Christian elements in the Ottoman Empire. However, the ambitions of Fakhr ad-Din were doomed to failure when by 1632 the Sultan

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 489.

Murad IV assumed effective control at Constantinople. The Pasha of Damascus, supported by a naval squadron, began a campaign to end the independent power of Lebanon, and in 1635 Fakhr ad-Din was executed at Constantinople.⁴⁷

In 1697 the Ma'an family became extinct was succeeded by the House of Shihab, which maintained its predominance until 1840. In the course of the eighteenth century, the Shihab amirs gradually consolidated their position against the other factions of the 'Mountain' and for a while recovered control of Beirut. While normally they took care to remain on good terms with the Turkish pashas of Tripoli, Sidon and Damascus, the pashas, for their part, strove to exercise an indirect control by fomenting the family rivalries and religious differences which always marked the course of Lebanese politics. With the advent of Bashir II (1788-1840) the House of Shihab attained the height of its influence. Not until the death of Ahmed Jazzar, Pasha of Acre (1804), was he free to develop his power, which he maintained by the traditional methods of playing off one pasha against the other, and by bribing the officials of the Porte whenever it seemed expedient. In 1810 he helped the Ottomans to repel an invasion by the Wahhabi power of Arabia; but in 1831 he sided openly with Muhammad Ali of Egypt, when that ruler invaded Syria. Holding Lebanon as the vassal of Egypt, he was compelled, however, to apply to the 'Mountain' the unpopular policy imposed by Ibrahim Pasha, the son of Muhammad Ali, with the result that a revolt broke out, which, after the Egyptian withdrawal of 1840, led to his exile. The age of the Lebanese amirs was now at an end, for the Ottomans assumed control of the 'Mountain', appointing two Qaim Makam to rule there, one Druze and the other Maronite, under the supervision of the pashas of Sidon and Beirut.⁴⁸

The period of direct Ottoman rule saw the rapid growth, between the Druzes and the Maronites, of mistrust already visible during the time of the Egyptian dominance, and now fostered by the Ottomans as the only means of maintaining their influence over Lebanon. As a result social and economic

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

discontent, due to the slow disintegration of the old feudal system which had existed in Lebanon since the middle Ages, the Maronite peasantry revolted in 1858 and destroyed the feudal privileges of the Maronite aristocracy, thus clearing the way for the creation of a system of independent small holdings. The Druze aristocracy, fearing the consequences of a similar discontent among their own Maronite peasantry, made a series of attacks on the Maronites of northern Lebanon, who, owing to their own dissensions, could offer no effective resistance. The dubious attitude of the Turkish pashas, in the face of these massacres of 1860, led to French intervention and in 1864 to the promulgation of an organic statute for Lebanon, which was now to become an autonomous province under a non-Lebanese Ottoman Christian governor, appointed by the Sultan and approved by the Great Powers. He was to be aided by an elected administrative council and a locally recruited police force. The statute also abolished legal feudalism in the area, thus consolidating the position won by the Maronite peasantry in 1858. The period from 1864 to 1914 was one of increasing prosperity, especially among the Christian elements, who also played an important role in the revival of Arab literature and Arab national feeling during the last years of the nineteenth century.⁴⁹

The privileged position of Lebanon ended when the Turks entered the war of 1914-18; and by 1918 the coastal areas of Lebanon were occupied by British and French forces. In September 1920 the French created the state of Greater Lebanon which included not only the former autonomous province but also Tripoli, Sidon, Tyre and Beirut, some of which had in earlier times been under the control of the amirs of Lebanon. The period from 1920-36 was for Lebanon one of peaceful progress. A constitution was devised in 1926,⁵⁰ which proved unworkable and was suspended in 1932, from which time the president of the republic carried on the administration. He was, by convention, a Christian, while the prime minister was a Muslim, and both worked towards the achievement of a careful balance between the various religious communities of the new state. Lebanon was not unaffected by the growth of the nationalist movement in Syria, some sections of which demanded the

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ S. Joarder, *Adhunik Madyaprachya* (part one), *op.cit.*, p. 548.

reduction of Lebanon to its pre-war limits and even the abolition of its existence as a separate state. These demands found some support amongst the Sunni Muslims of the areas added to Lebanon proper in 1920, with the result that the Syrian revolt of 1925-26 spread to parts of southern Lebanon. The Maronite Christians, on the whole, supported the idea of a separate Lebanon, but were not united in their attitude towards France on the one hand, and the Arab states on the other. The Franco-Lebanese Treaty of 1936 differed little from that which France negotiated at the same time with Syria, the chief difference being that the military convention gave France wider military powers in Lebanon than in Syria. A reformed constitution was promulgated in 1937; but the French refusal to ratify the treaty in 1938, and the advent of war prolonged a situation which, if outwardly calm, concealed a considerable discontent beneath the surface.

With the passage of time in November 1941 the Free French Commander, General Catroux, formally proclaimed Lebanon a sovereign independent state. In September 1943 a new Parliament which had a strong nationalist majority soon came into conflict with the French authorities over the transfer of the administrative services. When, in November 1943, the Lebanese Government insisted on passing legislation which removed from the Constitution all provisions considered to be inconsistent with the independence of Lebanon the French delegate-general arrested the president and suspended the Constitution. The other Arab states, together with Great Britain and the USA supported the Lebanese demands and in 1944 France began to transfer to Lebanese control all important public services, save for the Troupes Speciales, i.e. local levies under French command, whose transfer the French authorities at first made conditional on the signing of a Franco-Lebanese Treaty. But in 1945 the Troupes Speciales were handed over to Lebanon without such conditions, and an agreement between France and the Lebanese Government in 1946 provided for the withdrawal of French troops. As a result of this development Lebanon emerged as an independent state.⁵¹

⁵¹ EPL, *The Middle East And North Africa 1976-77, op.cit.*, p. 490.

Jordan

There was no political entity of Jordan before 1921. It was a part of geographical Syria. Jordan, as an independent State, is a twentieth century development. Before then it was seldom more than a rugged and backward appendage to more powerful kingdoms and empires, and indeed never had any separate existence. In Biblical times the area was covered roughly by Gilead, Ammon, Moab and Edom, and the western portions formed for a time part of the kingdom of Israel. During the sixth century BC the Arabian tribe of the Nabateans established their capital at Petra in the south and continued to preserve their independence when, during the fourth and third centuries, the northern half was incorporated into the Seleucid province of Syria. It was under Seleucid rule that cities like Philadelphia (the Biblical Rabbath Ammon and the modern Amman) and Gerasa (now Jerasha) rose to prominence. During the 1st century BC the Nabateans extended their rule over the greater part of present day Jordan and Syria, they then began to recede before the advance of Rome, and in AD 105-6 Petra was incorporated into the Roman Empire. The lands east of the Jordan shared in a brief blaze of glory under the Palmyrene sovereigns Odenathus (Udaynath) and Zenobia (al-Zabba) in the middle of the third century AD, and during the fifth and sixth centuries formed part of the dominions of the Christian Ghassanid dynasty, vassals of the Byzantine Empire. Finally, after 50 years of anarchy in which Byzantine, Persian and local rulers intervened. Trans Jordan was conquered by the Arabs and absorbed into the Islamic Empire.⁵²

For centuries nothing more is heard of the country, it formed normally a part of Syria, and as such was generally governed from Egypt, From the beginning of the sixteenth century it was included in the Ottoman vilayet of Damascus, and remained in a condition of stagnation until the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. European travelers and explorers of the nineteenth century rediscovered the beauties of Petra and Gerasa, but otherwise the desert tribes were left undisturbed. Even the course of the war in its early stages gave little hint of the upheaval that was to take place in Jordan's fortunes. The area

⁵² *Ibid.* p. 446.

was included in the zone of influence allocated to Britain under the Sykes-Picot Agreement of May 1916 and Zionists held that it also came within the area designated Balfour Declaration of November 1917. Apart from these somewhat remote political events the tide of war did not reach Jordanian territory until the capture of Aqaba by the Arab armies under Faisal, the third son of King Husain of the Hijaz, in July 1917. A year later, in September 1918, they shared in the final push north by capturing Amman and Deraa.⁵³

The end of the war thus found a large area, which included almost the whole of present day Jordan, in Arab hands under the leadership of Faisal. To begin with, the territory to the east of the River Jordan was not looked on as a separate unit. Faisal, with the assistance of British officers and Iraqi nationalists, set up an autonomous government in Damascus, a step encouraged by the Anglo-French Declaration of 1 November 1918, favouring the establishment of indigenous governments in Syria and Iraq. Arab demands, however, as expressed by Faisal at the Paris Peace Conference in January 1919, went a good deal further in claiming independence throughout the Arab world. This brought them sharply up against both French and Zionist claims in the Near East, and when in March 1920 the General Syrian Congress in Damascus declared the independence of Syria and Iraq, with Faisal and Abdullah, Husain's second son, as kings, the decisions were denounced by France and Britain. The following month the San Remo Conference awarded the Palestine Mandate to Britain, and thus separated it effectively from Syria proper, which fell within the French share. Faisal was forced out of Damascus by the French in July and left the country.⁵⁴

The position of Trans Jordan was not altogether clear under the new dispensation. After the withdrawal of Faisal the British High Commissioner informed a meeting of notables at Es Salt that the British Government favoured self-government for the territory with British advisers. In December 1920 the provisional frontiers of the Mandates were extended eastwards by Anglo-French agreement so as to include Trans Jordan within the Palestine

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

Mandate, and therefore presumably within the provisions regarding the establishment of a Jewish national home. Yet another twist of policy came as the result of a conference in Cairo in March 1921 attended by Winston Churchill, the new British Colonial Secretary, Abdullah, T. E. Lawrence and Sir Herbert Samuel, High Commissioner for Palestine. At this meeting it was recommended that Faisal should be proclaimed King of Iraq, while Abdullah was persuaded to stand down in his favour by the promise of an Arab administration in Trans Jordan. He had in fact been in effective control in Amman since his arrival the previous winter to organize a rising against the French in Syria. This project he now abandoned, and in April 1921 was officially recognized as *de facto* ruler of Trans Jordan. The final draft of the Palestine Mandate confirmed by the Council of the League of Nations in July 1922 contained a clause giving the Mandatory Power considerable latitude in administration of the territory east of the Jordan. On the basis of this clause a memorandum was approved in the following September expressly excluding Trans Jordan from the clauses relating to the establishment of the Jewish national home, and although many Zionists continued to press for the reversal of this policy, the country thenceforth remained in practice separate from Palestine proper.⁵⁵

Like much of the post-war boundary delineation, the borders of the new state were somewhat arbitrary. Though they lay mainly in desert areas, they frequently cut across tribal areas and grazing grounds with small respect for tradition. Of the three or four hundred thousand inhabitants only about a fifth were town dwellers, and these confined to for small cities ranging in population from 30,000 to 10,000, Nevertheless Trans Jordan's early years were destined to be comparatively peaceful. On 15 May 1923, Britain formally recognized Trans Jordan as an independent constitutional state under the rule of the Amir Abdullah with British tutelage, and with the aid of a British subsidy it was possible to make some slow progress towards development and modernization. A small but efficient armed force, the Arab Legion, was built up under the guidance of Peake Pasha and later Glubb Pasha; this force

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

distinguished itself particularly during the Iraqi rebellion of May 1941. It also played a significant role in the fighting with Israel during 1948. Other British advisers assisted in the development of health services and schools.⁵⁶

The Amir Abdullah very nearly became involved in the fall of his father, King Husain, in 1924. It was in Amman on 5 March 1924, that the latter was proclaimed Caliph, and during the subsequent fighting with Ibn Saud's Wahhabi troops penetrated into Trans Jordanian territory. They subsequently withdrew to the south, and in June 1925, after the abdication of Husain's eldest son Ali, Abdullah formally incorporated Ma'an and Aqaba within his dominions. The move was not disputed by the new ruler of the Hijaz and Najd, and there after the southern frontier of Trans Jordan remained unaltered.⁵⁷

In February 1928 a treaty was signed with Great Britain granting a still larger measure of independence, though reserving for the advice of a British Resident such matters as financial policy and foreign relations. The same treaty provided for a constitution, and this was duly promulgated in April 1928, the first Legislative Council meeting a year later. In January 1934 a supplementary agreement was added permitting Trans Jordan to appoint consular representatives in Arab countries, and in May, 1939 Britain agreed to the conversion of the Legislative Council into a regular Cabinet with ministers in charge of specified departments. The outbreak of war delayed further advances towards independence, but this was finally achieved in name at least by the Treaty of London of 22 March 1946. On 25 May 1946 Abdullah was proclaimed king and a new constitution replaced the now obsolete one of 1928.⁵⁸

Trans Jordan was not slow in taking her place in the community of nations. In 1947 King Abdullah signed treaties with Turkey and Iraq and applied for membership of the United Nations; this last, however, was thwarted by the Russian veto and by lack of American recognition of Trans Jordan's status as an independent nation. In March 1948 Britain agreed to the

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* p. 447.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

signing of a new treaty in which virtually the only restrictive clauses related to military and defence matters. Britain was to have certain peace-time military privileges, including the maintenance of airfields and communications, transit facilities and coordination of training methods. She was also to provide economic and social aid.⁵⁹

Trans Jordan had however, not waited for independence before making her weight felt in Arab affairs in the Middle East. She had not been very active before the war, and in fact her first appearance on the international scene was in May 1939 when Trans Jordanian delegates were invited to the Round Table Conference on Palestine in London. Trans Jordan took part in the preliminary discussions during 1943 and 1944 that finally led to the formation of the Arab League in March 1946, and was one of the original members of that League. During the immediately following years it seemed possible that political and dynastic differences would be forgotten in this common effort for unity. Under the stresses and strains of 1948 however, the old contradictions began to reappear. Abdullah had long favoured the project of a Greater Syria; that is the union of Trans Jordan, Syria and Palestine, as a step towards the final unification of the Fertile Crescent by the inclusion of Iraq. This was favoured on dynastic grounds by various parties in Iraq, and also by some elements in Syria and Palestine. On the other hand it met with violent opposition from many Syrian nationalists, from the rulers of Egypt and Saudi Arabia- neither of whom was disposed of favour any strengthening of the Hashemite house and of course from the Zionists and the French. It is in the light of these conflicts of interest that developments subsequent to the establishment of the State of Israel must be seen. Subsequently, the incorporation of the West Bank with the Trans Jordan, the name of the country was changed to the Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

Iraq

Iraq, the land of civilization, experienced various dynastic rules before the rise of Islam. The birth and growth of Islam led the Arabs on the path of conquest outside Arabia. The Arab Muslims tried to occupy it when it was under the Persians.

In 637, at the battle of Jalula, the Arabs virtually ended Sasanid power in Iraq. There immediately followed a period of struggle between Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet, and Muawiya, who had been governor of Syria. Ali fell in battle, however, in 661, making way for the Ummayyad dynasty, under Syrian hegemony, 750. A party arose known as the Shi'atu Ali (ie. the party of Ali) and most new converts gave their allegiance to the Shi'a, partly as an expression of their social and political grievance against the established order. In 750 Ummayed rule was replaced by that of the Abbasid dynasty, with Iraq becoming the dominant and most prosperous part of the empire. The second Abbasid, al-Mansur (754-775), quickly abandoned the Shiite extremists who brought the Abbasids to power. Abbasid power waned, and Baghdad fell under the rule of the Shi'ite Buwaihids from the middle of the tenth to the middle of the eleventh century, when effective power passed to the Seljuq Turks, although the Abbasid Caliph was, in name, the head of state.⁶¹

With the passage of time, in 1253 Hulagu, a grandson of Chinghiz Jenghiz Khan, moved westward in force, captured Baghdad in 1258 and thus made an end of the Abbasid Caliphate. Now subordinate to the Mongol Khan of Persia, Iraq became a mere frontier province. After the death of the Mongol Khan Abu Sa'id in 1335, Iraq passed to the Jala'irids who ruled until the early years of the fifteenth century. Iraq then passed successively under the power of two rival Turcoman confederations (the Black Sheep and the White Sheep) until, in the years 1499-1508, the White Sheep regime was destroyed by the Safavid Ismail, who made himself Shah of Persia. The Sunni Ottoman Turks saw a great threat in the Shiite Ismail, and the Sultan Suleyman, in the course of his campaign against Persia, conquered Baghdad in 1534-35.⁶²

⁶¹ *Ibid.* p. 367.

⁶² *Ibid.* p. 368; S. Joarder, *Adhunik Madyaprachya* (part one), *op.cit.*, p. 654.

Although Persian control was restored for a brief period between 1623 and 1638, Iraq was to remain at last nominally, under Turkish control until the First World War. A series of Mamluk pashas in the eighteenth century engaged in wars with Persia and towards the end of the century had to deal with Kurdish insurrection in the north and raids by Wahhabi tribesmen from the south. In the early nineteenth century the Ottoman Sultan decided to regain direct possession of Iraq and end the Mamluk system. Sultan Mahmud II sent Ali Ridha Pasha to perform this task in 1831. A severe outbreak of plague hampered the Mamluks, Da'ud Pasha was deposed and the Mamluk regiments were exterminated.⁶³

Although some of the European nations had long been in contact with the Iraq through their commercial interests in the Persian Gulf, Western influences were slow to penetrate into the province. By 1800 there was a British Resident at Basra and two years later a British Consulate at Baghdad.⁶⁴ France also maintained agents in these cities. French and Italian religious orders had settlements in the land" It was not, however, until after 1831 that signs of more rapid European penetration became visible, such as steam-boats on the rivers of Iraq in 1836, telegraph lines from 1861 and a number of proposals for railways, none of which was to materialize for a long time to come. The Ottoman-government did much in the period between 1831 and 1850 to impose direct control over Kurdistan and the mountainous areas close to the Persian border, but the introduction of reforms was not, in fact, begun until in 1869 Midhat Pasha arrived at Baghdad. Much of his work, performed in the brief space of-three years, proved to be superficial and ill-considered, yet he was able to set Iraq on a course from which there could be no retreat in the future. A newspaper, military factories, a hospital, an alms-house, schools, a tramway, conscription for the army, municipal and administrative councils, comparative security on the main routes and a reasoned policy of settling tribesmen on the land-these achievements, however imperfect, bear solid witness to the vigour of his rule. After his departure in 1872, reform and European influence continued to advance,

⁶³ EPL, *The Middle East And North Africa 1976-77*, *op.cit.*, p. 369.

⁶⁴ S. Joarder, *Adhunik Madyaprachya* (part one), *op.cit.*, p. 656.

although slowly. Postal services were much developed, a railway from Baghdad to Samarra was completed in 1914 and the important Hindiya Barrage on the Euphrates was rebuilt between 1910 and 1913. The measures of reform and improvement introduced between 1831 and 1914 must indeed be judged as belated and inadequate — the Iraq of 1900 differed little from that of 1500 yet a process of fundamental change had begun, which no regime, however inept, could reverse.⁶⁵

In November 1914 Britain and the Ottoman Empire were at war. British troops occupied the Shatt al-Arab region and, under the pressure of war needs, transformed Basra into an efficient and well-equipped port. A premature advance on Baghdad in 1915 ended in the retreat of the British forces to Kut, their prolonged defence of that town and, when all attempts to relieve it had failed, the capitulation to the Ottomans in April 1916. A new offensive launched from Basra in the autumn of that year brought about the capture of Baghdad in March 1917. Kirkuk was taken in 1918, but before the Allies could seize Mosul, the Ottoman government sought and obtained an armistice in October.⁶⁶ For two years, until the winter of 1920, the Commander in Chief of British Forces, acting through a civil commissioner, continued to be responsible for the administration of Iraq from Basra to Mosul, all the apparatus of and modern system of rule being created at Baghdad e.g., departments of Land, Posts and Telegraphs, Agriculture, Irrigation, Police, Customs, Finance, etc. The new regime was Christian, foreign and strange, resented by reason of its very efficiency, feared and distrusted no less by those whose loyalties were Muslim and Ottoman than by important elements who desired self-determination for Iraq.⁶⁷

The last phase of Ottoman domination in Iraq, especially during the year after the Young Turk Revolution in 1908, had witnessed a marked growth of Arab nationalist sentiment. Local circles in Iraq now made contact with the Ottoman Decentralization Party at Cairo, founded in 1912, and with the Young

⁶⁵ EPL, *The Middle East and North Africa 1976-77*, *op.cit.*, p. 369.

⁶⁶ S. Joarder, *Adhunik Madyaprachya* (part one), *op.cit.*, pp. 658-659.

⁶⁷ EPL, *The Middle East and North Africa 1976-77*, *op.cit.*, p. 369.

Arab Society, which moved from Paris to Beirut in 1913. Basra, in particular, became a centre of Arab aspirations and took the lead in demanding from Istanbul a measure of autonomy for Iraq. A secret organization, al-Ahd (the Covenant) included a number of Iraqi others serving in the Ottoman armies. The prospect of independence that the Allies held out to the Arabs in the course of the war strengthened and extended the nationalist movement. In April 1920 Britain received from the conference at San Remo a mandate for Iraq. This news was soon followed by a serious insurrection amongst the tribesmen of the south. The revolt, caused partly by instinctive dislike of foreign rule but also vigorous nationalist propaganda, was not wholly suppressed until early in the next year. In October 1920 military rule was formally terminated in Iraq. An Arab Council of State, advised by British officials and responsible for the administration, now came into being and in March 1921 the Amir Faisal Ibn Husain agreed to rule as King at Baghdad. His ceremonial accession took place on 23rd August 1921.⁶⁸

The Najdi (Saudi Arabian) frontier with Iraq was defined in the Treaty of Mohammara in May 1922. Saudi concern over loss of traditional grazing rights resulted in further talks between Ibn Saud and the British Civil Commissioner in Iraq, and a Neutral Zone of 7,000 sq km was established adjacent to the western tip of the Kuwait frontier. No military or permanent buildings were to be erected in the zone and the nomads of both countries were to have unimpeded access to its pastures and wells. A further agreement concerning the administration of this zone was signed between Iraq and Saudi Arabia in May 1938.⁶⁹

Despite the opposition of the more extreme nationalists, an Anglo-Iraqi Treaty was signed on 10th October 1922. It granted Iraq limited control of foreign affairs and a larger measure of domestic autonomy.⁷⁰ It embodied the provisions of the mandate, safeguarded the judicial rights of foreigners and guaranteed the special interests of Britain in Iraq. An Electoral Law prepared

⁶⁸ *Ibid*; S. Joarder, *Adhunik Madyaprachya* (part one), *op.cit.*, pp. 667-668 ; Patrick Seale, *op.cit.*, p. 7.

⁶⁹ EPL, *The Middle East and North Africa 1976-77*, *op.cit.*, p. 370.

⁷⁰ Don Peretz, *The Middle East Today*, *op.cit.*, p. 406.

the way for the choice of a constituent assembly, which met in March 1924 and, in the face of strong opposition by the nationalists, ratified the treaty with Britain. It accepted too, an Organic Law declaring Iraq to be a sovereign state with a constitutional hereditary monarchy and a representative system of government. In 1925 the League of Nations recommended that the vilayet of Mosul, to which the Turks had laid claim, be incorporated into the new kingdom a decision finally implemented in the treaty of July, 1926 between the interested parties, Britain, Turkey and Iraq.⁷¹

By this year a fully constituted parliament was in session at Baghdad and all the ministries, as well as most of the larger departments of the administration, were the effective control. In 1930 a new treaty was signed with Britain, which established between the two countries a close alliance for a period of 25 years and granted Britain the use of air bases at Shu'ayba and Habbaniya. On 3rd October 1932 Iraq entered the League of Nations as an independent power, the mandate being now terminated.

The difficulties which confronted the Kingdom in the period after 1932 required much time and effort for their solution: e.g., the animosities between the Sunni Muslims and the powerful Shiite tribes on the Euphrates, which tended to divide and embitter political life; the problem of relations with the Kurds, some of whom wanted a state of their own, and with other minorities like the Assyrians; the complicated task of reform in land tenure and of improvement in agriculture, irrigation, flood control, public services and communications. As yet, the government itself consisted of little more than a facade of democratic forms concealing a world of faction and intrigue. The realities of the political scene were a xenophobic press often ill-informed and irresponsible; 'parties' better described as cliques gathered around prominent personalities; a small ruling class of tribal sheikhs: landowners; and the intelligentsia — lawyers, students, journalists, doctors, ex-officers — frequently torn by sharp rivalries. It is not surprising, therefore, that the first years of full independence showed a rather halting progress towards efficient rule. The dangerous nature of the tensions inside Iraq was revealed in the

⁷¹ EPL, *The Middle East and North Africa 1976-77*, *op.cit.*, p. 370.

Assyrian massacre of 1933 carried out by troops of the Iraqi army. Political intrigue from Baghdad had much to do with the outbreak of tribal revolt along the Euphrates in 1935/36. The army crushed the insurrection without much trouble and then, under the leadership of General Bakr Sidqi and in alliance with disappointed politicians and reformist elements, brought about a coup *d'état* in October 1936. The new regime failed to fulfil its assurances of reform its policies alienated the tribal chieftains and gave rise to serious tensions even within the armed forces, tensions which led to the assassination of Bakr Sidqi in August 1937.⁷²

Of vast importance for Iraq was the rapid development of the oil industry during these years. Concessions were granted in 1925, 1932 and 1938 to the Iraq, Mosul and Basra Petroleum Companies. Oil had been discovered in the Kirkuk area in 1927 and by the end of 1934 the Iraq Petroleum Company was exporting crude oil through two 12-inch pipelines, one leading to Tripoli and the other to Haifa. Exploitation of the Mosul and Basra fields did not begin on a commercial scale until after the Second World War.

In 1937 Iraq joined Turkey, Persia and Afghanistan in the Sa'dabad Pact, which arranged for consultation in all disputes that might affect the common interests of the four states. A treaty signed with Persia in July 1937 and ratified in the following year provided for the specific acceptance of the boundary between the two countries as it had been defined in 1914. Relations with Britain deteriorated in the period after 1937, mainly because of the growth of anti-Zionist feeling and of resentment at British policy in Palestine. German influence increased very much at this time in Iraq, especially among those political and military circles associated with the army group later to be known as the Golden Square. Iraq severed her diplomatic connections with Germany at the beginning of the Second World War, but in 1941 the army commanders carried out a new *coup d'état*, establishing, under the nominal leadership of Rashid `Ali al-Gaylani, a regime which announced its non-belligerent intentions. A disagreement over the passage of British troops through Iraq left no doubt of the pro-German sympathies of the Gaylani

⁷² *Ibid.*

government and led to hostilities that ended with the occupation of Basra and Baghdad in May 1941. Thereafter Iraq co-operated with the Allies and declared war on the Axis powers in 1943.⁷³

Iraq, during the years after the Second World War, was to experience much internal tension and unrest. Negotiations with Britain led to the signing, at Portsmouth in January 1948, of a new Anglo-Iraqi agreement designed to replace that of 1930 and incorporating substantial concessions, amongst them the British evacuation of the airbases at Shu'ayba and Habbaniya and the creation of a joint board for the co-ordination of all matters relating to mutual defence. The animosities arising from the situation in Palestine called forth riots at Baghdad directed against the new agreement with Britain, which were sufficiently disturbing to oblige the Iraqi Government to repudiate the Portsmouth settlement.⁷⁴

The Iraqi nationalists did not support the pro-British policy pursued by the Hashimite Monarchy. The Nationalist sentiment surmounted high and in the midst of this the Hashimite Monarchy was overthrown as a result of the army coup in 1958. After that Iraq was declared a republic.⁷⁵

Saudi Arabia

Although there is some support for the belief that Arabia was, at one time, a land of great fertility, there is little evidence of this in historical times. For the most part, Arabian history has been the account of small pockets of settled civilization, subsisting mainly on trade, in the midst of an ocean of nomadic tribes whose livelihood was derived mainly from camel-breeding and raiding. The earliest urban settlements developed in the south-west' where the flourishing Minaean kingdom is believed to have been established as early as the 12th century BC. This was followed by the Sabaeen and Himyarite kingdoms, which lasted with varying degrees of power until the sixth century AD. The term kingdom in this connection implies rather a loose federation of

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* p. 371

⁷⁵ S. Joarder, *Adhunik Madyaprachya* (part one), *op.cit.*, p.706.

city states than a centralized monarchy. As an important trading station between east and west, southern Arabia was brought into early contact with the Persian and Roman empires, whence spread the influence of Judaism, Zoroastrianism and later Christianity. Politically, however, the south Arabian principalities remained independent, though there was an abortive Roman expedition in AD 24 and two brief periods of Abyssinian rule in the fourth and sixth centuries AD.⁷⁶

By the end of the sixth century the centre of gravity had shifted to the west coast, to the Hijaz cities of at-Ta'if, Mecca and Medina. While the southern regions fell under the somewhat spasmodic control of the Sasanid rulers of Persia, the Hijaz grew in independence and importance as a trade route between the Byzantine Empire, Egypt and the East. From the fifth century onwards, Mecca was dominated by the tribe of Quraish. As a result of their extensive commercial activities, influences, from Byzantine, Persian, Aramaic and Judaic sources began to make themselves felt. Meanwhile the central deserts remained obstinately nomadic, and the inhospitable east coast formed for the most part, a corner of the Persian sphere of influence.⁷⁷

It is not necessary here to relate in detail the events that led to the spectacular outbreak of the Arabs from the Arabian Peninsula and their political and social domination, within a century, of an area extending from Spain to northern India. Ostensibly the driving force behind this great movement was the Islamic religion preached by Muhammad, a humble member of the Quraish tribe; and so powerful was its appeal that not only was the faith itself widely adopted, but even the language of its holy book, the Koran, has left an indelible impression on the speech of all the peoples whom it reached.

However, this flowering and development of Arabism proceeded for the most part outside the confines of the Arabian Peninsula itself. The Islamic unification of the near and Middle East reduced the importance of the Hijaz as a trade route. Mecca retained as unique status as a centre of pilgrimage for the whole Islamic world, but Arabia as a whole, temporarily united under

⁷⁶ EPL, *The Middle East and North Africa 1976-77*, *op.cit.*, p. 593.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

Muhammad and his successors, soon drifted back into disunity. The Yemen was the first to break away from the weakening Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad, and from the ninth century onwards a variety of small dynasties established themselves in Sana'a, Zabid and other towns. Mecca also had its semi-independent governors, though their proximity to Egypt made them more cautious in their attitude towards the Caliphs and the later rulers of that country, particularly the Fatimids of the tenth to twelfth centuries. In Oman, in the south-east, a line of spiritual Imams arose who before long were exercising temporal power; to the north the Arabian shores of the Persian Gulf provided a home for the fanatical Carmathian sect whose influence at times extended as far as Iraq, Syria, Mecca and the Yemen.⁷⁸

Arabia continued to be restless and unsettled until the beginning of the sixteenth century, when the whole peninsula came nominally under the suzerainty of the Ottoman Sultans at Istanbul. It was a hold that was never very strong, even in the Hijaz, and in Oman and the Yemen native lines of Imams were once again exercising unfettered authority before the end of the century. More important for the future of the peninsula was the appearance of European merchant adventurers in the Indian Ocean and the Persian/Arabian Gulf. The Portuguese were the first to arrive in the sixteenth century, and they were succeeded in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by the English, Dutch and French. By the beginning of the nineteenth century Britain had eliminated her European rivals and had established her influence firmly in the Gulf and to a lesser extent along the southern coast.⁷⁹

The political structure of Arabia was not beginning to take the shape it has today. The Yemen was already a virtually independent Imamate; Lahej broke away in the middle of the eighteenth century, only to lose Aden to Britain in 1839 and to become the nucleus of the Aden Protectorate. To the north of the Yemen was the principality of the Asir generally independent, though both countries were occupied by the Turks from 1850 to the outbreak of the First World War. The Hijaz continued to be a province of the Ottoman

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 594.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

Empire. In 1793 the Sultanate of Oman was established with its capital at Muscat, and during the nineteenth century all the rulers and chieftains along the Persian Gulf coast, including Oman, the sheikhdoms of the Trucial Coast, Bahrain and Kuwait, entered into close and 'exclusive' treaty relations with the British Government. Britain was principally concerned to prevent French, Russian and German penetration towards India, and to suppress trading in slave and weapons.⁸⁰

Meanwhile, the Najd in the centre of Arabia was the scene of another upheaval with religious inspirations. The puritanical and reforming Wahhabi movement, launched in the middle of the eighteenth century, had by 1800 reached such strength that its followers were able to capture Karbala and Najaf in Iraq, Damascus in Syria, and Mecca and Medina in the Hijaz. They were defeated by Muhammad Ali of Egypt, acting in the name of the Ottoman Sultan, in 1811-1818 and again in 1838, but the Wahhabi ruling house of Sa'ud continued to rule in the interior until 1890, when the rival Rashidi family, which had Turkish support, seized control of Riyadh.

In 1901 a member of the deposed Sa'udi family, Abdul Aziz Ibn Abdur Rahman, set out from Kuwait, where he had been living in exile, to regain the family's former domains. In 1902, with only about 40 followers Abdul Aziz captured Riyadh, expelled the Rashidi dynasty and proclaimed himself ruler of the Najd.⁸¹ During subsequent years he recovered and consolidated the outlying provinces of the kingdom, defeating Turkish attempts to subjugate him. Having restored the House of Sa'ud as a ruling dynasty, Abdul Aziz became known as Ibn Saud. To strengthen his position, Ibn Saud instituted the formation of Wahhabi colonies, known as Ikhwan (Brethren), throughout the territory under his control. The first Ikhwan settlement was made in 1912, and about 100 more were established carrying Wahhabi doctrines to scattered communities in remote desert areas, over the next 15 years. By the outbreak of the First World War (1914-1918), Ibn Saud was effectively the master of central Arabia, including the Hasa coast of the Persian Gulf.⁸²

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ S. Joarder, *Adhunik Madyaprachya* (2nd Volume), *op.cit.*, pp.209-210; Midawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 40.

⁸² EPL, *The Middle East and North Africa 1976-77*, *op.cit.*, p. 594.

When Turkey entered the war on the side of Germany in October 1914, Arabia inevitably became a centre of intrigue, if not necessarily of military action. British influence was paramount along the eastern and southern coasts, where the various Sheiks and tribal chiefs from Kuwait to the Hadhramaut lost no time in severing their last slender connections with the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, the Turks had faithful allies in Ibn Rashid of the Shammar, to the north of the Najd, and in Imam Yahya of the Yemen. The Turks also retained garrisons along the west coast, both in the Asir, whose Idrisi ruler was impelled by his long standing enmity with the Imam of the Yemen to intrigue against them and in the Hijaz, where Husain Ibn Ali, the Sharif of Mecca, still acknowledged Ottoman suzerainty. In the centre Ibn Saud, who had accepted Turkish recognition in 1913 of his occupation of the Hasa coast, was in close and friendly relations with the British-controlled government of India.⁸³

British Prolonged military strategy developed as the war dragged on into a two-pronged thrust against the Turks from both Egypt and the Persian Gulf. In the implementation of this plan opinions were divided on the extent to which use could be made of the Arab population. The Indian Government on the eastern wing, while favouring the pretensions of Ibn Saud, preferred to see the problem in purely military terms, and opposed any suggestion of an Arab revolt. This, however, was the scheme favoured by the Arab Bureau in Cairo, whose views eventually prevailed in London. They were alarmed at the Ottoman declaration of a jihad (holy war) and possible repercussions in Egypt and North Africa. Negotiations were started at a very early stage with Arab nationalist movements in Syria and Egypt, but these met with comparatively little success. More progress was made when the British negotiators turned their attentions to the Sharif of Mecca, Husain, member of the Hashimi family that had ruled in Mecca since the eleventh century AD. The support of such a religious dignitary would be an effective counter to Turkish claims. Husain was inclined to favour the Allied cause, but was reluctant to act independently, and it was only after he had elicited from the British promises which he believed would meet Arab nationalist aspirations that he decided to move. On 5 June

⁸³ *Ibid.*

1916 he proclaimed Arab independence and declared war on the Turks. By November things had gone so well that he felt able to claim the title of King of the Hijaz. Military operations continued throughout the winter and in July 1917 the port of Aqaba was captured and the Hijaz cleared to Turkish troops except for a beleaguered and helpless garrison in Medina.⁸⁴

Arabia thereafter remained comparatively peaceful and was not even greatly disturbed by the complicated post-war political maneuvers in the Middle East. Husain played a somewhat ineffectual role in maintaining the Arab point of view at the peace conferences and over the allocation of mandates and as a result forfeited the favour of the British Government. When therefore, he was unwise enough to challenge the growing power of his old enemy Ibn Saud, he found himself entirely without support. Ibn Saud's stature had been steadily growing since the end of the war. In November 1921 he had succeeded in eliminating the house of Ibn Rashid and annexing the Shammar, and a year later he was recognized by the Government of India as overlord of Hail, Shammar and Jawf. On 5 March 1924 Husain laid claim to the title of Caliph, made vacant by the deposition of the Ottoman Sultan.⁸⁵ His claims were nowhere recognized, and Ibn Saud, declaring him a traitor, overran the Hijaz in a campaign of a few months, captured Mecca and forced Husain's abdication. Husain's eldest son, Ali continued to hold Jeddah for another year, but was then driven out and on 8 January 1926. Ibn Saud proclaimed himself King of the Hijaz. At first the Najd and the Hijaz formed a dual kingdom, but on 23 September 1932, they were merged to form the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* p. 595.

⁸⁵ S. Joarder, *Adhunik Madyaprachya* (2nd Volume), *op.cit.*, p.212; Gary Troeller, *The Birth of Saudi Arabia Britain and the Rise of the House of Sa'ud* (London: Frank Cass, 1976), p. 216.

Chapter 4

Origin and Development of the Palestine Problem Till 1993

The Palestine problem is the most controversial and complex issue in modern times. There were three parties to this conflict - the Arabs, the Jews and the British. But the British entered into this conflict much later and the other two parties put their claim over Palestine on historical grounds. The root of the Palestine Problem lies in the fact that two peoples – the Palestinian Arabs and the Jews (whether inside Palestine or outside) – claim the right of ownership of the same territory which is known as Palestine to the outsiders, *Filastin* to the Arabs and *Eretz Israel* (Biblical land of Israel) to the Jews. The claim of the Jews rests almost, entirely on a very strong historical connection with the territory in the fairly distant past. Though dispersed from the territory a number of times – the last being in the second century of the Christian era – the Jews in the Diaspora continued to maintain a sort of spiritual connection with the land which had been the cradle of Jewish culture and civilization. The periodic pogroms, which the Jewish ghettos were subjected to in the different countries of Europe in the medieval and early modern periods, made this connection more meaningful and valuable to the Jews. Even though some voluntary Jewish groups from the countries of Eastern Europe had established some small agricultural settlements in Palestine in the second half of the nineteenth century, it was the establishment of the World Zionist Organization by Theodor Herzl in the last years of the nineteenth century that actually marks the beginning of the Jewish drive for a return to Eretz Israel.¹

¹ Herzl, an Austrian Jew, was a newspaper reporter who while covering the famous 'Dreyfus Trial' in Paris was shocked by the widespread anti-Jewish attitude in France and came to the conclusion that only the establishment of a Jewish state can solve the Jewish Question. The name 'Zionism' is derived from the Mt. Zion in Jerusalem which is supposed to be the original site of the Temple of Solomon. It was also the capital of the kingdom of Judea. Politically it signifies the movement for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine cited in Safiuddin Joardar, 'The Camp David Agreements: Genesis and Geopolitics' *The Dhaka University Studies*, Part A, Vol. 43, No.1, June, 1986, p. 56 (henceforth the source is referred to as Safiuddin Joardar, *Dhaka University Studies*).

It is to be noted that by the 1880s, the growth of anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria as well as the avalanche of pogroms in Russia and East convinced a considerable section of the Jewish intelligentsia that assimilation was no longer a desirable nor a possible solution to the "Jewish Question." they came to realize the Jews were not only a religious group, but also a separate nation, bound by a common faith and sentiment rather than by land. According to these Jewish nationalists, the Jewish Question could only be solved if the Jews stood on a par with other nations, which could be attained by the collective return of Jews to the ranks of the nations as a people living in their homeland. This was why Dr. Theodor Herzl, as the founder of political Zionism, insisted that the Jews should be granted sovereignty over a portion of the globe large enough to satisfy the rightful requirements of a nation."²

Herzl was not only an ideologue, but also an efficient organizer. In order to negotiate with the Great powers in the pursuit of Zionist objectives, Herzl needed a strong base for which he could rely for the support of his policies. Therefore, he was determined to build the Zionist movement as an actor in international relations with the necessary apparatus of institutions and program. For this purpose, Herzl envisaged a congress of representatives of the Jewish people to be the chief organ of the Zionist movement. The institutional framework of the congress, he thought, should be in the nature of a national assembly, composed of representative from each local Zionist community. Based upon these rules, the First Zionist Congress was convened at Basle, Switzerland, on 27 August 1897. In the Congress, which was attended by more than two hundred delegates from all over the world, the Zionists, first formulated a programme defining their aims, and second laid the foundations of a permanent organization. With respects to the pronouncement of their ultimate aims, the Zionists were cautious not to insist on founding a "state." The congress agreed to establish a "Home in Palestine." The government of the Zionists movement was entrusted to the Actions' Committee which, under the presidency of Herzl, was responsible for the execution of all policies undertaken in the name of the Zionist organization. In

² Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State: An Attempt to a Modern Solution to the Jewish Question* (London, 1946), chap.ii.

the Second Congress which was held in Bastle in August 1898 it was decided to establish a bank under the name of the Jewish Colonial Trust to serve as the financial instrument of the organization.³

Palestine, which became the focus of the Zionists, was neither empty nor free of an existing sovereignty. It was part of the Asiatic provinces of the Ottoman Empire, inhabited by the Arab subjects of the sultan. Therefore, Herzle admitted that the "decision is in the sole hands of his Majesty the Sultan."⁴ Knowing the debt-stricken state of the Turkish economy, his strategy to convince the sultan was to make him a financial offer he would not dare to refuse. Herzl came to Istanbul in the middle of June 1896, and through Philip de Newliski⁵ he requested the sultan to issue a charter, enabling the Jews to colonize Palestine in return for twenty million pounds. Newliski lobbied at the Palace and is reported to have said to Abdul Hamid II, "Without the help of the Zionists, the Turkish economy would not stand a chance of recovery."⁶ Again with Newliski's ability to open doors in the Ottoman capital, Herzl managed to see the Grand Vizier, Halil Rifat Pasa, but the latter did not like the project at all. In any event, the authoritative Turkish response came on the second day of his stay. The sultan was adamant. He told Newliski, "if Mr. Herzl is as much your friend as you are mine, then advise him not to take another step in this matter. I cannot sell even a foot of land, for it does not belong to me, but to my people. My people have won this empire by fighting for it with their blood and have fertilized it with their blood. We will again cover it with our blood before we allow it to be wrested away from us."⁷

³ On the growth and development of Zionism, there are numerous studies in English, the most up to date and definitive being David Vital's *The Origins of Zionism* (Oxford University Press, 1965).

⁴ On Herzl's negotiations in Istanbul, see R. Patai, ed., *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl* (hereafter *Diaries*) (London, 1960), I, 366-367, 374-394, 403, 412, 419-22, 427; II, 435, 439-446, 457, 467-471, 479-485, 496, 581, 588, 609-611, 813, 827; III, 847-848, 866-867, 899-900, 961-963, 967-973, 979, 997, 1006, 1016-1018, 1079, 1086, 1092-1093, 1112-1117, 1121-1136, 1144, 1150-1166, 1187-1193, 1216-1230, IV, 1274-1310, 1314-1323.

⁵ Newlinski was Polish noble and a renegade who earned his living in European capitals spying for the Sultan. See N.M. Gelber, "Philip Michael de Newlinski", *Herzl Year Book*, ed. R. Patai (New York, 1959), II, 113-152.

⁶ Ottoman Foreign Ministry Archives (OFM), *Tercume Mutenevvia-Siyasi (TM-S)* dossier 129/1, Document no. 19, 28 July 1897.

⁷ *Diaries*, I, 378.

It could be said that if the Zionists lost on the diplomatic front and failed to obtain a Charter for a Jewish home in Palestine, they won in another way. Thanks largely to the intervention of the Powers, the Zionists evaded the Turkish regulations of immigration and settlement, and were by and large successful in establishing in Palestine a stronghold in the form of colonies which was destined to become the nucleus of the future Jewish state, Israel. In 1911, seeing that all his government's efforts had been in vain. Abdul Hamid II, by then deposed and exiled, admitted to his private physician that the achievements of the Zionists in Palestine were just an introduction, preparing the groundwork for accomplishing their ultimate goal: "I am sure that with time they can and will be successful in establishing their own state in Palestine".

To popularize their demand for Palestine in the Christian West the Zionists invoked what they regarded as the divine promises embodied in the Bible. They argued that in Chapter 15: 18 God promised Abraham, "Up to they seed have I given this land from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates". This biblical verse forms the basis of the Zionist assertion that the natural frontiers of Israel lie between Nile and the Euphrates. And the expansionist designs of Israel show how anxious the Zionists are to fulfill by sword this biblical prophecy!⁸ Professor A, Guillaume rejects the interpretation that the promise was made to the Jews alone. He asserts that the word "seed" includes both Muslims and Christians who trace their lineage from Abraham through his son Ishmael. Guillaume goes on to say that the prophecy of the return of the Jews has long been fulfilled when they returned to Judea and rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem and the temple. Therefore, according to the Scripture (Old Testament) there cannot be a second return of the Jews to the Holy land.⁹ This argument pricks the bubble of the Zionist propaganda, which has so skilfully moulded the opinion of the Christian. West nursing a guilty conscience as a result of the persecution of Jews in Palestine during the crusades and later in Germany during the Nazi regime. The secular West, otherwise allergic to religion-oriented politics, sponsored the idea of a Jewish national home in Palestine.

⁸ Quoted in Sami Hadawi: *Bitter Harvest* (New York: The New World Press, 1962), p. 27.

⁹ *Ibid*, p. 28.

Thus the Jewish nationalism was first coherently formulated when Theodor Herzl founded the World Zionist Organization in 1897. Herzl believed that a Jewish State was the only answer to the anti-Semitism he had witnessed at Dreyfus Trial, which "shook him to the core".¹⁰ Initially he had attached little importance to the locality of such a State, having favoured the British offer of territory in East Africa, but he later chose Palestine because of its religious and sentimental significance for the Jews. Apart from this, there appeared little to sustain his ambitious scheme. The Hebrew Kingdom was established in Palestine as early as 1000 B.C., but the Assyrians, the Chaldeans, the Persians, the Greeks and the Romans later dominated it successively. When in the seventh century A.D., Palestine was conquered by the Arabs; it had long ceased to be Jewish. In the sixteenth century, along with Syria and other Arab provinces, it passed under the Ottoman Turks.

Though a significant proportion of the Jewish people kept away from the movement at the initial stage, the movement gradually gained momentum. The fateful declaration made by the British Government in 1917 known generally as the Balfour Declaration is a testimony as much to the growing strength and organizing ability of the Zionist leaders as to the influence that the Jews had in different countries of Europe and North America. The Jewish claim to Palestine rests partly on this declaration.¹¹

The claim of the Palestinian Arabs is based partly on their historical association with Palestine and partly on the geo-demographic realities.

Jerusalem is the first *Kiblah* (the central point of religious-cultural life) of the Muslims; the prophet Muhammad is believed to have stopped in a mosque in Jerusalem prior to his nocturnal heavenward journey. And since the middle of the seventh century, a typically Arab society has been existing in Palestine except for the time that parts of the territory were under the control of the crusaders. From the geo-demographic point of view, the territory was predominantly Arab, the Arabs constituting over 90 percent of the population.¹²

¹⁰ Joseph Dunner, *The Republic of Israel: Its History and Its Promise*, New York: Whittlesey House, 1950, p. 20.

¹¹ By this declaration the British Government committed itself to the idea of the establishment of a National Home for the Jewish people in Palestine. For an in-depth study of the declaration, see Leonard stain, *The Balfour Declaration* (London, 1961) cited in Safiuddin Joardar, *Dhaka University Studies*, pp. 56-57.

¹² On these claims and counter-claims, see Frank p.Epp, *Whose Land is Palestine? The Middle East Problem in Historical Perspective* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1970) and Henry Cattar, *To Whom Does Palestine Belong?* (Beirut: the Institute for Palestine Studies, N.D.) Cited in Safiuddin Joardar, *Dhaka University Studies*, p. 57.

However, as time went on, it became obvious that it was not the genuineness or otherwise of the respective claims but the degree of organizational ability, military strength and Big Power support that decided the issue. And in these areas, the Jews were way ahead of the Palestinian Arabs. This is evident from the manner in which the Zionist leaders succeeded in having the Balfour Declaration endorsed by the other Allied Powers – especially the Big Four.

The fact that Britain got the mandatory authority over Palestine instead of the international administration that the country was to have according to the Sykes – Picot Agreement was due in no small measure to the influence of the Zionist organization.

Thus the diplomacy of the great Powers immediately during and after First World War greatly affected the future of Palestine. The Ottoman Empire had entered the war against the Allies but was unable to keep all its subject territories behind it. The Arabs, chafing under Ottoman rule, took this opportunity to make a bid for independence. In this they were encouraged and abetted by Great Britain which sought a foothold and a sphere of influence in the Middle East. Britain had already sounded disaffected elements in the Arab world before the terms and conditions of the Arab Revolt and of British assistance were formalized in Sir Henry McMahon's¹³ correspondence with the Sharif Husain.¹⁴

Briefly, Husain had proposed for British recognition that the future independent Arab state should be bounded "on the north, by the line Mersin-Adana to parallel" 37° N and thence along the line Birejik-Urfa-Mardin-Midiat-Jazirat-Amadia to the Persian frontiers; on the east, by the Persian frontier down to the Persian Gulf; on the south, by the Indian Ocean; on the west, by the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea back to Mersin.¹⁵ As it became evident that the definition of frontiers was a fundamental pre-condition of revolt, McMahon replied that "The districts of Mersin and

¹³ Sir Henry McMahon was the British High Commissioner for Egypt and the Sudan.

¹⁴ Husain Ibn Ali was the Grand Sharif of Mecca.

¹⁵ Sharif Husain to McMahon, 14 July 1915, The McMahon Correspondence, Appendix A. George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1938), p. 414.

Alexandretta, and portions of Syria lying to the west of the districts of Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo, cannot be said to be purely Arab, and must on that account be excepted from the proposed delimitation."¹⁶ However, the Sharif maintained that the "vilayets of Aleppo and Bairut and the western maritime coast" were "purely Arab provinces"¹⁷ and at the end of the war the Arabs "would claim from you Bairut and its coastal regions"....¹⁸

The dispute regarding the future of Palestine revolved around the question: how much Arab territory was included in the area defined by the Husain-McMahon Correspondence? The Arabs maintained that Palestine fell within the area of Arab independence proposed by the Sharif, but the British Government contended that "The whole of Palestine west of the Jordan wasexcluded from Sir H. McMahon's pledge."¹⁹ For his part, McMahon had not suggested the frontiers, but rather, had consented to Husain's proposal, with certain reservations individually enumerated. Palestine was not mentioned in the text, nor was the Sanjaq of Jerusalem, the Ottoman region corresponding roughly to the area of Palestine, listed as one of the British exceptions. A glance at the administrative divisions of the Ottoman Empire would show that the British exceptions could not have included the bulk of Palestine.

Hardly had the British bargain with the Arabs been struck that, anticipating the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire, the great Powers negotiated to carve up the Ottoman dominions. The Sykes-Picot Agreement, 1916,²⁰ contrary to Britain's commitment to the Arabs, was a flagrant breach of faith. It divided the area between the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf – covering the whole of Syria and Iraq – into British and French spheres of influence. A third area, comprising a part of Palestine, was reserved for a special international regime, to be set up in consultation with Russia and the

¹⁶ McMahon to Sharif Husain, 24 October 1915, *Ibid.*, p. 419.

¹⁷ Sharif Husain to McMahon, 5 November 1915, *Ibid.*, p. 421.

¹⁸ Sharif Husain to McMahon, 1 January 1916, *Ibid.*, p. 425.

¹⁹ Cmd. 1700, 1922 (Churchill Memorandum) quoted in *Official Documents, Pledges and Resolutions on Palestine*, Compiled by the Arab Refugee Office, New York, 1959.

²⁰ After the French diplomat F. Georges-Picot and Sir Mark Sykes. The text of the Agreement is reproduced in George Antonius, *op.cit.*, Appendix B.

Sharif of Mecca. However, for the future of Palestine the turning point came with the Balfour Declaration of 2 November 1917. For the first time it gave political recognition to the Jewish national home in Palestine. On the one hand, Britain had contemplated an international regime for Palestine, on the other it declared: ... His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."²¹ In 1917, the population of Palestine was about ninety percent Arab.

Husain's surprised enquiry was met with the British reply that "Jewish settlement in Palestine would only be allowed in so far as would be consistent with the political and economic freedom of the Arab population."²² Therefore, the Sharif was free to conclude – however illogical it may be – that as a refuge for world Jewry, Palestine would not be converted into a Jewish political state. He was also reassured by an official British document known as the Declaration to the Seven, 1918. In the areas liberated by the Allies from Turkish rule – which included Palestine – the Declaration to the Seven affirmed Britain's intention that "the future government ... should be based upon the principle of the consent of the governed".²³ As we have seen, at that time Palestine was overwhelmingly Arab.

For Britain, these conflicting commitments were perhaps a part of the supreme effort to win the war. After the Allied victory, it soon became evident at the Peace Conferences that there was a wide divergence between Arab expectations and British and French interests in the Middle East. In accordance with the Sykes-Picot Agreement, France adamantly demanded control of Syria; Britain was unwilling to give up Iraq and Palestine. So far as Palestine is concerned, it is interesting to note the views of the "American

²¹ *Official Documents, Pledges and Resolutions on Palestine*, p. 12.

²² George Antonius, *op.cit.*, p. 268. In a message from Commander Hogarth.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 434. This was in reply to a plea for a clear statement of British policy made by seven eminent Arabs in Cairo. The text of the British document is reproduced in *Ibid.*, Appendix D.

Section of the International Commission on Mandates in Turkey",²⁴ which investigated the situation on the spot.

This led President Wilson appointed the King-Crane Commission in 1919 to investigate the situation in Syria (Lebanon and Palestine included). In its recommendation the Commission opposed the unlimited Jewish immigration into Palestine and observed that the term "national home" for the "Jewish people" did not mean "Jewish State".²⁵ The Commission was opposed the creation of a Jewish State since it would amount to a gross outrage upon the "civil and religious rights" of the non-Jewish communities in Palestine.²⁶ But the voice of the Commission was drowned in the din of Presidential election battle and its reports were cast into the limbo of oblivion. The Arabs who had become aware of the double-crossing by their allies due to the disclosure of the treaty documents by the Bolshevik government were anxious about their fate. When the Sharif Husain sought clarification about the national home, he was told by Commander D.G. Hogarth of the Arab Bureau in Cairo that the British declaration did not mention Jewish State.²⁷

While the Commission favoured the mandatory system for a limited period, it recommended a modification of the extreme Zionist programme of unlimited Jewish immigration. For, it argued, "a national home for the Jewish people is not equivalent to making Palestine into a Jewish State", nor could it be accomplished "without the gravest trespass upon the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine". It had been made clear to the commissioners "that the Zionists looked forward to a practically complete dispossession of the present non-Jewish inhabitants of Palestine, by various forms of purchase".²⁸ However, after Palestine was placed under British Mandate by the Supreme Council of the Allies at San Remo on 25 April 1920, the substance of the Balfour Declaration was written into the text of the Mandate.

²⁴ Also called the King-Crane Commission, after its members, Dr. Henry C. King and Charles R. Crane.

²⁵ Quoted in Hadawi: *op.cit.*, p. 24.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ George Lenczowski, *The Middle East in World Affairs*, 3rd Edition, Cornell University Press, London, 1962, p. 82.

²⁸ George Antonius, *op.cit.*, pp. 448-449. The text of the King-Crane Report is reproduced in *Ibid.*, Appendix H.

Hence it is to be noted that between the conquest by General Allenby's army in 1917 and July 1, 1920 Palestine, or the Ottoman Province of Jerusalem, was occupied and administered by the British army. After the Balfour Declaration but even before the Armistice, the Zionist organization sent a commission to the area headed by Dr. Weizmann, Major Ormsby-Gore, and Major de Rothschild. The purpose of the commission was to establish a link between the military and the Jewish population of Palestine assists in the return of Jews who fled during the war and co-ordinate all activities of Jewish organizations and institutions. The future of Palestine hung in the fire, until the San Remo Conference in April, 1920 awarded it to England. Till then, uncertainty nurtured every rumor and fear, and Palestinians experienced a restlessness that later events never did resolve.²⁹

At the close of the war the population comprised about 550,000 Jews. The Muslims and most Christians were Arabic-speaking natives. Some Jews were cultural Arabs, having lived there for many centuries. The great majority of Jews, however, were newcomers. One group had resided there a generation or two, having immigrated to live and work in agricultural community projects typical of mid-nineteenth-century socialistic utopian societies. The others belonged to *Haluka* communities living on charity from world Jewry. This group included Jews of various nationalities who emigrated to the Jewish Holy Land to pray and die. During the war the Jewish population dropped to an estimated 20,000. Some left Palestine and a normal percentage of the *Haluka* died without the usual influx of others who wished to die in Palestine.³⁰

The British wanted to incorporate Palestine into their empire because of its proximity to Suez, its suitability as an outlet for Mosul oil, and its strategic position with respect to Arabia. The British army was occupying Palestine, and there seemed to be no good reason for leaving. A Zionist alliance might serve Britain's imperial interests and prevent the French from holding the entire Levantine coast and from approaching this close to Suez.³¹

²⁹ Sydney Nettleton Fisher, *The Middle East A History* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, First Published 1960, reprinted 1971), p. 427.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 428.

With the conflicting views and interests under the British mandate, reprisals and bloodshed first occurred in April, 1920, when many Arab villagers flocked to Jerusalem to the Nabi Musa celebrations. Rumors turned into riots; Arabs who inflamed the villagers and Zionists with caches of arms were seized and sentenced by British military courts to penal servitude. That same month the Powers, meeting at San Remo, affirmed the British mandate over Palestine; and on July 1, 1920 Sir Herbert Samuel, the first High Commissioner for Palestine, including Trans Jordan, relived the military authorities of their burden.³²

During the five years of Sir Herbert's civil administration four separate, yet parallel, governments were formed. Most important was the British executive government, composed of various administrative departments over each of which the High Commissioner appointed a British director or secretary. These officials formed a cabinet, whose first chief secretary was Wyndham Deedes. Departments were established for public works, education, immigration, customs, excise and trade, antiquities, treasury, revenue, attorney-general, police, health, agriculture and forests, posts and telegraphs, lands, and audit. An advisory council consisting of ten British officials, four Muslims, three Christians, and three Jews was appointed. An elective legislative council was projected, but it never came into existence because of disagreement over the ratio of representation between Arabs and Jews.³³

The Jewish community inaugurated the second government. In the fall of 1920 a Jewish national assembly was elected. It, in turn, appointed a Jewish national council (*Vaad Leumi*), which the High Commissioner recognized as representative of the Jewish community in Palestine. The national council governed the Jews of Palestine in personal, communal, and religious affairs and recommended actions to British authorities concerning matters affecting the Jewish community. Certain Jews of prewar Palestinian residence, however, clung to a theocratic concept of Jewish life and refused to be governed by the national council. Supported by *Agudath Israel*, they

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 428-429.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 429.

disclaimed all connections with political and nationalistic Zionism, but proved too small minority for the British Palestine administration to recognize in any formal way.³⁴

The third government was the international Zionist organization with headquarters in London. It represented more than thirty Zionist groups in many parts of the world and had sponsored the drive which obtained the Balfour Declaration. A number of its executives lived and worked in Palestine; and between 1921 and 1929 they were known as the Palestine Zionist executive. Each member was responsible for some department of work: political, immigration, education, industry, health, and public works. Sometimes referred to as a quasi-government, the Zionist executive followed the policies established by the Zionist organization in London and augmented the administration of the mandatory administration in Palestine. Frequently when the High Commissioner's government and the Zionist executive were at odds, the Zionist organization proved more effective in persuading the British cabinet and House of Commons to follow the Zionist course than the foreign or colonial secretary was in obtaining support for policies of the High Commissioner.³⁵

The three "governments" represented imperialism, Jewish settlers, and world Jewry, respectively. The fourth government tried to represent the great majority of the people of Palestine-Muslim and Christian Arabs. Arab notables-of whom the two most prominent families were the al-Husaynis and the Nashashibis-at first voiced the opinion that Arab Palestine was and should continue to be a part of Syria. But they had no love for the French and, therefore, dropped that contention after Faysal's defeat at Damascus. Following a large Arab congress at Haifa in December 1920 the Arab executive was born. Musa Kazim al-Husayni, former mayor of Jerusalem was its chairman until 1934. Although the Arab executive attempted to parallel the activities of the Zionist executive, it never had the latter's extensive financial resources or wealth of personnel at its call.³⁶

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

In addition to the Arab executive the British created the supreme Muslim council in 1921 to deal with Muslim religious affairs, especially custody of religious endowments and administration of Muslim courts. Fines, fees, and patronage gave the supreme Muslim council real power; and its president, Hajj Amin Al-Husayni, became the leading political Muslim figure in Palestine in the 1930's. Commonly known as the Mufti, Hajj Amin was elected, with Sir Herbert Samuel's connivance, to that office in 1921. A position held for life, the mufti of Jerusalem, like muftis in other cities gave legal opinions on Sacred Law for citizens and the courts.³⁷

With four governments in Palestine, each with several parties or groups, and with the eyes of the world upon the Holy Land of three religions, Sir Herbert found the task of government the mandate a challenge to human ingenuity. He had to remember Britain's imperial concern for Palestine and the entire Middle East. He had to govern the mandate economically and peacefully. He had to fulfill the mission of the mandatory power in instructing the people, eighty-five percent of whom were Arabs, and preparing the way for self-government and independence. And he had to follow the instructions of the cabinet in London, which was persistently dogged by political pressure to honour not only the letter of the Balfour Declaration but also its spirit as interpreted by the Zionists who were already building the foundations for a national state of Israel. The dilemmas posed kept the political scene in Palestine shifting, as first one faction and then another played the leading role.³⁸

Thus the history of Palestine under the British Mandatory administration is the story of the strengthening of the Jewish community in Palestine with the assistance and encouragement of the Mandatory administration, the British government and the international Jewry, the increasing frustration of the Palestinian Arabs who because of their organizational weakness and the ineptitude of their leaders found their position – and even their existence – threatened found expressions only in noisy demonstrations which often led to rioting. Then there was the 'inconstancy' of the British policies marked by adherence to a principle at one time and its abandonment shortly afterwards.³⁹

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 430.

³⁸ *Ibid.*,

³⁹ Safiuddin Joardar, *Dhaka University Studies*, p. 57.

Under such prevailing situation and after the Arab-Jewish conflict over the question of immigration, the British expressed its policy towards Palestine. On June 3, 1922, the Churchill Memorandum dispelled the misgivings in the Arab mind and stated that the national home did not mean the creation of a Jewish State not the subordination of Arab population, language, and culture in Palestine.⁴⁰ It seems as though the British were having second thoughts about their policy toward the Palestine question.

By this time, the Jews organized their community (*Yishuv*) along modern lines through such institutions as the 'National Assembly' (*Vaad Leumi*), the Jewish National Fund, the Anglo-Palestine Bank and the establishment of different types of agricultural settlements, schools and hospitals under the over-all supervision of the Jewish Agency in Palestine.

The Jewish National Fund with the financial backing of the world Jewry started purchasing lands on a massive scale often by paying fantastic prices. Lands had to be acquired by any means because without it there could be no national home. Lands were bought from the absentee landlords as well as from the marginal farmers. Prior to the emergence of Israel as an independent state in 1948, the Jews had acquired in Palestine over $1\frac{1}{2}$ million *dunums* of land (one *dunum* slightly over three acres) of which the National Fund owned about 1 million *dunums*.⁴¹ What is important to remember in connection with the acquisition of land by the Zionist is their belief that they were taking their 'own' lands back. This is evident from the use of expressions such as 'Liberating', 'redeeming' and 'conquering' the land. It should also be borne in mind that the increasing acquisition of land by the Jewish National Fund led to the increasing pauperization of the marginal Palestinian Arab farmers and farm labourers due mainly to the rigidly – followed law of the National Fund that the 'Liberated' lands can never be sold or leased to anyone who was not a Jew nor could non-Jewish labour be hired to work on these lands.⁴²

⁴⁰ Cmd. 1700; *The Churchill Memorandum*, dated June, 3, 1922.

⁴¹ A Granott, *Agrarian Reform and the Record of Israel* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1956), p. 28 cited in Safiuddin Joardar, *Dhaka University Studies*, p. 58.

⁴² Safiuddin Joardar, *Dhaka University Studies*, p. 58.

With this strength the Zionists continued to exert pressure for the creation of a Jewish Commonwealth. They encouraged organized infiltration of Jews into the holy land in order to convert it into a Jewish Colony. For in 1918 Palestine was an Arab country.

It is to be noted that under the British mandate, the Zionist objective was promoted primarily through Jewish immigration and settlement in Palestine, most of the immigrants being drawn from European countries. This process was accelerated as the persecution of Jews in Hitler's Germany and in Poland increased. The introduction of thousands of people, from backgrounds and cultures distinctly separate from those of the Palestinian Arabs, on the plea of a Jewish occupation of 2000 years ago, would appear to be morally questionable and politically indefensible. Yet immigration, aimed at raising the Jewish population of Palestine, was the crux of the Zionist programme. Between 1929 and 1932, the total authorized immigration did not exceed 5,429 in any one year, but it subsequently escalated from under 10,000 in 1932 to its peak of 61,854 in 1935⁴³ Where as in 1931 the Jews comprised 17 per cent of the total, in 1940 they were estimated to be one-third of the population of Palestine.⁴⁴ Although they contributed to Palestine's economic progress, their influx created several problems, necessitated the establishment of an immigration department and special measures for public security. Moreover, it had an injurious effect on the political and economic life of the Arab community and resulted in Arab complaints of exclusion from higher posts.⁴⁵ But above all, Jewish enterprises and rural settlements led to the displacement of Arab landowners, who were tempted to sell their lands. As the property of the Jewish community these lands, as a rule, were worked exclusively by Jewish labour. Jewish urban settlements mainly centred on Tel Aviv and Haifa, where large-scale industries were set up for the first time. Already an official language under the mandate, Hebrew was rejuvenated also as a spoken language. Through their own resources and efforts, the Jews had gradually established a State within a State.

⁴³ Arnold J. Toynbee, *Survey of International Affairs, 1936* (London: Oxford University Press for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1937), p. 702.

⁴⁴ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1958, Vol. 17, p. 134.

⁴⁵ For the social and economic development following Jewish immigration and its effect on the Arabs, for the inequality in wages and conditions of work between Arab and Jewish labour and the disparity in education, see *Arnold J. Toynbee, op.cit.*, p. 702.

It is to be noted that in the summer of 1929, anti-Jewish feeling among the Arabs, which had been building up since the start of the decade, had come out into the open on an unprecedented scale in the so-called Wailing Wall riots. The troubles began when Jewish demonstrators in Jerusalem marched to the old city in solemn procession to plant the Zionist flag at the Wailing Wall: the last remnant of the temple of Herod, which survives as the western wall of the Aqsa mosque, the third most holy sanctuary of Islam.⁴⁶ When the Arabs arrived to remove the flag, a clash ensued in which twenty-eight Jews were reportedly killed. This incident triggered a wave of Arab attacks against Jews in other parts of Palestine which lasted for five days, bringing the total of Jews killed to 133 by the official count. The British had to use force - in some cases with great harshness - to restore order. The perpetrators of the troubles were then arrested and tried; the Arabs among them receiving severe punishments, including the death penalty, while Jews, whom Arabs alleged to be equally guilty, were left virtually unpunished. Justifiably or not, the outcome of the trials following the Wailing Wall riots confirmed most Arabs in the belief that the British were conniving with the Jews against them.

Among the British on the spot, the Wailing Wall incidents of August 1929 created the impression that a crisis had come about in the development of the Mandate, because of a new mood within the Arab community. The High Commissioner, who had left a superficially calm Palestine for duties in London and Geneva, returned urgently to quell the violent outburst of 1929. At his request, the home government appointed a commission of Enquiry into the causes of the disturbances that became known as the Shaw Commission. Immediately following the trials, a special parliamentary commission arrived from London to investigate the underlying causes of the troubles.⁴⁷ However, to those on the spot it seemed that this was the right moment to re-evaluate

⁴⁶ Muslim hold this wall sacred, calling it *al-Buraq*, after the name given by Muslim tradition to the mount which the Prophet Muhammad rode on the celestial voyage which took him from Mecca to Jerusalem and back in one night (Koran 17:1). The wall is believed to mark the point where al-Buraq alighted in Jerusalem, then left the ground for the return to Mecca.

⁴⁷ Kamal Salibi, *The Modern History of Jordan* (London, New York, 1993), p. 132.

policies.⁴⁸ A few months after the disturbances, Chancellor proposed⁴⁹ a far-reaching constitutional reshaping of the Mandate and triggered off a chain of decisions which was to influence the future pattern of thought among all the interested groups (p-44).

Unlike his earlier reports, Chancellor wrote in his memorandum that the disturbances were neither an expression of inherent lack of faith in Britain, nor an outcome of religious agitation—they were an outburst of enmity towards the *yishuv*, generated by a considerable growth of nationalist feeling within the Arab community. He emphasized the Arabs' rejection of the Mandate and interpretation of the British pledges, as expressed in the Husain-MacMahon correspondence and went as far as to argue that the Government's stand had no moral basis. In the face of Arab's vehement denunciation of Britain's 'Zionist Policy', he saw two lines of action open to the government, either:

1. to withdraw from the Jews the specially privileged position... and to grant the people of Palestine a measure of self-government, or
2. to continue the present policy unchanged and to enforce the provisions of the mandate by maintaining military forces... to protect the Jews.

Under the situation, the British continued the pro-Jewish policy. With the passage of time, the increasing pauperization and the threat of being turned from the position of a majority to that of a minority made the Palestinian Arabs take to the streets and – when the treat was felt to be very imminent – take up arms. Their sense of frustration was all the more bitter when the British government went back on its commitment to safeguard their minimal interests. The fate of the famous Pass field White Paper issued by the British government in 1930 is a case in point. The White Paper maintained that since the Balfour Declaration had committed the British government to the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people and to safeguarding the civil and religious rights of the non-Jewish population, unrestricted Jewish immigration could not be supported. There was instantaneous reaction among

⁴⁸ *Survey of International Affairs, 1930*, p. 227

⁴⁹ Chancellor to Secretary of State January 17, 1930 P.R.O. C.O. 733. 183. 77050.

the Zionists who started putting pressure on the Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald through the pro-Zionist political leaders such as Lloyd George, General Smuts, Baldwin and Chamberlain. The result was that the White Paper was cold-stored, and the Prime Minister wrote a letter to the Zionist leader Dr. Chaim Weizmann informing him of the repudiation of the White Paper. Weizmann exultingly wrote in his diary: "It was under MacDonald's letter that Jewish immigration into Palestine was permitted to reach figures like forty thousand for 1934 and sixty two thousand for 1935, figures undreamed of in 1930."⁵⁰

In 1935, the Jews refused to sit as a minority on the legislative Council Proposed by the Mandatory-even though, together with the British official on the council, they would have been able to outvote the Arab delegates. At the same time, they expected the Arabs to agree to their own mass immigration and to rely on Zionist guarantees that when they, the Jews, become a majority, they would not seek political domination. It was not surprising that Jewish colonization and Arab resentment should have led to open clashes between the two communities in the period ahead.

Over the question of self government and immigration, the reluctant of the British led the growth of Arab resentment. The reacted sharply and started rebellion in 1936 against the policy pursued by the British. The Arab rebellion in Palestine began with sporadic outbursts of terrorism on April 19, 1936. The ensuing disorders and the Arab general strike that followed were in retaliation against the British refusal to grant three demands first put by the Arab leadership of Palestine to the Mandatory authority in November, 1935. The three demands were (a) total cessation of Jewish immigration into Palestine; (b) prohibition of all sales of Arab land to Jews; and (c) the granting of independence to Palestine and the ending to the Mandate.

With the passage of time the Arabs were persuaded to call off the rebellion of their own accord. As regards the effects of the rebellion it is to be mentioned that the revolt in Palestine of 1936-1939 was, in size, intensity, and

⁵⁰ Chaim Weizann, *Trial and Error* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1949), p. 335 cited in Safiuddin Joardar, *Dhaka University Studies*, pp. 58-59.

longevity, the most serious uprising against foreign domination in the Arab world between the wars. But in retrospect, it was doomed to failure. Neither the internal evolution of the Palestinian Arab community, the enfeeblement of the imperial power, or international conditions had developed to the point where the revolt could have liberated Palestine. In a predominantly agricultural society still compartmentalized on pre-modern lines, in which nationalist concepts and nationalist goals had taken hold with only a small segment of the population there were crucial gaps between the various elements involved in the revolt. The urban political leadership was quite limited in both its aims and its willingness to commit itself wholeheartedly to a struggle for these aims. The rural peasantry - their raw material of the armed revolt itself - was continually divided against itself by local and factional rivalries stemming from traditional ties. For most of the duration of the revolt, the aim of the political leadership was the minimal one of changing British policy in Palestine rather than ousting the British. It seems that for a short time only, and in circumstances which were of a transitory nature, wresting control of the country was actually hoped for. But the very violence of the revolt as well as the factional uses to which much of the violence was being put deprived it of much of its support, and the actual change in British policy made in 1939 produced general (if unenthusiastic) acquiescence when Great Britain succeeded in making liberation too difficult.

It must not be forgotten that the revolt occurred in the 1930s, before Great Britain's ability to behave as an imperial power had been crippled by Second World War and before her resolve to meet what she conceived of as her imperial responsibilities had been debilitated. While Great Britain appeased the Arabs by her retreat from the partition plan this appeasement was aimed chiefly at the Arab states surrounding Palestine, to insure their favourable disposition in the impending war. Within Palestine, the revolt was successfully repressed by military methods. Finally, the atmosphere of world politics had not yet developed to the point where wars of national liberation were regarded as an invariably progressive development: the League of Nations had no Afro-Asian bloc, and those powers which did denounce British military action in Palestine either stood for little on the scale of world moral

voices (such as Italy and Germany) or were satisfied with the White Paper's promise of a future independent and Arab-dominated Palestine (such as the Arab states). In all these ways, the revolt was premature: it occurred before the Palestinian Arab community was sufficiently developed, before the British Empire was sufficiently weakened, and before the world as a whole was sufficiently anti-imperialist.

But the results of the revolt of 1936-1939 were nevertheless momentous. While a failure on the military level and on terms of its maximal goals, it did succeed in altering the policy of Great Britain in Palestine, an alteration which in turn produced the Zionist struggle for liberation a few years later. Paradoxically, the revolt strengthened the *Yishuv* for that struggle: in the late 1930s the Jewish sector of the economy made considerable advances towards autonomy, defensive fortification were built, Haganah increased in numbers and improved in training, and the minority military organization ETZEL began its anti-Arab operations. At the same time, the revolt shattered the Arab community virtually beyond repair. By 1939, the Arab leadership was decimated, literally in some cases, figuratively in the case of the dominant faction, the supporters of Hajj Amin (many of whom remained in exile until the conclusion of Second World War). Physically the Palestinian Arab community was exhausted: the economy had suffered greatly from the revolt, the rural armament (often acquired over generations) had to a large degree been either expended or captured, and many of the young militants who would be so desperately needed in the 1940s were dead. Casualty figures for guerrilla forces are notoriously difficult to estimate, but the most likely figure for this revolt is that from four to six thousand Arabs were killed during the course of the revolt. An ominous portent was the temporary flight of thousands of well-to-do Palestinian Arabs to neighbouring countries at the peak of the revolt, a flight when was to be repeated, with permanent effects, a decade later. While it would be too much to say that the failure of the revolt predetermined the later failure of the 1940s, the fact remains that the Arabs of Palestine had largely expanded their potentialities for organized violence in the 1930s and were to make a much poorer showing a decade later.

But the most important result of the Arab revolt was one which seemed to compensate for this weakening of the Palestinian Arabs. For it was in the late 1930s that the Arab side of the Palestine problem assumed its contemporary dimensions, that the concern of the rest of the eastern Arab world with the Arab-Zionist competition for Palestine became overt, massive, and (seemingly) irreversible. Only at this time, due to a variety of unique circumstances and given the stimulus of the revolt itself, did Palestine assume its central position in Arab perceptions.

As the Zionists saw it on the eve of the Arab Revolt, Arab opposition posed the greatest single obstacle to the fulfilment of their dream of a Jewish national home in Palestine. Zionists were divided, however, in their attitudes toward the Palestinian Arabs, in their interpretations of the gravity of the obstacle they pose, and in their approaches to overcoming it. On this, the most important question facing Zionism, Zionists tended to fall into three principal groups: Official, Revisionist, and Bi-nationalist with different perceptions regarding the issue.⁵¹

Under such circumstances, there appeared to be only two ways to solve the Palestine problem in a Zionist spirit: agreement with the Arabs or dependence upon the British. For various reasons, most Zionists reached the conclusion that, for the time being at least, agreement with the Arabs was impossible. Of this group of Zionists, most who perceived the existence of Arab nationalism in Palestine would seek to solve the problem by quickly creating a Jewish majority, recognizing as they did the importance of the time factor. A small group of Zionists believe that agreement with the Arabs was not altogether impossible, although they admitted that there were huge obstacles to overcome. This latter group, contrary to general Zionist opinion, considered the Arabs, and not the British, to be those with whom the Zionists had to deal, and warned that otherwise armed conflict was inevitable. The

⁵¹ The 'Official' Zionist group is here meant to include members of the Jewish Agency, the sounding-board of official Zionist policy. Those Zionists most commonly called 'Revisionists' were members of the New Zionist Organization, a group set up in opposition to the policies of the Official Zionists. For the purposes of this study, the 'Bi-nationalist' group includes members of the Hashomer Hatzair organization and independent individuals who believed that the solution to the Palestine question lay in the establishment of a bi-national state.

chances for reconciliation between the two national movements however, appear to have been almost non-existent especially in early 1936, when for various reasons the expectations of both communities were at their peaks.

After the Arab uprising of 1936, a Royal Commission was appointed to investigate its causes and recommended a solution for Palestine problem.⁵² The Commission recognized that

"There is no common ground between them (Arabs and Jews). The Arab community is predominantly Asiatic in character, the Jewish community predominantly European. They differ in religion and language. Their culture, social life, their ways of thought and conduct is as incompatible as their national aspirations."⁵³

The Peel Commission had declared the British Mandate to be "unworkable" and this view was publicly endorsed by the British Government, but the partition proposal was ultimately rejected by Britain. In 1937, the Royal Commission recommended the partition of Palestine into Arab and Jewish States and the creation of a neutral enclave around Jerusalem and Bethlehem.⁵⁴ The Arab Higher Committee categorically rejected the partition scheme while the Zionists agreed to negotiate with the British. Due to continued resistance by the Arab population the British abandoned the partition scheme and took a new look at the problem. Thereupon, the British Government sent another commission known as Woodhead commission to investigate ways of implementing the Peel Plan in 1938. It found unanimously that partition would be unworkable because the proposed Jewish state was too small and the likelihood of Arab resistance too great. Instead Great Britain announced that an Anglo-Jewish-Arab conference would convene in London during February and March 1939 to discuss the future of Palestine.⁵⁵ They called the Arab and Jewish leaders into a Conference at London. The Arab leaders pressed for

⁵² Also called the Peel Commission, after its Chairman Lord Peel.

⁵³ The Palestine Royal Commission Report, Comd, 5479, 1936, quoted in Arnold J. Toynbee, *op.cit.*, p. 742.

⁵⁴ Lenczowski: *op.cit.*, p. 383 ; Peel Commission Report, Foreign Office Papers, cmd, 5479, of July 7, 1937.

⁵⁵ Don Peretz, *The Middle East Today* (New York: Praeger, 1983), p. 297.

immediate independence and the stoppage of Jewish immigration in Palestine, while the Jews urged the continuation of the British mandate. Finally, the British Government issued 'The MacDonald White Paper' on May 17, 1939 which announced that the Jewish national home as envisaged in the Balfour Declaration had been established and that its further development against the wishes of the Arabs would be a violation of Britain's undertakings to the Arabs.⁵⁶ The Jewish immigration was to continue for five years during which period the entry of 75000 Jewish immigrants would be permitted and thereafter it would stop completely.⁵⁷ Furthermore, the government imposed restrictions on the transfer of land to the Jews for a period of five years and assured the establishment of self-government in Palestine.⁵⁸

Thus, the White Paper of 1939 denied any intention of forcibly converting Palestine into a Jewish State, against the will of the Arab population. It limited Jewish immigration from 1939 to 1944 to a maximum of 75,000, sought to check Jewish territorial expansion by authorizing the High Commissioner to regulate or prohibit land sales from Arabs to Jews and envisaged an independent Palestine, jointly governed by the two communities.⁵⁹

As mentioned above, the White Paper represents a shift in the British policy toward Palestine. It can be attributed to the changed situation arising out of the Nazi threat. The world stood on the threshold of another war. The British were worried about their interests east of the Suez and needed the active alliance of the Arabs in the war, for the latter's hostility could jeopardize the life-line of imperial communications. Therefore, they sought to appease the Arabs. But the Zionists launched a full-blast campaign against the White Paper. They shifted their field activities from UK to the USA. They held a conference at the Biltmore Hotel in New York in May 1942 which was attended by the Zionist leaders from the U.S., Europe and Palestine. The Conference adopted on May 11, 1942 what became known as the Biltmore

⁵⁶ Cmd. 6119; The 1939 *White Paper* dated May, 17, 1939.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Comd. 6109, 1939. Reproduced in *Official Documents, Pledges and Resolutions on Palestine*, pp. 64-71.

Programme. It rejected the White Paper of May 1939 and demanded the opening of Palestine to unrestricted Jewish immigration, the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine and the recognition of a Jewish military force.⁶⁰ It is interesting to note how the Zionist managed to defeat the White Paper. By vigorous lobbying they sold the idea of Jewish Commonwealth to the American government. Although the U.S. Congress had endorsed the idea of a national Jewish home, it was not until 1944 that the ruling Democratic Party, under Zionist pressure, openly favoured the "setting up of a free and democratic Jewish Commonwealth".⁶¹ Since then national home and state became interchangeable terms as far as the American government was concerned. But still the U.S. government had some use for the Arabs. While the war went on, President Roosevelt repeatedly assured King 'Abdul 'Aziz Ibn Sa'ud that he would not take any action prejudicial to the interests of Arabs nor would make changes in the basic U.S. policy without first consulting the Arabs and Jews.⁶² But his successor, Truman yielding to the Zionist pressure, asked Premier Atlee to allow immediate entry to 100,000 Jewish refugees.⁶³ The British resented the pressure tactics of Truman. The U.S. pressed Britain to allow massive Jewish settlement in Palestine because it did not like to permit them to settle in America.⁶⁴

But while the division of Palestine was averted, the British admission that the mandate was unworkable did much to transfer the initiative directly to the Jews and Arabs. In a bid to impose a solution they were unequally balanced: though fewer in number, the Jews were more advanced and had the advantages of unity, effective propaganda media, superior organization, vast financial resources. Further, they capitalized on the universal sympathy for their cause, aroused by Hitler's persecution of European Jews. In their campaign they also enlisted the political and financial support of the American

⁶⁰ ESO Foundation for Palestine, *A Study of Jewish, Arab and British Policies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1947), Vol. II, p. 1085.

⁶¹ Alfred M. Lilienthal: *The Other Side of the Coin* (New York: Devin Adair Co., 1965), pp. 272-73.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 274.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 278.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 280.

Jewry, which after the war, had become the largest concentration of Jews in any country. Led by President Truman, American official circles and public opinion urged Britain to initiate a programme of mass Jewish immigration and colonization in Palestine.⁶⁵ As a result, the Anglo-American Commission of Enquiry was set up in 1945 to investigate the plight of Jews in Europe and the prospect of further immigration into Palestine.

In its report the Commission pointed out that Palestine alone could not accommodate all the displaced Jews of the world, but recommended that 100,000 Jewish refugees should be admitted as soon as possible. It proposed further, that a future independent Palestine should be neither an Arab nor a Jewish State, but a State in which both people would share equally.⁶⁶ Unlike the British Government, Truman refused to treat the report as a whole, singling out for immediate implementation only the clause relating to immigration. This "at once put the Jews in a position where they felt need make no further concession to the report"⁶⁷ The report was also rejected by the Arabs.

The Commission had also urged the liquidation of all illegal forces in Palestine. The Palestinian Arabs were represented by the Palestine Arab Higher Committee, formed in 1936 through the fusion of five political parties, and from 1945 onwards, also by the League of Arab states. By and large they had so far been "vocally violent and bitter" but "physically quiescent".⁶⁸ On the other hand, the Jews had not only resorted to large-scale illegal immigration but over the years had also organized illegal forces – Hagana, Irugn Zvai Leumi and the Stern Gang – which engage in acts of sabotage and terrorism. According to Cunningham, in suppressing them "neither from the Jewish

⁶⁵ In 1945 the Governors of 38 of the 48 States of the United States had supported a petition asking Truman to take steps to convert Palestine into a Jewish State. George E. Kirk, *Survey of International Affairs, 1939- 1946: The Middle East 1945-1950*, London: Oxford University Press for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1954, p. 193.

⁶⁶ A summary of the Commission's recommendations can be found in *Keesings Contemporary Archives*, Vol. VI, 1946-1948, Cols. 7891-93.

⁶⁷ Sir Alan Cunningham. "Palestine—the Last Days of the Mandate", *International Affairs*, London, October 1948, p. 484. Cunningham was Britain's last High Commissioner in Palestine.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 483.

Agency, nor from the Jewish people did we get the support we required".⁶⁹ On the contrary, as the power of the Mandatory weakened, these groups were able to operate with more daring and success.

Even though the British Labour party had all along adopted a pro-Zionist posture to the extent of adopting a resolution in its 1944 annual convention to the effect that the Palestinian Arabs should be encouraged to move out of the country as the Jews moved in, the labour government that was formed after the 1945 elections found that the Palestinian problem was infinitely more complicated and adopted a less than enthusiastic attitude to the question of an unlimited Jewish immigration. The reactions of the Zionists were two-fold. Firstly, they tried, as an active pro-Zionist, professor Harold Laski, said to "fight the Atlee-Bevin betrayal of the Jews"⁷⁰ Secondly, inside Palestine the Jewish, secret terrorist organization such the *Haganah*, the *Irgun* and the *stern Gang* started 'operations' both against the British officials and the vital installations. As was to be expected, no British proposal for the future of Palestine was acceptable to both the Arabs and the Jews.⁷¹ Since the British were reluctant to face the responsibility of the new situation which threatened civil war, the Foreign Secretary announced on February 18, 1947 that the mandate had proved to be unworkable and that the British government wanted its termination.⁷² On April 2, 1947 the United Kingdom Delegation requested the U.N. Secretary General that the Palestine question be placed on the agenda of the General Assembly and that it should set up a special Committee to consider the matter.⁷³ The Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) was formed to look into the problem and suggest a solution. So the fate of Palestine now depended, not as the principle of self-determination-demanded, on the population of the country, but upon a collection of foreign Powers.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 486.

⁷⁰ Kingsley Martin, *Harold Laski* (London; Victor Gollancz, 1953), p. 26; cited in Safiuddin Joarder, *Dhaka University Studies*, p. 59.

⁷¹ *British Proposals for the Future of Palestine, July 1946 February 1947*, Cmd. 7044, 1949, Extracts reproduced in *Official Documents, Pledges and Resolutions on Palestine*, pp. 94-106; cited in Safiuddin Joarder, *Dhaka University Studies*, p. 59.

⁷² Hadawi, *op.cit.*, p. 75; cited in Safiuddin Joarder, *Dhaka University Studies*, p. 59.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 76; cited in Safiuddin Joarder, *Dhaka University Studies*, p. 59.

The Committee visited the area and favoured independence and economic union for Palestine. Thereafter the recommendation was divided into Majority and Minority Reports. The Majority report supported by Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, the Netherlands, Peru, Sweden and Uruguay recommended the partition of Palestine into Arab and Jewish States.⁷⁴ The Arab state was allocated 42.88 percent of the total territory while the Jewish State was given 56.47%. Jerusalem was to remain an international Zone.⁷⁵ The Minority Report endorsed by India, Iran, and Yugoslavia provided for a federal state with Arab and Jewish units each enjoying complete autonomy.⁷⁶ Jerusalem was to be its capital. The Federal Government was to exercise jurisdiction over defence, foreign affairs, immigration, currency, interstate waterways, transport and communications while the Arab and Jewish States were to be responsible for local matters.

While the Zionists favoured the Majority Report, the Arabs favoured none and they kept repeating their earlier demand for the establishment of the rule of the majority in Palestine, even though some of them felt that the Minority Report was the lesser of the two evils. The General Assembly voted the partition resolution on November 29, 1947 with 33 in favour, 13 against and to abstentions.⁷⁷ While the U.S. and Soviet Union voted for the partition, Britain abstained, as she also did on the question of the admission of Israel to the U.N. on May 11, 1949. The Arabs rejected both the plans. The evidence is overwhelming that the requisite two-third majority in favour of the partition resolution was obtained by strong-arm methods used by U.S. diplomats. Liberia, Haiti and the Philippines, who had earlier opposed the partition, finally voted for it.⁷⁸ Britain's Premier Atlee said that the American policy was influenced by "Jewish votes and party contribution of several big Jewish firms".⁷⁹ This charge was admitted by President Truman who said that he was

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

⁷⁹ Quoted in Lilienthal; *op.cit.*, p. 280.

asked to use the influence of Washington to secure majority support for the partition plan at the general Assembly session.⁸⁰ The extent to which American policy was subjected to Zionist pressure can be judged from the following remark made by Truman while addressing a group of U.S. officials: "I am sorry, gentlemen, but I have to answer to hundreds of thousands who are anxious for the success of Zionism. I do not have hundreds of thousands of Arabs among my constituents".⁸¹ According to the Partition Resolution, the Palestine Commission was to take over the administration of Palestine after the withdrawal of the armed forces by the mandatory power⁸² and facilitate the transfer of sovereignty to the successor governments namely the Arab and Jewish States. Britain did not permit the Commission to function on the ground that such an arrangement would give rise to diarchy. Since neither the Arabs nor Britain accepted the partition plan, there was no existing authority to take over power nor the British withdrawal was slapdash and haphazard, meanwhile, both the Arabs and the Jews prepared for the war which now seemed inevitable. In fact, the struggle for supremacy had already started,⁸³ and the Arabs progressively lost ground until at the end of the Mandate the Jews held all the territory which had been allotted to the Jewish State by the United Nations. In the meantime armed Zionist hordes led by Hagana and other terrorist organizations descended upon the Arab population which appealed in vain to the Big Powers for help. On April 9, 1948 some 250 men, women and children were murdered in cold blood in the village of Deir Yasin alone.⁸⁴ The invading armies systematically emptied the land of the Arab population. Actually the Zionists had started the war and the blood purge of the Arabs before May 14, 1948. They were about to overrun the entire territory. As the Security Council debated a new United States proposal for a temporary trusteeship in Palestine, the State of Israel was announced on the 14 May 1948. Next day, the armies of the neighbouring Arab states which had already been mobilized, began an invasion of Palestine.

⁸⁰ A Lilienthal: *op.cit.*, p. 279.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 282.

⁸² *U.N. Partition No. 181 (II)* of 29 November 1947.

⁸³ For an account of guerilla activities in Palestine between December 1947 and May 1948, see George E. Kirk, *op.cit.*, p. 251 ff.

⁸⁴ Hadawi: *op.cit.*, p. 104.

Since the mandatory power failed to maintain law and order with the result that the Arab states had to intervene to save the life and property of the Arabs. In a cable to the U.N. Secretary-General on May 14, 1948, the Secretary-General of the Arab League gave reasons for the Arab intervention. Their object was "to restore peace and security and to prevent the spread of lawlessness and disorder into the neighbouring Arab lands".⁸⁵ These developments culminated in the Arab-Israeli war which was called off in response to the Security Council resolution passed on July 15, 1948.⁸⁶ The war followed a surprising course. With the exception of the Trans Jordan Arab Legion which successfully captured a part of Jerusalem, the armies of the Arab states were repulsed and suffered heavily. In the process, Israel extended its frontiers by occupying territory which had been assigned to the Arab state by the United Nations. This territory it retained when after protracted mediation by the United Nations, separate armistice agreements were signed between Israel and Egypt, Trans Jordan, Syria and the Lebanon.⁸⁷ In the war Israel emerged as victor and occupied large portions of Arab Palestine as well as the greater part of Jerusalem which was proclaimed capital of the new State. Israelis ejected nearly one million Arabs from their homes. After the first Arab-Israeli war, Israel occupied 77% of the total area instead of 56% which was allocated to her under the U.N. partition plan. Since then Israel has annexed more Arab territory in contravention of the U.N. resolutions of November 29, 1947. Thus the State of Israel which emerged after the war was not the Jewish State envisaged by the U.N. Resolution. Hence the Arabs' refusal to accord recognition to her.

Following the Arab-Jewish war of 1948, the peace efforts by the U.N. mediator, Count Folke Bernadotte, were defeated by Zionists who assassinated him in Jerusalem on September 17, 1949 because in his recommendations to the U.N. General Assembly he had suggested certain changes in the frontiers, which amounted to the transfer of Negeb to Jordan and Western Galilee and

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

⁸⁷ With Egypt on 24 February 1949, with the Lebanon on 23 March 1949, with Jordan on 3 April 1949 and with Syria on 20 July, 1949.

Jaffa to Israel. Haifa was to become a free port and Lydda a free Airport.⁸⁸ Jerusalem was to be placed under the jurisdiction of U.N. Count Bernadotte opposed the unrestricted Jewish immigration to Palestine since he feared that it would cause population pressure and pose a threat to the neighbouring states.⁸⁹ Subsequent events have borne out his opinion.

Dr. Ralph Bunch, the successor of Count Bernadotte, managed to arrange a series of armistice agreements between Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria, on the one hand, and Israel on the other. The agreement maintained the cease-fire line pending the final territorial settlement between the belligerents. Since armistice in international law is a temporary cessation of hostilities, the Arab states maintain that they are in a state of war with Israel. One of the fundamental provisions common to all the four Agreements is that the armistice demarcation line can neither be "construed as a political or territorial boundary" nor is it prejudicial to the "rights, claims and positions" of either Party.⁹⁰ Not only does Israel treat the demarcation line as her actual frontier but asserts her claim on the territory of her Arab neighbours beyond the line. It is difficult to see how her Arab neighbours can declare the end of belligerency in the face of Israel's self-avowed expansionist policy. On March 10, 1949, about a fortnight after the conclusion of General Armistice Agreement, Israel invaded Southern Negeb and effected junction with the Gulf of Aqaba from where she had been excluded by the Agreement.⁹¹

The United Nations proceeded to arrange a final and permanent settlement of Arab-Israeli dispute on the basis of the partition Resolution. It also addressed itself to the problem of Arab refugees who had been expelled from their homes by Israeli army and lived under subhuman conditions. The U.N. felt that no stable peace was possible with one million displaced persons yearning for return to their motherland. The General Assembly resolutions of December II, 1948 set up a Conciliation Commission "to facilitate the repatriation, resettlement and economic and social rehabilitation of the refugees and the

⁸⁸ Hadawi: *op.cit.*, p. 156.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 117-118.

⁹¹ Hadawi: *op.cit.*, p. 150.

payment of compensation". It also charged the Commission with the task of assisting the parties to arrive at the settlement of outstanding issues.⁹² The Conciliation Commission drew up what became known as the Lausanne Protocol, which provided for the repatriation of the Arab refugees and the restoration of their rights and property as well as the territorial settlement of Palestine in accordance with the U.N. resolution.⁹³ Israel signed the protocol on May 12, 1949⁹⁴ since her as seeking admission to the U.N. which had rejected her application in December 1948 on the ground that the Jewish State did not honour her obligation under U.N. Charter. While admitting Israel into the membership of the United Nations on May 11, 1949 the General Assembly resolution enjoined her to comply with the U.N. Partition Plan and December 11 resolution.⁹⁵ In other words, the admission of Israel was conditional upon her evacuation of the occupied territory and return to the boundaries as defined by the Partition Resolution. She was also required to facilitate the return of such Arab refugees as were expelled by her during the war. No sooner had Israel been admitted to the U.N. than she denounced the Lausanne Protocol and asserted fantastic claims upon the entire territory of mandatory Palestine with the temporary exception of the Central Area of Palestine⁹⁶ which was under the military occupation of Jordan. Israel also refused to permit the return of Arab refugees to their homes.

Nor were the founders of Israel content with the mass eviction of Arabs from the land of their birth. They passed discriminatory laws which reduced the Arab subjects to second class citizens. In 1950 Israeli rulers passed the Law of Return granting unrestricted entry rights to Jews of all nationalities while the Nationality Law of 1952 required the native Arabs to fulfill certain conditions such as knowledge of Hebrew and three year residence in Israel prior to the date of application for naturalization.⁹⁷ About half a million Jews

⁹² U.N. Resolution 194 (III) of December 11, 1948.

⁹³ Hadawi: *op.cit.*, p. 160.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ U.N. Document A/519, p. 138.

⁹⁶ Hadawi: *op.cit.*, p. 160.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 199.

were imported in Israel within the first three years of her existence - a staggering number considering the absorptive capacity of the tiny State. On the other hand, restrictions were imposed upon the Arab citizens under the Military Emergency Measures preventing them from exercising the freedom of movement and enjoyment of property rights. Extraordinary powers were given to Israeli authorities under the Civil Emergency Laws and Regulation whereby they could declare any town and village as 'abandoned area' regardless of whether the area had been abandoned or not.⁹⁸ The Israeli government expropriated the Arab lands by promulgating the Land Acquisition Law on March 10, 1953 and Law of Limitations of 1958 which were applied with ruthless severity. By 1957 they confiscated 40,000 acres of Arab lands. The confiscated lands though acquired for 'public purposes' were ultimately transferred to the Jewish National Fund for the settlement of Jewish immigrants.⁹⁹ These discriminatory laws were in clear violation of the Charter of Human Rights and the U.N. Resolutions and aimed at the genocide of the Arab population. While Israel flouted the authority of the U.N. and perpetrated untold atrocities upon the Arab population, it continued to enjoy the support of western powers without which its survival would have been impossible.

It is evident that in the Middle Eastern politics the most constant factor since 1948 has been the enduring hostility between the Jews, the Palestine Arabs and Arab states. "This hostility" to quote an Arab scholar, "sprang up from the attempt to import a new society in a land already occupied by an old one". When this "dynamic, exclusive, alien society" seized control of the greater part of Palestine, "two-thirds of the Arab inhabitants lost their lands and homes".¹⁰⁰ The establishment of Israel thus resulted, in a Diaspora in reverse.

The creation of Israel gave a powerful stimulus to the Arab nationalist sentiment. This great surge of nationalism produced new stresses and strains in the Middle Eastern politics. It drove a wedge between the newly-emergent nationalist Arab states with a strong socialistic streak and the traditionalist

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 212.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 214.

¹⁰⁰ Albert Hourani, "Palestine and Israel", *Observer*, London, 3 September 1967.

Arab regimes with a strong aversion to socialism and even to liberalism. This made it inevitable that the Middle East should be subjected to the pressures of cold war politics and that it should become a cockpit of the Big Power struggle for world supremacy.

Hence, political developments in the Middle East have largely been shaped by the interaction of certain basic factors chief of which are: the plight of the Palestinian refugees: the subservience of Israel to the West: the intra-Arab rivalry and the cut and thrust of the Big Power politics. These factors were demonstrably at work in the building up of subsequent crisis and its catastrophic denouement.

For the Palestinian Arabs the emergence of Israel meant the loss of a homeland in which for hundreds of years they had constituted an overwhelming majority. Now, to the bitterness of dispossession and the humiliation of defeat was added a vast refugee problem. It was ironic that Israel, a haven for homeless Jews, should have rendered homeless seventy per cent of the Arab population of Palestine.¹⁰¹ Refused permission to return to their homes in Palestine and not assimilated by the other Arab states, who feared that would be tantamount to recognizing Israel, they clustered in refugee encampments, maintained at subsistence level by the United Nations. For almost twenty years they remained a pathetic symbol of Arab opposition to the creation of Israel.

The Palestine issue has been exploited by every Arab statesman in a bid for supremacy in the Arab world. Apart from the circumstances of its creation, Israel could be criticised as an entity which is foreign to the regional character of the Middle East. But the Arab states also feared that committed as it was to its immigration policy, Israel was bound to expand at the expense of its neighbours. Nor were their fears totally unjustified.

It is to be noted that after the attainment of independence in 1948, the policies of the Israeli government towards the Arab minority have been those of an occupying power towards the subjugated. The role of the Israeli army

¹⁰¹ George Lenczowski, *Op.cit.*, pp. 400-401.

over the Arab areas was legalized by a law passed in January, 1950. The law itself was based on the Defence (Emergency) Regulations of 1945 promulgated by the British administration to deal with the Jewish terrorists. At that time the Regulations were violently attacked by the Zionist leaders.¹⁰² Article 109 (1) (d) of the Regulations says that restriction can be imposed on any person "in respect of his employment or business, in respect of his association or communication with other persons, and in respect of his activities in relation to the dissemination of news or the propagation of opinions". By articles 122 and 126, the Military Governor could "prevent, limit, or supervise ... the use of specific roads, generally." Article 119 empowered him to "order the confiscation ... of any house, building or piece of land if he has reason to suspect that guns have been fired or bombs, explosives or fire illegally set-off from that property" The article 125 went one better and granted the military governor the power "to proclaim any area or place a forbidden (closed) area which no one can enter or leave without a written permit from the military commander or his deputy failing which he is considered to have committed a crime". According to this article, all Arab villages and settlements were divided into small pockets called 'closed areas' which no Arab could leave or enter into without a written permission. Article 109 gave the military government the power to force any person to live in any place designated by the military governor or to remain in his or her place of residence for an appointed length of time. The military governor was also empowered by article 111 to order the detention of any person for a period not exceeding one year (subject to renewal) at any detention Camp." In order to make sure that these regulations were being complied with, a network of military courts was established. When after the 1967 war, the West Bank and Gaza were conquered by Israel; these regulations were applied to the inhabitants of these two areas as well.

On the declaration of independence on May, 14, 1948, the government of Israel became overnight the 'owner' of over 20.5 million *dunums* of Arab land not yet liberated by the Jewish National Fund and gradually absorbed

¹⁰² See Bernard Joseph, *British Rule in Palestine* (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1948), pp. 218-232.

through the Development Authority created by the Law 5710 in 1950. The magnitude of the expropriation of the lands of the Palestinian Arabs will be evident from the fact that since 1948 nearly 400 Arab townships and villages or roughly half of the Arab settlements in Palestine have disappeared – ploughed over by the Zionist settlers to become agricultural lands.¹⁰³ The expropriation was made easier through the Absentee Property Law 5710 of 1950 which defined an absentee as widely as possible and expropriated his property. The importance of this massive expropriation of Arab lands is the fact that it runs counter to the numerous UN resolutions on the return of the refugees to their properties and has worsened the already-bitter relationship between the Arabs and the Israelis. It is this bitterness that made the Palestinian refugees living in abominable conditions in the camps Jordan (before 1970) or Gaza (before 1967) to sneak into Israel from time to time to strike at this or that target. These generally ineffective raids promptly met with massive retaliatory raids by the Israeli army on the neighbouring Arab countries.¹⁰⁴

Israeli leaders regard her existing frontiers as temporary for, according to Ben-Gurion, "Israel has been established in only a portion of the land of Israel".¹⁰⁵ Therefore it is the Zionist mission to attain what they believe to be the historical frontiers of their state which extend from Nile to the Euphrates. That Israeli rulers' cling to this myth of the promised land is amply demonstrated by their annexationist policy. They have often violated the cease-fire line and made border raids on Egypt, Syria and Jordan in order to draw them into the war. The organized Israeli raids on Jordanian village Kibya on October 14, 1953 and on the Egyptian-held Gaza on February 28, 1955 and on Syrian territory east of Lake Tiberias on December 11, 1955 were calculated moves by Israeli adventurers to escalate the war against the Arabs. The Arab countries showed great restraint in the face of such grave provocations. They drew the attention of the Security Council to these

¹⁰³ The *Israel Government Yearbook 5719* (1958) speaks of the expropriation of lands in 350 Arab villages. There were other acquisitions after 1958.

¹⁰⁴ For the raids and the counter raids, see Lt. Gen. E.L. Burns, *Between Arab and Israeli* (London: Harrap, 1962).

¹⁰⁵ *Israeli Government Year Book 1952*, pp. 63, 65.

incidents which censured the Israeli acts. Fearful of the designs of Israel, Egypt requested the U.S. for the purchase of arms for defensive purposes but the U.S. turned down the Egyptian request, thus driving her to seek arms from the Communist bloc. It was under these circumstances that Egypt concluded an arms deal with Czechoslovakia. Had the U.S. responded to the Egyptian request, Nasser would not have turned to the Communist bloc and the Arab - U.S. relations would have been cordial. But it seems that the U.S. subordinated her foreign policy to the whims of domestic politics where the "vital Jewish votes" are more important than the goodwill of one hundred million Arab peoples of the Middle East and North Africa. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, saw in it an opportunity to get closer to the Arabs and multiply diplomatic and economic contacts with the Middle East countries which had hitherto been closed to her. The American Government did not take kindly to the Egyptian-Czechoslovakian arms deal and the Zionist inspired propaganda painted Nasser and his colleagues in pink and red. The withdrawal of U.S. offer to finance Aswan Dam did great harm to the U.S. - Egyptian relations. The U.S. backed out of its commitment due to opposition of Israeli and Cotton lobbies.¹⁰⁶ In sheer desperation Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal Co. on July 26, 1956. This was too much for the Tory pride to bear since imperial Britain saw in it a challenge to her vital interests. Although Nasser promised the payment of compensation to the expropriated Company as well as right of innocent passage to the ships of all nations except Israel, the British anger could not be pacified. Egypt closed the canal to Israeli shipping since 1949 on the ground that according to Article two of the International Convention of Constantinople of 1888 Egypt alone could restrict the passage of ships if it was "necessary to her defence or the maintenance of public order". While the Anglo-American governments and their western Allies were negotiating with Cairo for a peaceful settlement of the Suez problem, Eden and Guy Mollet, then Premier of France, met in Paris to decide upon the appropriate course of action. France had sounded out Israel to invade Egypt. The plan was kept secret from the U.S. for Eden and Mollet feared American opposition to their plan. The British expeditionary force at Cyprus was ready

¹⁰⁶ Jean and Simone Lecouture: *Egypt in Transition* (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1958), p. 469.

to act while the French preparation for landing were finalized. The French were sore with Nasser and wanted to get rid of him because they suspected his hand in the Algerian revolution. As for Israel, she welcomed the invasion plan because she expected to make territorial gains by conquest as she had done in the last war and secure the right of shipping through Suez and Gulf of Aqaba which had been blocked by Nasser. She also sought to weaken Egyptian defence by destroying her arsenal especially the newly imported arms from Czechoslovakia. An Israeli victory over Egypt would enable her to speak from a position of strength at the Conference table and force the Arabs to accord recognition to her.

On October 29, 1956 Israeli army supported by air force pierced into Sinai Peninsula. Other Israeli columns captured Gaza and the Gulf of Aqaba Coast of Sinai. While Egyptians were fighting the invaders, the British and the French gave ultimatum on October 30, 1956 to the combatants to withdraw ten miles from both sides of the Canal within 12 hours. The Egyptian rejection of the one-sided ultimatum gave them a pretext for intervention. The Anglo-French forces occupied Port Said.

The invasion of Egypt shocked the world opinion. President Eisenhower denounced it as a "desperate gamble" and asked the British and French to withdraw from Egypt; while the Soviet Union in a dramatic gesture threatened to use the "terrible new weapons" if the invaders continued the war. At the Security Council Britain and France vetoed an American and a Soviet resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire between Egypt and Israel.¹⁰⁷ Then the General Assembly passed two resolutions, one calling for immediate cease-fire and the other for speedy evacuation of the occupied territory by the invaders under the supervision of the United Nations Emergency Force.¹⁰⁸ Detachments of UNEF began arriving in Egypt in the middle of November and the British and French forces cleared out of the occupied territory by December 22, 1956. Israel was not willing for an unconditional withdrawal of her forces from the Egyptian territory. She insisted

¹⁰⁷ Lenczowski: *op.cit.*, p. 516.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 517.

as she insists today, on the recognition of her shipping rights through Suez, as a price for her evacuation. But President Eisenhower suspended her economic aid with the result that Israel was compelled to withdraw from the Egyptian territory.¹⁰⁹ In February 1957 when Eisenhower threatened Israel to suspend economic assistance in the event of her non-compliance with the U.N. resolution, Lyndon B. Johnson, the Democratic Party leader in the Senate, had a "heated session" with the President and told him that the house would never approve sanctions against Israel.¹¹⁰ He called these measures "unwise, unfair and one-sided" and on the Senate floor he accused Egypt of having provoked Israel's "military counteraction" by continually maintaining a state of war.¹¹¹ Judging from his past and present record one comes to the conclusion that Mr. Johnson has been at least consistent, if not impartial, in his policy toward Arab-Israeli conflict.

Nasser agreed to the stationing of the U.N. Force at Sherm-el-Sheikh on the condition that they would be withdrawn on Egypt's demand.¹¹² Egypt also conceded that the Israeli ships could pass through the Gulf of Aqaba until the presence of UNEF at Sharm -el-Sheikh.¹¹³ In other words, Egypt reserved the right to impose blockade after the withdrawal of the U.N. Force. This was to become the cause of the third Arab-Israeli war.

From the traumatic experience of 1948 up to the mid - 60's, the activities of the bitterly angry Palestinians living in refugee camps consisted of occasional forays into Israel to cause whatever damage they could inflict on Israel. Except for the *fedayeen* raids from Gaza in 1955, such forays were not very effective and often ended in disasters. Majority of the Palestinians still believed that the various Arab governments will be able to find a solution to the Palestine problem that would make it possible for them to return to their 'homes'. This illusion was rudely shattered in June, 1967 when through a lightning pre-

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

¹¹⁰ Lilienthal: *op.cit.*, p. 327.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² Hadawi: *op.cit.*, p. 147.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

emptive attack Israel not only destroyed the air force and armies of the three front-line Arab states but also the credibility of the existing Arab leadership. Even though Yasir Arafat, a civil engineer by profession, had started building up a small group of guerrillas under the name of *al-Fatah* (victory) as early as 1955 and George Habash, a Greek Orthodox Christian from Lydda, was building up about the same time the 'Arab Nationalists' Movement and its commando wing the 'Heroes of Return' (Abtal al-Audah), the Arab League floated a 'tame' Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) under a namboyant lawyer Ahmad Shuqairy, and it was not until much later that the activists succeeded in evicting the 'barking lawyer' and capturing the PLO.

Even though the Palestinian guerrillas were divided into a number of 'parties' (about which later) whose mutual relationship was not always cordial, they succeeded in giving hope to and raising the morale of the Palestinians living in sub-human conditions in the refugee camps. The guerrillas, after all, were fighting to preserve the Palestinian entity, and in this the refugees saw their only hope of return to a normal human existence. And it is this entity that Israel was trying to destroy or just refuses to recognize its existence. This official Israeli attitude was clearly expressed in 1967 by the Israeli Minister of Information Israel Galili who in a speech at the United Kibbutz conference maintained that the Palestinian Arabs did not constitute an ethnic group or 'a people with distinct nationalistic character'. This view was clustered by Professor Jacob Talmon, of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, who in a long letter to the newspaper *Maariv* maintained that denying other peoples their rights deprived the Israelis of every moral right – 'at least in the eyes of the non-Jews' and remarked:

"Why should not the Arab who read Minister Galili's words, join the terrorists? If you steal his national right away from him, what else does he have to lose? Or do you assume that he has no sense of nationalism or concept of honour?"¹¹⁴ This sense of honour and self-respect of the

¹¹⁴ Cited by John K. Cooley, *Green March, Black September* (London: Frank Cass 1973), pp. 205-206.

Palestinians rose to a new height on March 21, 1968 when in the now famous Battle of Karameh (Jordan) the Palestinian guerrillas inflicted heavy damages on the invading Israeli army column.¹¹⁵

This separate Palestinian entity was given an intellectual boost by the creative Palestinian writers – especially poets such as Samih al-Qassen. Salim Jubran and Tawfiq Zayyad, Muhammad Darwish and Fadwa Tuqan. Some of them were imprisoned by the Israeli government for their combative writings.

With the passage of time, the third Arab-Jewish War took place in 1967. In the Six Day war of 1967 Israel won decisively. This resulted the loss of more Arab territories, displacement of still more refugees and the aggravation of the sense of grievance felt by the Palestinians and now shared more widely than ever in the rest of the Arab world. For six years, during which an uneasy condition of "no peace and no war" persisted in the area, accompanied by extreme tension and frequent outbreaks of guerrilla activity and even limited warfare, there was no material change in the situation. The Arabs, immediately after their defeat in 1967, were unwilling to consider negotiations: by the time they had modified this refusal, the Israelis had so hardened their position that there appeared to be no basis for on acceptable compromise. With diminishing conviction the United Nations, the superpowers and other intermediaries tried to devise a settlement, but without success. In May 1973 the Israelis celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the birth of the Jewish state with a military parade in Jerusalem which symbolized Israel's strength and determination. With the Arab states apparently divided and in disarray, the surprise was all the greater when, on October 6th, the armies of Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack on Israel which was to upset completely the power balance in the Middle East and to lead to important repercussions in the rest of the world.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ For an account of the Palestinian resistance movement in general, see Michael Hudson, "The Palestinian Arab Resistance Movement: its significance in the Middle East Crisis", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 23 (Summer, 1969).

¹¹⁶ Europa Publications Limited, *The Middle East and North Africa 1976-77*, p. 34.

During the six years between the June war of 1967 and the October war of 1973 there had been five main attempts from outside the area to provide in acceptable basis for agreement between the parties in the Middle East. The first of these was made at the United Nations in the autumn of 1967 when the Security Council, after anxious debate, adopted a unanimous resolution dealing with all the points at issue between Israel and her Arab neighbours. As a result of this resolution (No. 242 of November 22nd, 1967) a Swedish diplomat, Dr. Gunnar Jarring, was appointed as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, with the task of establishing contact with the conflicting parties and helping them to reach agreement. The fact that the resolution was supported by all the major powers gave it a strength which enabled it to survive as the basis for a potential settlement; but, despite the patient efforts of Dr. Jarring, the varied interpretations placed upon the resolution prevented its implementation.¹¹⁷

The second initiative was taken early in 1969 at the suggestion of the French Government, in the conviction that Dr. Jarring would be unable to make any progress until the major powers agreed on a single interpretation of the Security Council resolution. Accordingly, Four-Power talks were started in New York between the representatives at the UN of the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain and France and these were later superseded by bilateral talks between the United States and the Soviet Union. The stumbling-block continued to be the interpretation of the clause in resolution 242 which provided for Israeli withdrawal "from territories occupied" in the conflict of June 1967 and by the end of the year it was clear that the two super-powers had failed to reach agreement.¹¹⁸

The American Secretary of State, Mr. William Rogers, then took the Third initiative, putting forward in December 1969 a series of proposals which came to be known as the "Rogers Plan". The plan left the details of a settlement to be negotiated between the interested parties, but made it clear that the American Government envisaged only minor rectifications in the pre-

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

June 1967 borders between Israel and her Arab neighbours and favoured granting to the Palestinians the right so often promised in UN resolutions to choose between returning to Palestine or receiving compensation for their lost properties.¹¹⁹ The Rogers proposals were badly received by all parties and although they continued to be discussed throughout 1970 the United States Government finally abandoned them in favour of a less ambitious plan to achieve a partial settlement between Israel and Egypt.¹²⁰

The mood of Egypt after the defeat of 1967 was one of pessimism. Apart from the loss of face, the loss of Sinai with the Abu Rudeis oil field and the loss of the revenue from the canal were severe economic blows, though the Arab economic assistance prevented an immediate breakdown of the economy.

With the passage of time, after coming to power following the death of Nasser, the mood of Sa'dat alternated between exhilaration and despair. He talked confidentially about 1971 being the "year of decision", yet nothing was decided; he was elated with early Egyptian success in the 1973 war, yet at the latter stage the counter – thrust by Israel left a large part of the Third Egyptian Army stranded in the Sinai, and all that he got from it was some territorial adjustments through two disengagement treaties (Sinai I on January, 18, 1974 and Sinai II on September, 14, 1975) as a result of Kissinger's 'Shuttle Diplomacy'. The Kissingerian approach to the Middle Eastern problem suffered from two limitations: it paid attention only to territory to the exclusion of the people (the Palestinians) and it attempted to exclude USSR totally from the peace-process in the area.¹²¹

The 'Shuttle diplomacy' did not – and could not – break down the stalemate and a stalemate favoured the Israelis. They got the time to push through their programme of establishing new settlements in the occupied territories with a view to changing for ever the demographic and geographic

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ Text of the Joint statement in Robert O. Freedman, *Soviet Policy Towards the Middle East Since 1970*, New York, Praeger, 1978, pp. 303-304 cited in Safiuddin Joarder, *The Dhaka University Studies*, p. 64.

realities. The violent demonstrations by the Palestinians throughout the occupied territories were strongly suppressed making it necessary for the UN Human Rights Commission to adopt an unanimous resolution on February 15, 1977 expressing 'grave concern' over the deteriorating situation in the occupied territories and calling on the government of Israel to adhere to the terms of the 4th Geneva Convention in its treatment of the civilians in all the occupied territories including Jerusalem".

Relations between Syria and Egypt deteriorated again as a result of President Sadat's peace initiative in November 1977. Syria's President Assad strongly criticized the move and diplomatic relations between the two countries were broken off in December.

It is to be recalled that as a result of the coming of rightist government in Israel under Begin, Sadat took initiative to make peace with Israel. This initiative resulted settlement of some differences through talks and made the two countries to come to a closer. The closeness led them signing of agreements in 1978 known in history as Camp David Agreements.

At Camp David summit two documents were produced: the first one was entitled "A Framework for Peace in the Middle East"; it was a set of instructions that would enable Israel, Jordan and the Palestinians to work out over five years the final status of Gaza and the West Bank. Some sort of self-government, undefined in the agreement, was to be decided upon in those areas provided gilt-edged securities were guaranteed for Israel. It was a vague and very possibly indefinable collection of terms to be reduced into concrete form within a stated time, that is, five years. The second and more definite document "A Framework for the conclusion of a Peace Treaty Between Egypt and Israel" called for an Israeli - Egyptian peace treaty to be signed within three months involving major withdrawal by Israel from Egyptian territory in three to nine months after the signing of the treaty and complete withdrawal in three years. Of course normalization of diplomatic relations would naturally follow. Israel's decision to deal with individual Arab states one by one and not as a single body was carried out. Egypt being the most powerful of the Arab states satisfied Israel's requirements. An important

matter: the question of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Sinai remained untouched. It was certainly a mixed victory for Israel; it was to lose Sinai but succeeded in dividing the Arab Camp. How far Arab solidarity achieved its goal is any one's guess; the prospect of some sort of peace in the Middle East could be visualized even if the Arab Camp was dispersed. The United States was responsible for this partial success; President Carter acted as the honest broker but Sinai, a biblical territory, had to be sacrificed by Israel no matter what divine sanction it received in the past. A climate of peace could be inaugurated in the Middle East if the terms of the two agreements were sincerely respected.¹²²

The Camp David Agreements failed to produce any fruitful result. In the 1980s tension between the Arabs and the Jews continued. In the course of it various attempts were made for making peace in the area under study.

The Fahd Plan, proposed in 1981, was an eight point proposal to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict and give the Palestinians an independent state. The elements of the plan were familiar, and loosely based on UN Resolutions 242 and 338: Israel to withdraw from 1967-occupied territories, including East Jerusalem (but not the whole city), dismantling of settlements, recognition of the PLO as the Palestinian representative, establishment of an independent Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital, and secure guarantees of peace. Fahd's plan was not popular at home with the Saudi intelligentsia, middle class, and clergy who were strongly critical of any proposal that recognized Israel.¹²³

At the Twelfth Arab Summit Conference, held in Fez, Morocco September 9, 1982, the League of Arab states adopted a version of the Fahd plan, which became known as the Fez Initiative. King Hassan of Morocco was a key supporter of the plan and its provision that implicitly recognized Israel's right to exist. His support at Fez led to a formal visit by Israeli Prime Minister Perez in 1986.¹²⁴

¹²² Nikshoy C. Chatterji, *A History of Modern Middle East* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1987), pp. 353-354.

¹²³ http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_1967_to_1991_fahd_1981.php.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

Israel rejected the Fez Initiative because it made all the usual demands of Israel but did not have anything new to provide for Israel's security. Still, it did represent a shift in Arab policy by a) its implicit recognition of Israel, and b) the possibility of negotiating a peace agreement of some sort. Fez thereby opened the door, a little, to future negotiations and peace initiatives.¹²⁵

The Reagan plan approach grew out of the belief that the US must show progress towards solving the Arab-Israeli issue -- or, at least, make energetic attempts in that direction -- to retain US influence in the Arab world. The policy was meant to show the Arabs that America was trying to respond to their grievances. There was also an important domestic political component or Reagan. In a speech delivered on September 1, 1982 President Reagan outlined a proposed solution for the Arab-Israeli conflict. He labeled his position as the "next step" in the process that was begun with the Camp David Accords to pave the way for autonomy for the Palestinian people. He spoke of ""the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and their just requirements." He proposed a five-year transition period for "the peaceful and orderly transfer of domestic authority from Israel to the Palestinian inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza" and a freeze on new Israeli settlements during that time. Self-government by the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza would be in association with Jordan and not a separate state. Jerusalem would remain undivided, its final status to be decided through negotiations¹²⁶

The Reagan Plan was finally rejected by Jordan and the PLO in April 1983 – a development that discouraged Washington about prospects for settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the reliability of Arab "moderates". Consequently, the US-Israel alliance was strengthened, recovering from the blows it had suffered during Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, and Syria was again identified as the prime obstacle to regional stability.¹²⁷

It was the PLO shelling, and not directly the Argov shooting as is sometimes assumed, that triggered the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. On June 6, 1982, under the direction of Defence Minister Ariel Sharon, Israel invaded

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_1967_to_1991_reagan_1982.php.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

Lebanon with a massive force, called Operation Peace for the Galilee, driving all the way to Beirut and putting the PLO and residents, as well as the Lebanese civilian population of that city, under siege. Israel justified its breach of the Habib cease-fire by citing the attempted assassination of the Israeli ambassador in London and a build-up of PLO armaments in South Lebanon. Israel was also concerned by increasing Syrian involvement in the Lebanese civil war and wanted to forestall a hostile, Syrian-backed government developing in Lebanon.¹²⁸

Israeli objectives in Lebanon, at a minimum, were to destroy the PLO's military power in southern Lebanon and to create a security zone there. If it proved possible, the plan would expand to encompass completely eradicating the PLO's military, political and economic hold over Lebanon, evicting Syrian forces from Lebanon, and facilitating the creation of a Christian-dominated Lebanon which would sign a peace treaty with Israel.¹²⁹

During the autumn of 1982, there were active negotiations among the United States, Israel, and Lebanon over the withdrawal of Israeli forces and the terms of a possible treaty between Lebanon and Israel. There were also negotiations over the removal of Syrian troops and PLO forces that still remained in Lebanon. The presence of the US Marines put pressure on the Lebanese to agree to the American plans and implied some measure of protection for the Lebanese authorities against those Lebanese, Palestinians, Syrians and other Arabs who adamantly opposed any normalization between Lebanon and Israel.¹³⁰

On May 17, 1983, after intense American shuttle diplomacy, Lebanon and Israel signed an agreement ending the State of War between the two countries and providing for a phased Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. The agreement was contingent on the withdrawal of Syrian and Palestinian forces in parallel with the Israelis. However, Syria, who occupied about 35% of Lebanon, had no intention of withdrawing. The agreement did not go into

¹²⁸ [http:// www. palestine facts.org/pf_1967to1991_lebanon_198x_backgd.php](http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_1967to1991_lebanon_198x_backgd.php).

¹²⁹ [http:// www. palestinefacts.org/pf_1967 to 1991_lebanon_198x_idf_course-php](http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_1967to1991_lebanon_198x_idf_course-php).

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

effect. Naturally fighting continued. On March 5, the Government of Lebanon, under pressure from Syria, announced that it had canceled the May 17, 1983 agreement providing for the withdrawal of Israeli troops and the end of the state of war with Israel.¹³¹

In the course of settling the Palestine issue acceptable to both the parties, the International Conference on the Question of Palestine took place at the United Nations Office in Geneva from August 29 to September 7, 1983. It was attended by representatives of 137 States -117 as full participants and 20 as observers - as well as by the PLO. This initiative did not receive the support of all parties: Israel, the United States and some other countries expressed their opposition to the holding of the Conference. In general, this conference reflected the anti-Israel bias that infected the United Nations soon after Israel was founded.¹³²

Later in 1983, the General Assembly endorsed the Declaration and welcomed the Geneva Conference's call for an international peace conference on the Middle East. Throughout the 1980s, the Assembly reaffirmed the call for convening the proposed conference. After politically motivated changes in the PLO's position were announced by Yasser Arafat in 1988, and a peace plan fielded by Israel in 1989, a peace conference did eventually take place at Madrid in 1991.¹³³

Although the PLO's diplomatic contacts with West European and Third World countries were steadily increasing in the mid-1970s, the PLO's terrorism and ideology prevented it from making headway with the US government whose policy, first formulated by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in 1975, was to refuse to deal with the PLO until it accepted UN Resolution 242, abandoned terrorism, and recognized Israel's right to exist. On November 7, 1985, Yasir Arafat formulated these distinctions into a far-ranging declaration, now known as "the Cairo Declaration", which was approved by the Palestinian National Council on November 19, 1988 in Algeria. In this declaration, Arafat says:

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_1967to1991_intconf_palestine_1983.php.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

PLO approves its 1974 decision on the condemnation of all forms of foreign operations and all forms of terror... From today, the Organization will take all deterrent steps against those who violate this decision. However, in the same declaration, Arafat further says, "the opposition to the Israeli occupation," will continue by, "all possible means," in the territories [in order to], "achieve the withdrawal from the territories."¹³⁴

In December 1987, a collective Palestinian popular uprising erupted against Israel in the West Bank and Gaza areas. This period of violence is known as the Intifada, or "shaking off." At first a spontaneous outburst instigated by false rumors and incitement by Muslim clerics, the Intifada quickly developed into a well-organized rebellion orchestrated by the PLO from its headquarters in Tunis. Masses of civilians attacked Israeli troops with stones, axes, Molotov cocktails, hand grenades, and firearms supplied by the Fatah, killing and wounding soldiers and civilians. Israeli troops, trained for combat with opposing armies, were not well prepared to fight this kind of war. As the intifada ran its course from 1987 to 1993, the level of violence and the degree to which it was organized and coordinated by the PLO only increased.¹³⁵

As a result of Israel's War of Independence in 1948, Jordan occupied East Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria, land known since that time as the "West Bank". In April 1950, Jordan annexed eastern Jerusalem (dividing the city for the first time in its history) and the "West Bank" areas in historical Judea and Samaria that Trans Jordan had occupied by military force in 1948. As a result the name of the country has been changed to Jordan in April 1949. On April 24, 1950, the Jordan House of Deputies and House of Notables, in a joint session, adopted a Resolution making the West Bank and Jerusalem part of Jordan. As a result of the Six Day War in 1967, Jordan lost control of the lands west of the Jordan River, including East Jerusalem. Israel began its administration of the territories, which continues today. Jordan not only suffered heavy casualties but also lost much of its best farmland and, as well, had to cope with hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees who fled the Israelis by crossing the Jordan to

¹³⁴ [http:// www.palestinefacts.org/pf_1967to1991_plo_cairo_1985.php](http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_1967to1991_plo_cairo_1985.php)

¹³⁵ http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_1967to1991_intifada_1987.php.

the east. Jordan maintained an uneasy relationship with its Palestinians, now the majority east of the Jordan. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) constantly incited the Palestinians against Jordan even though Jordan gave them citizenship and in general treated them better than any other Arab land. By 1970 the PLO became such a threat to Jordan, and an international embarrassment for Jordan because of their terrorism, that King Hussein drove them out of Jordan.¹³⁶ Since then a good number of talks took place between Hussein and Yasir Arafat for mutual understanding and settlement. But it did not happen due to the gap of their desires.

In December of 1987 the first Intifada, the Palestinian uprising on the West Bank and in Gaza, changed the entire situation for Jordan. Hussein supported the Intifada publicly and offered aid in an attempt to keep, or regain, Palestinian confidence. But Hussein's attempts at being seen as a friend of the Palestinians were rejected as Arafat became the spokesman for the Palestinians. In July 1988, in response to the accumulated pressures and the months of intifada demonstrations by Palestinians in the West Bank, King Hussein of Jordan ceded to the PLO all Jordanian claims to the territory. Any hopes of a Jordanian-Israeli resolution to the Palestine problem were effectively ended.¹³⁷

The outbreak of Arab violence during the first intifada in December of 1987 brought new urgency to US efforts to broker some kind of solution. To respond to the situation and show US engagement, Shultz produced a new plan, presented in January 1988, which combined elements of the Camp David Accords, the Reagan plan, King Hussein's proposals, and Israeli Foreign Minister Peres' ideas for an international conference. Between February and June 1988, Shultz used the Kissinger technique of "shuttle diplomacy" to promote his plan by travelling three times to the Middle East in the five months.

¹³⁶ http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_1967to_1991_jordan_renounce_claims.php.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

The basic elements of the Shultz plan called for:

- Begin negotiations hosted by the five permanent UN Security Council members, attended by all parties accepting UN Resolutions 242 and 338 and renouncing violence and terrorism.
- The Palestinians would be represented by a joint Jordan-Palestinian delegation who would negotiate the terms of a three-year transitional period for the territories
- The international meetings would facilitate separate bi-lateral negotiations for a final settlement, but have no veto or enforcement power.¹³⁸ But the plan did not satisfy all the relevant parties.

On November 15, 1988, a Palestinian state was proclaimed by Yasser Arafat at a meeting of the Palestine National Council in Algiers. This was the second declaration of such a state, the first being at a meeting in Gaza in October 1, 1948. Both the Gaza and the Algiers declarations are largely irrelevant today, notwithstanding that the Algiers Declaration received enormous attention at the time. The Palestine National Council based the Algiers declaration of Palestinian statehood on UN Resolution 181, the 1947 Partition Plan which divided Mandate Palestine into Arab and Jewish states. The real significance of the Algiers declaration was that it advanced the negotiations between the PLO and the United States.¹³⁹

It is to be noted that US policy, first formulated by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in 1975, was to refuse to deal with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) until it accepted certain conditions. These conditions for US contact with the PLO were set by Kissinger in a 1975 US-Israel memorandum of agreement. Kissinger promised that the United States:

- ... will not recognize or negotiate with the PLO as long as the PLO does not recognize Israel's right to exist and does not accept Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

¹³⁸ http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_1967to1991_shultz_plan.php.

¹³⁹ http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_1967to1991_algiers_declr.php.

Due to US pressure and also for getting recognition from the USA Arafat yielded and announced that

- The PLO accepted UN Resolution 242
- The PLO promised recognition of Israel
- The PLO renounced terrorism

Arafat concluded:

- We want peace...we are committed to peace, and we want to live in our Palestinian state and let others live.

Responding to the PLO's public pledges of this policy change, Shultz quickly announced that the US conditions were met and a US-PLO dialogue began in Tunis. Those talks ultimately led to the 1991 Madrid Conference.¹⁴⁰

In continuation of this Israel initiated a peace plan in May 1989. The plan consisted of four basic points:

- Strengthen the peace with Egypt as a regional cornerstone
- Promoting full peaceful relations with the Arab states
- Improving refugee conditions though international efforts

Palestinian elections and interim self-rule for a five year period leading to a "permanent solution"

There were also several "Basic Premises" set forth that were non-negotiable parts of the initiative:

- Israel opposed the establishment of an additional Palestinian state in the Gaza district and in the area between Israel and Jordan
- Israel would not conduct negotiations with the PLO

¹⁴⁰ http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_1967to1991_plo_israel_exist_1988.php.

- There would be no change in the status of Judea, Samaria and Gaza other than in accordance with the "basic guidelines of the government"

This initiative was based on the Camp David Accords, and in turn, formed the basis of the Baker Plan that led to the 1991 Madrid Conference Middle East Peace Negotiations.¹⁴¹

On November 1, 1989, US Secretary of State Baker formally submitted his Five-Point Election Plan to Israel and Egypt, although they had reviewed drafts beforehand. It was based on Israel's Four Point Plan of May 1989 and did not go into detail. It was intended as a framework under which Egypt would facilitate bringing Palestinian Arabs (but not the PLO) into a process of discussion about elections to establish proper representation for the Palestinians, and potentially other issues.¹⁴²

The break-up of the Soviet Union and the Gulf War reshaped the basic political order of the Middle East. In an attempt to take advantage of this change, US Secretary of State James Baker made eight trips to the region in the eight months following the Gulf War. The Madrid Invitation, inviting Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and the Palestinians to an opening conference jointly sponsored by the US and the Soviet Union on October 30, 1991, represents the result of this shuttle diplomacy.¹⁴³

The invitation, an outcome of compromises by all sides, detailed the structure of the Madrid process:

- An opening conference having no power to impose solutions
- Bilateral talks with the Arab states bordering Israel
- Talks with the Palestinians on 5-year interim self-rule, to be followed by talks on the permanent status
- Multilateral talks on key regional issues, like refugees.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_1967to1991_israel_peach_1989.php.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_1967to1991_madrid_1991.php

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

The Oslo Accords officially called the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements or Declaration of Principles (DOP) was a milestone in the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict, one of the major continuing issues within the wider Arab-Israeli conflict. It was the first direct, face-to-face agreement between the government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). It was intended to be the one framework for future negotiations and relations between the Israeli government and Palestinians, within which all outstanding "final status issues" between the two sides would be addressed and resolved. Negotiations concerning the agreements, an outgrowth of the Madrid Conference of 1991, were completed secretly in Oslo, Norway on 20 August 1993; the Accords were subsequently officially signed at a public ceremony in Washington, DC on 13 September 1993, in the presence of PLO chairman Yasir Arafat, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and US President Bill Clinton. The documents themselves were signed by Mahmoud Abbas for the PLO, foreign Minister Shimon Peres for Israel, Secretary of State Warren Christopher for the United States and foreign minister Andrei Kozyrev for Russia.¹⁴⁵

The Oslo Accords were a framework for the future relations between the two parties. The Accords provided for the creation of a Palestinian National Authority (PNA). The Palestinian Authority would have responsibility for the administration of the territory under its control. The Accords also called for the withdrawal of the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) from parts of the Gaza Strip and West Bank.¹⁴⁶

It was anticipated that this arrangement would last for a five-year interim period during which a permanent agreement would be negotiated (beginning no later than May 1996). Permanent issues such as positions on Jerusalem, Palestinian refugees, Israeli settlements, security and borders were deliberately left to be decided at a later stage. Interim Palestinian self-government was to be granted by Israel in phases.¹⁴⁷

Support for the Accords, of the concessions made and the process were not free from criticism on all sides. The repeated public posturing of all sides has discredited the process, and put the possibility of achieving peace into question [*citation needed*].

¹⁴⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oslo_Accords

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

Chapter 5

Involvement of the Arab states in the Palestine Problem before 1948

Egypt

Palestine issue seems to be the most sensitive and popular project among the Arabs throughout the whole of the Arab Middle East. The Egyptian decision-making elites followed the policy to achieve Arab unity through championing this issue. The Palestine issue thus acted as a prod for the Egyptian-decision makers to have a new look in Arab affairs. To champion this and to abandon isolation, Egypt has had to evolve an Arab-oriented policy bringing under its sharp focus the Palestine issue since late 1930s.

It is to be noted here that from the days of unilateral British declaration of Egyptian independence in 1922 till 1936, the Egyptian decision-makers did have no official involvement in the controversy that developed over the question of the future of Palestine. The main concern of the Egyptian government, at that time, was the delimitation of the Egyptian-Palestinian boundaries so that in no way it hampered the Egyptian interest. Though the sporadic outbreaks of violence in the late 1920s and early 1930s in Palestine aroused considerable reaction and much enthusiasm among the Egyptian public opinion, the Egyptian government itself tacitly avoided intervening in the situation. But during the Palestinian Arab revolt from 1936 to 1939, however, this stance of non-involvement came to an end. In late 1930s, successive Egyptian governments (the Wafdist ministries of 1936-37 and the coalition ministries of Mohammed Mahmud of 1938-39) had been deeply involved in the Palestine issue. In this way by 1939 the Egyptian decision-makers played a very vital role in diplomatic negotiations concerning Palestine.¹ At the same time, it should also be mentioned here that though the outbreak of resentment of the Palestinian Arabs in 1936 attracted the

¹ James Jankowski, "The Government of Egypt and the Palestine Question, 1936-1939", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 4, Oct., 1981, p. 427.

attention of the Egyptian public,² the Egyptian government at that time was involved in delicate negotiations for the conclusion of a treaty with Great Britain. So the government had to take great care for formulating any policy regarding Palestine. It rather took actions to control public expressions. Simultaneously, the government and even the opposition leaders of Egypt put emphasis on changing Palestine policy of the British government. This was because of the fact that until the conclusion of Anglo-Egyptian Treaty in the summer of 1936 Egypt had been occupied entirely, as regards external affairs, by her relations with Great Britain.

But on her emergence as an independent nation Egypt, as a Moslem and as an Arabic-speaking country inevitably began to take an interest in Arab affairs. In the development of the Palestine question, the conference of the Arabs at Bludan in Syria (September 1937) was a landmark in the increasing involvement of the Arab World in the issue'.³ Afterwards in October 1938, the World Parliamentary Congress of Arab and Muslim Countries for the Defence of Palestine' took place in Cairo. This marked Egypt's assuming a central place in unofficial (no Arab government took part officially in the Congress) Arab-Muslim efforts to assist the Palestinian Arab cause. The Arab revolts in Palestine (1936-39) and further development over the question of it brought about a radical change in the attitude of the Egyptian decision-makers towards Palestine. It then became impossible on their part and for all the independent Arab governments to ignore Palestine. Naturally, it became imperative and urgently necessary for them to try and influence events in Palestine. This was indeed a new phenomenon. From this time on, consultation between the British government and the Arab governments took place over the future of Palestine. The rejection of the British government of the Report of the Peel Commission's recommendation regarding the partition

² As regards the attitude of the Egyptian people, see., James JanKowski, "Egyptian Responses to the Palestine Problem in the inter war period", *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 12, 1980, pp. 1-38.

³ In order to rally Arab public opinion, the Mufti of Palestine activated the idea of a pan - Arab congress, to increase the pressure both on the British and the Arab government, cf., Elie Kedourte, "The Bludan Congress on Palestine, September, 1937", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 17, January, 1981.

of Palestine into Arab and Jewish areas was nothing but the outcome of intimations received from the independent Arab states who emphasized that such a solution would be unacceptable to them or to the people of the Arab World. The degree of this involvement further increased in the early months of 1939 when an international conference of Palestine Arab, Jewish and Arab government representatives were held in London in March 1939.⁴ The solution imposed by the British government according to the white paper of 1939 was promulgated after consultation with the Arab representatives present in the conference.

The pressure from Egypt along with that coming from other Arab countries, thus acted as an important factor in Great Britain's evolving policy for Palestine between 1937 and 1939. The Arab victory in the diplomatic battle over partition of Palestine came in good part because of the involvement of governments like Egypt in the Palestine question. It is to be noted here that preceding the conference Cairo became a temporary diplomatic centre of the Arab World in January 1939. At that time, the delegates of the Arab states (except Trans Jordan) arrived in the Egyptian capital for consultation about Arab strategy in the conference. While receiving the delegates cordially one of the Egyptian decision-makers expressed that Egypt has never forgotten the past glory of the Arabs and the unbroken friendship and connections between herself and the Arab countries through history.⁵

A good number of factors can be attributed to the growing involvement of the Egyptian decision-makers in the Palestine issue. The following are considered to be major ones prompting Egyptian political leaders to involve the government of Egypt in a previously neglected problem. The first and most important of these was the pressure of Egyptian public opinion upon the government. The second factor was the changing perceptions of Egyptian leaders themselves, especially the perception that the situation in Palestine was coming to impinge directly upon the national interests in Egypt. In addition, an economic consideration in moulding the policy of the Egyptian

⁴ On the Conference as whole, see, Arnold J. Toynbee, *Survey of International Affairs, 1938* (Two vols., London: 1941), pp. 440-458.

⁵ Prime Minister Mahmud's speech at the time of welcoming. It represented the Arabist in tone.

leaders towards Palestine can never be denied. To them, the emergence of a Jewish state would hinder commercial expansion of Egypt into the Near Eastern markets in which the Egyptians were expecting to have a considerable place. A combination of political, socio-economic, and cultural factors had thus long been at work in Egypt shaping popular opinion about Palestine. This crystallized into massive Egyptian support for the cause of the Palestinian Arabs since the outbreak of 1936-39.

The attitude that developed over the question of the participation in the Palestine in the inter-war period has haunted Egyptian politics ever since and resulted in closer ties between Egypt and other Arab states. It also underlined the importance of Egypt as the centre of the modern Islamic World. The attitude of Arab co-operation in regard to Palestine led many Egyptians to look favourably upon broader forms of collaboration with their fellow Arabs. The concept of Arab unity and Arab co-operation thus flourished and ultimately gained momentum in subsequent times as a result of the Palestine issue. In addition, the consultation with and collaboration between the Arab states arising out of the Palestine rebellion has the effect of restoring the Arab World as Psychological entity both in the minds of outsiders and in the minds of Arab themselves. In this way, the Palestine issue attracted the attention of the Arab nationalists beyond the state boundaries imposed on them by the European powers by the post First World War peace treaties. The event in Palestine thus captured the attention of the Arab World more than anything else. Its impact differed from country to country in the Arab World but in Egypt it coincided with the rapid erosion of her long-standing political insulation from the Arab nationalist movement and contributed to a great extent to its new Arab orientation.⁶ The implications of the Egyptian government's involvement in the Palestine issue undoubtedly went beyond Palestine itself.

In the Second World War (1939-45) Egypt was a vital strategic factor as the British base in the Middle East. So any development in the area should ensure British interests. The British wanted to maintain its former position

⁶ Ralph M. Coury, "Who Invented Egyptian Arab Nationalism"? *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 14, Part 2, November 1982; Israel Gershoni, *The Emergence of Pan-Arabism in Egypt* (Tel. Aviv, 1981), pp. 37-38.

through the formation of the League of Arab states. But the formation of the Arab League (1945) was motivated to a great degree by the Palestine question. At that time, in spite of differences of opinion on some political matters, Palestine was the subject on which the rulers and the governments of Arab states presented more or less a united stand. Those who genuinely wished for Arab unity saw in Palestine the one immediately possible basis of common agreement in which to lay the foundations of such unity. Those who did not wish for Arab unity but also realized the political necessity of making some gesture in favour of it, saw in Palestine the possibility of canalizing the activities of the Arab League into non-controversial channels. However, in the course of time, the Arab League also intervened in the Palestine issue. This body-which has originally been envisaged by the British government as the vehicle for the political integration and economic rehabilitation of the Arab Middle East, thus became nothing more than an Arab alliance against Zionism. Anti-Zionist zeal became the measure of Arab prestige; Arab rulers and governments became the creatures of their own propagandist utterances. The Palestine issue thus acted as a plea to hold the Arab states together. The more they disagreed about other matters, the more necessary it became to preserve a facade of agreement about Palestine. Thus it happened that the interplay of rivalries within the frame-work of the Arab League took the form of a competition for the patronage of the Arabs of Palestine.⁷ From the beginning Egypt held a position of leadership in the League which was bitterly hostile to the idea of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine. Previously preoccupied with her own national problems. Egypt had now shown interest in the Palestine problem. The Egyptian decision-makers thus did not fail to play a positive role in respect of Palestine in order to establish Egyptian hegemony in the Arab World.

John Marlowe Holds different view regarding the attitude of the Egyptian common people. To him, there had never been much spontaneous enthusiasm in Egypt for the cause of the Palestinian Arabs since the average Egyptian never thought of or referred to himself as an Arab. There were

⁷ John Marlowe, *Anglo-Egyptian Relation, 1800-1956* (Frank Cass & Company, Ltd, 1st edition, 1954, 2nd edition, 1965), pp.323-324.

practically no historical, cultural, and racial or Arab ties between Egypt and Palestine. To the inhabitants of Syria and Trans Jordan, Palestine was part of their own land; to an Egyptian, it was a country of foreigners. The Arab inhabitants of Palestine were bound to the inhabitants of Syria and Trans Jordan by a common history, by common habits of life, and by frequent intercourse across the artificial and newly created frontiers which had been erected between them. There was no such common bond except that of language and religion between the Palestinian Arabs and the Egyptians of any class.⁸ Hence the Palestine issue had never been a source of much emotional excitement to the Egyptians.

Though correct in theory the above views of Marlowe seem to be an exaggeration in practice. The divergence between theory and practice is well reflected during the time of any national crisis facing the Arab World. The response of the Egyptian people to the Palestinian outbreak of 1936-39 bears its testimony. It has already been mentioned earlier that the Egyptian decision-makers tried to nourish and champion the cause of the Palestinian Arabs since 1939 as they took it as a basis of their Arab-oriented policy. They were so careful about Palestine that they did not like to settle the issue by any country of the Arab World other than Egypt. The following evidence bears its testimony. In the 1940s when encounter took place between the Arabs and the Jews over the question of Palestine, the efficient armed forces of the Arab countries at that time was the Arab Legion of Trans Jordan. King Abdullah of Trans Jordan made no secret of his intention of annexing to his own dominions as much of Palestine as he could occupy. There was also little doubt that he was prepared to compromise with the Zionists to the extent of arranging a partition of Palestine with them. The governments of Syria, Lebanon or Saudi Arabia for domestic situation were not in a position to raise any effective opposition to this design. It was, therefore, imperative on Egypt to make large scale preparations for a campaign against Zionism in Palestine in order to prevent the disposal of Palestine from becoming a matter of private arrangement between Abdullah and Zionists, a procedure which would have meant the destruction of the Arab League, the creation of a Jewish state, and

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 327-328.

a great accession to strength and prestige of Abdullah, who was not only personally unpopular with most of the Arab leaders, but also regarded by them as a tool of the British. If Abdullah had been left to the battle of Palestine alone, it would, in most Arab eyes, have been a case of Great Britain leaving to the front door and returning by the back.⁹ So Egypt decided to intervene actively in the Palestine issue. But in spite of political pronouncement about Palestine, no active preparation was made until the last moment for a military invasion of Palestine.

Syria

So was the case with Syria. No event of the 1930s captured the attention of the Arab world as did the Arab Revolt in Palestine. Its progress was eagerly followed in the daily press of Cairo, Baghdad, Damascus, and in the capitals of North Africa. It was also carefully monitored by Arab leaders and regimes. On one hand, the revolt aroused Arab nationalist sentiments in ways not witnessed in the region since the days of Faysal's Arab Kingdom; on the other, it alarmed Arab rulers who feared its repercussions on domestic political elite in their respective countries.

The impact of the revolt on the Arab world differed from country to country. It coincided with and helped to erode Egypt's longstanding political insulation from the Arab nationalist movement (despite Cairo own central role in the birth of the nationalist idea and as a political asylum for nationalist activists from Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine) and contributed to its new Arab orientation.¹⁰ It helped independent Iraq to establish itself as a vital centre of Arab nationalist activity, enhancing Baghdad's political reputation among the Arabs. In Trans Jordan, the ambitious Amir Abdullah, while not at all pleased

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 327. Cited in Philip S. Khoury, "Divided Loyalties? Syria and the Question of Palestine, 1919—1939," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 21, July 1985. No. 3, p. 324.

¹⁰ See James, Jankowski, *The Government of Egypt and the Palestine Question, 1936-1939*, *Middle Eastern Studies* 17 (Oct. 1981), 427-453; Ralph M. Coury, "Who Invented Egyptian Arab Nationalism?", Part-2, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 14 (November 1982); Israel Gershoni, *The Emergence of Pan-Arabism in Egypt* (Tel Aviv, 1981), pp. 37-38; cited in Philip S. Khoury, "Divided Loyalties ? Syria and the Question of Palestine, 1919-1939", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 21 July, 1985, No. 3, p. 324. (hereafter Khoury, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 21).

by the use of his territory as a conduit for arms and fighters, sought to benefit from the revolt by expanding his influence in Palestinian politics.¹¹ In Syria, the impact of the revolt and the reaction of the political leadership were especially mixed.

Syria's involvement in the affairs of Palestine is not only of importance for our understanding of the conduct of the revolt, but it also casts new light on the tensions between the established Syrian framework of political factionalism and new forces trying to break out of that framework; on the tensions between Syrian provincialism and pan-Arabism; and on the different means the imperial powers had at their disposal to bend local elites their way. The major dilemma facing the leadership of the Syrian national independence movement the National Bloc (*Al-Kutla al-Wataniyya*) in 1936 was that as its prospects for getting control of government grew brighter, it encountered a number of obstacles which had the potential to ruin these prospects. A resurgence of pan-Arab sentiment focused on developments in Palestine was one such obstacle. The Bloc leadership could neither avoid involvement in the Palestine question nor allow Palestine to divert it from its quest for government power. A delicate balance had to be struck between pan-Arab commitment and local self-interest; otherwise the widening gulf between the nationalism of elites and nationalism of popular sentiment might become unbridgeable. If this happened the Bloc's domination of the independence movement would surely collapse.

A combination of political, socio-economic, and cultural factors had long been at work in Syria shaping popular opinion about Palestine. This crystallized into massive Syrian support for the revolt of 1936-39. There were the traditional bonds between Syria and Palestine which fostered the belief among many Syrian (and Palestinian) nationalists that Palestine was an appendage of Syria. Indeed before the First World War Syria and Palestine had belonged to a single geographic region united under an Ottoman administration and linked by trade. The inhabitants lived in a relatively homogeneous cultural environment in which language and social custom

¹¹ Mary C. Willson, 'King Abdullah A political Biography' (D.Phil dissertation, University of Oxford, 1983), Ch. 7. Cited in here after Khoury, MES, Vol. 21. p. 325.

were more or less similar, despite some ethnic and class variations. Although the Ottoman government, Arabs, and Jews all referred to a *Geographic* area called Palestine, in terms of administrative unity Palestine, as such, did not exist before the First World War. In the second half of the nineteenth century, Palestine was part of the *vilayet* of Syria¹² (*Sham*) and was divided into three sanjaks (Jerusalem, Nablus, and Acre). Then, in the 1880s Ottoman administrative reorganization created a more autonomous *mutasarriflik* of Jerusalem which was attached to the new vilayet of Beirut, which the Ottomans had carved out of the *vilayet* of Syria: Between these different units peoples and goods moved back and forth unencumbered by the bureaucratic processes and taxes associated with borders.

Ties between Syria and Palestine were undoubtedly strongest among the upper classes. In both territories there existed an active urban notability, which derived power and influence from control of local government offices and religious institutions, and wealth from extensive landownership and usury in the countryside. In the course of the nineteenth century, this class acquired practically undivided control of political life in Palestine and Syria but its relations were manifold. Its members moved freely between Damascus and Jerusalem, Beirut and Jaffa; intermarriage was frequent and it was common to find families in Damascus and Beirut owning land in Palestine.¹³

The various ties between the local elites of Palestine and Syria were eventually transformed into political bonds, especially in association with the rapid growth of the idea of Arabism after 1900. Arab elites first formed political bonds in Istanbul, where they acquired an Ottoman professional education. Afterwards these bonds were strengthened through shared experience in provincial administration, in the Ottoman parliament where Syrians joined Palestinians in lobbying for greater political and administrative autonomy in the face of Young Turk centralization and Turkification policies and against Jewish immigration into Palestine, and in a variety of secret

¹² See 'Add al-'Aziz Muhammad 'Awad, *Al-Idara al-'Uthmaniyya fi wilayar suriyya 1964-1914* (Cairo, 1969); Neville Mandel, *The Arabs and Zionism Before World War* Berkeley, 1976), pp. 19-20.

¹³ For Example, the Jaza'iri and Yusuf families in Damascus and the Salam family in Beirut.

nationalist societies before and during the First World War. They acquired their greatest strength in Damascus after the war, where Syrians and Palestinians, now joined by Iraqis, worked for the establishment of an independent Arab state under Amir Faysal.¹⁴

The historical record indicates, however, that after the collapse of Faysal's Kingdom and the partition of geographical Syria into separate British and French administered mandates, the bonds between Syrians and Palestinians loosened perceptibly. Indeed, it took the revolt of 1936 in Palestine to restore the close ties and co-operation of the early period. Of course, Syrian and Palestinian nationalists maintained ties supported each other during the decade and a half preceding the rebellion, but the relationship was not as active as it was before.

During the 1920s, co-operation took place through the medium of the Syrian-Palestinian Congress based in Cairo, which defended both Syrian and Palestinian rights before the League of Nations.¹⁵ With so large a fraction of the Syrian nationalist leadership in exile or in prison during much of the decade, moral and materials support flowed more regularly from Palestine to Syria than in the other direction. The Arabic press in Palestine printed daily articles critical of the French and exhorting the Syrian people to overthrow the yoke of French imperialism. Demonstrations and protests against French policy and in the name of Syrian independence often assumed a violent character in Palestine. Syrian nationalist, in particular members of the radical Istiqlal party, also found refuge in Palestine where they waged a propaganda campaign against the French Mandate while British authorities looked the

¹⁴ See Philip S. Khoury, *Urban Notables and Arab Nationalism. The Politics of Damascus 1860-1920* (Cambridge, 1983), Chs. 3,4.

¹⁵ See. Philip S. Khoury, 'Factionalism among Syrian Nationalists during the French Mandate', *International Journal of Middle East studies* 13 (November 1981), 441-469, and marie-Rence Mouton, 'Le Congres syrio- Palestiniande Geneve', *Relations internationales* 19 (Autumn 1979), 313-328. In the early 1920s, some Syrian nationalists actually applied pressure on Palestinian leader to each an accommodation with the Zionists. They wanted Zionist leaders (and the British) to intervene on Syria's behalf with the French. See Khoury. 'Factionalism', pp. 443-444; Y. Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian Arab National Movement* (London, 1974), pp. 112-114; Neil Capla, *Futile Diplomacy. Volume one. Early Arab-Zionist Negotiation Attempts 1913* (London, 1983), pp. 54-58.

other way. The French High Commission accused the British of openly assenting Syrian nationalists in Palestine and Trans Jordan in order to upset French rule with the aim of one day replacing the French in Syria. Although the French exaggerated the extent of British complicity, Britain did purposely hinder French efforts to crush the Great Syrian Revolt of the mid 1920s by refusing to extradite Syrian rebels who had taken refuge in Palestine and Trans Jordan, a breach of good manners the French never forgot.

Throughout the 1920s, Syria did not neglect the Palestine question. Whenever, the Syrian nationalist press was to under suspension (it often was in this period), it took the opportunity to criticize Zionist activities and British policy. Most active among the newspapers was the leading Arabic daily of Damascus, *Alif Ba* whose editor Yusuf al-Issa, was a Palestinian. Christian and relative of Issa al-Issa, the nationalist editor of the Jafta newspapers, *Filastin*, Syrians also demonstrated against Zionism and British policy usually in response to developments in Palestine or, as in 1924, during the visit of Lord Balfour to Syria.¹⁶ However, Syrian interest in the Palestinian cause was irregular and rather mild in this period.

Palestine was comparatively quiet in the 1920s, owing to the slowing of Jewish immigration and a more or less working relationship between the Palestinian, Arab leadership and the British. Syria, by contrast, was alive with regular and violent disturbances against the French and their local allies. Indeed, Syria's political future seemed gloomier in this decade than Palestine's; the most significant political upheaval of the 1920s in the Arab East occurred in Syria, not in Palestine. The great Revolt, which lasted from 1925 to 1927, attracted support far and wide, not just from the Arab territories but from the Muslim world at large and from Syrian émigré communities in the Americas. Palestine did not experience a similar upheaval until ten years later. Simply put, in the 1920s there was more political activity of the kind that aroused pan-Arab sentiments in Syria than in Palestine, a point generally lost on historians of Arab nationalism.

¹⁶ See Philip S. Khoury, 'The Politics of Nationalism: Syria and the French Mandate, 1920-1936', Ph.D Dissertation (Harvard University, 1980).

The largest popular manifestation of Syrian support for the Palestinian cause came at the tail end of the decade when the lull in Palestine was finally shattered by Arab riots against Jews, known as the Wailing Wall incident. The importance of these riots on Syrian political life, apart from demonstrating the intensity of popular feeling in Syria for Palestine, was the establishment of a pattern for National Bloc activity, which would repeat itself time and time again during the Mandate years. This entailed discouraging, whenever possible, all pan-Arab activities, which might force the nationalist leadership to stray from its principal course of relaxing French control over Syria. Specifically, it meant avoiding any pro-Palestinian activities that might deny the National Bloc British diplomatic support, or, even more alarmingly, that might get out of control and turn into anti-French manifestations, resulting in a military crackdown and the isolation of the Bloc from the summit of politics in Syria.

The National Bloc was steered by moderates, headed by Jamil Mardam., the chief architect of its strategy of honourable co-operation. At the level of inter Arab affairs, this strategy dictated that the national movement should not be sidetracked by any issues-regardless of their meant or appeal which diverted the Bloc and its major goal. And the Bloc staked its claim to be the paramount political organization in the country on its ability to both harness and direct the energies of the urban masses; this included making certain that popular manifestations did not disrupt the delicate diplomatic negotiations between the Bloc and the French.

Contributing to the Blocs pragmatism was the idea, adopted after the failure of the Great Revolt that Syria could not hope to participate in any Arab union scheme without first securing its own independence. Further more, Palestine was Syria's most valuable export market and any disruptions there damaged Syria's economy as a whole, and in particular the financial interests of the Muslim commercial bourgeoisie to which a number of Bloc leaders were socially and financially tied. With such prospects, the reluctance of the Bloc to become deeply involved in Palestine becomes understandable.

This pattern repeated itself in the summer of 1931 when the Bloc leadership purposely avoided the limelight at several large public rallies staged in solidarity with a variety of pan-Arab and pan Islamic issues,

including Palestine and Libya, and again in December 1931 when the Bloc failed to send an official delegation to the Jerusalem Congress organized by the Mufti to drum up world wide Islamic support for the Palestinian cause. In both instance, the Bloc wanted to avoid annoying the French and possibly jeopardizing the coming national elections.

It was only after Jamil Mardam and other Bloc Moderates failed to secure a treaty in 1933 that the National Bloc temporarily scrapped the strategy of honourable co-operation and became more involved in pan-Arab issues. In fact, Mardam and his cronies, there relations tarnished by collaboration, now looked beyond Syria's frontiers for political support. They needed to rehabilitate their reputations and pan-Arabism provided an ideological tool to do so, especially with the intractable French offering no reasonable opportunities for the resumption of honourable co-operation. Moreover, by contacts in Iraq and Saudi Arabia Jamil Mardam would be in a better position to neutralize the radical wing of the Damascus Bloc headed by Shukri al-Quwwatli and the newly created pan-Arabist League of National action (*Usbat al-Amal al-Qawmi*).¹⁷

One outcome of the National Bloc's re-orientation was the establishment of the first significant propaganda organization in the Arab world devoted to pan-Arab activities, the National Bureau of Propaganda. Founded in 1934 by Fakhri al-Barudi, the Bureau devoted itself to the systematic dissemination of information critical issues of the times and in particular on the question of Palestine. The other significant area in which the Bloc joined with other Syrian nationalists in support of Palestine was in working to prevent financially strapped Syrians owning land in Palestine from selling their holdings to the Jewish National Fund at inflated prices. The Syrian national independence movement's renewed commitment to Palestinian affairs, however, would not remain so unambiguous for long.

¹⁷ For an example of League of National Action activities on behalf of Palestine at this time, see France: MAE (Ministres des Affaires Etrangeres), Syrie-Liban 1930-40, deMartel telegrams of 3 Nov. 1933 and 5 Nov. 1933, Vol. 486, pp. 246-54; *ibid.*, pp. 268-79. Cited in hereafter Khoury, MES, Vol. 21. p. 328.

Historians seem to agree that the rebellion in Palestine had several causes.¹⁸ Two related factors were certainly the growing Arab fear that the Zionist movement was rapidly gaining ground in its drive to establish a Jewish national home and eventually an independent state in Palestine and the Arabs' own growing desire for national independence. By the mid-1930s, the Zionists appeared to be more successful at securing British support for their ambitions than the Arabs. This widening gap was reflected by a gradual shift in the locus of power in Palestine away from its traditional absentee landowning class, which provided the bulk of the Arab political leadership, towards Jewish commercial classes, including an emerging Jewish industrial bourgeoisie; it was a shift taking place more or less with the complicity of the British mandate authorities. The transformations of Palestine under the impact of increasing commercialization and Zionist land colonization caused the dispossession and alienation of vital sections of Palestine's Arab peasantry and its urban poor. This in turn produced a reservoir of resentment which touched the fringes of open revolt. By 1936 Palestine found, itself in the throes of popular uprising, the intensity of which had not previously been experienced in the Arab East.

This growing restiveness clearly alarmed the traditional Arab leadership, now faced with new class forces threatening to break out of the established political framework of factionalism.

The ascendance of young militants..... combined with the unrest of the peasantry in term forced the notable leadership to react more vigorously to the deeping crisis caused by massive Zionist immigration, a peasantry threatened with bankruptcy and dispossession in the lowland plains, and the willingness of the British government to grant Palestinian Arabs even a modicums of self-rule.¹⁹

¹⁸ On the causes of the revolt see Y. Porath. *The Palestinian Arab National Movement. Form Riots to Rebellion, 1929-1939* (London, 1971); Abdul-Wahhab al-Kayyali, *Palestine: A Moder Hisotry* (London, 1978); Ann Mosely Lesch, *Arab Politics in Palestine 1917-1939* (Ithaca, 1979); Ghassan Kanafani, *The 1936-39 Revolt in Palestine* (Committee for a Democratic Palestine, n.d.); Tom Bowden, 'The politics of Arab Rebellion in Palestine 1936-39', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 11 (1975), 147-74; 'Abd al-Qadir Yasin, *Kifah al-sha'b al-Filastini qabl'amm 1948* (Beirut, 1975); Theodore Swedenburg, 'The 1936-39 Revolt in Palestine: Ideology and History', unpublished paper (University of Texas at Austin, 2 January 1983).

¹⁹ Swedenburg, 'The 1936-39 Revolt', 28. For a sharp analysis of the system of political factionalism and the different class-based organizations (such as the al-Qassam

The valiant but unsuccessful effort of a popular Muslim religious shaykh of Syrian provenance, 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam to spark an armed peasant uprising around Haifa in November 1935 led this Arab leadership to adopt, albeit uncomfortably, a less accommodating approach towards the British.²⁰ A showdown was inevitable and it took the form of *General strike* starting in April 1936. That the Strike drew its inspiration from the one in Syria earlier that year seems certain.

The immediate and spontaneous popular support in Syria for the Palestinian Arabs in 1936 had much to do with a heightened political awareness of the importance of Palestine to the future of the Arab world. By the mid 1930s, Syrians had acquired the same fear that the Palestinian Arabs had about the Zionists being in a much better position than ever before to create their own independent state and, in the process, to erect yet another obstacle to Arab unity, Syrians also feared that a Jewish state, with its expertise and powerful ties to the West, would eventually jeopardize the future of neighbouring territories. From an economic standpoint, Zionist enterprises posed a potential danger to the Syrian economy. By this time, the valuable Syrian transit trade faced intense competition from a developing Palestinian transit trade, especially with Iraq, which was associated with the dramatic growth of the port of Haifa as a serious competitor to Beirut.²¹ As Syria slowly developed a modern industrial base in the 1930s, it faces the more dynamic industrial movement in the increasingly separate Jewish sector of Palestine's economy. Syrian businessmen, particularly; those involved in the cloth-weaving and confectionery industries, had along supported Arab boycotts of Jewish products both in Palestine and locally, which enabled them to compete better with Jews in their own market and in the valuable Arab market in Palestine. Of

movement, the Palestine Communist Party and, at least for a while, the Palestine Istiqlal Party, which challenged that system by the mid-1930s, see Salim tamari, 'Factionalism and Class Formation in Recent Palestinian History', in Roger Owen (ed.), *Studies in the Economic and Social History of Palestine in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Carbondale and Edwardsville, 1982), pp. 177-202.

²⁰ Porath J, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement, 1919-1939 from Riots to Rebellion*, London, Frank Cass, 1977. pp. 142-143.

²¹ See PRO, FO 371/1247, Vol. 17946. Havard To Simon, 14 Feb, 1934; FO 371/2883, Vol. 19002. Rendel Memorandum, 28 May 1935; FO 371/7527, Vol. 19024, Havard to FO, 20 Dec. 1935.

course, there were Syrian merchants interested in promoting trade with the Jewish economy, and indeed trade went on virtually uninterrupted until the late 1930s. Some even accepted the idea that Zionist economic enterprise could lead to a mutually beneficial relationship through the extension of Jewish expertise and capital. But this was a minority view, one that had not developed the attraction that it had for instance in the more dynamic Egyptian business community of Cairo and Alexandria. The Syrian economy after all had yet to reach the stage of development of the Egyptian economy and was therefore less competitive, inclining Syrian merchants and industrialists to fear, rather than welcome, greater Zionist involvement in their country.²²

As for radical pan-Arabists in Syria, they welcomed a large-scale revolt at this time. It had potential to cause a decisive setback to British interests, perhaps leading to Britain's withdrawal and possibly precipitating a French withdrawal from the region as well. As conditions for a new world were ripened with the rise of Nazi Germany, nationalist leaders throughout the Arab East, including Egypt, could not conceal their hopes that both imperial powers might lose their grip on the region. But in 1936, with Syria and Egypt bound by treaties or the promise of treaties, and Iraq already a member of the League of Nations, Palestine held out the only real chance for such a revolt.

Although the Syrian people were only beginning to recover from their own General Strike they extended support immediately to Palestine. Apart from the natural ties of kinship, culture, and politics between Syria and Palestine, Syrians could not easily forget that the strongest outside support they had received during their strike came from Palestine. There, several large demonstrations and strikes in solidarity with the Syrian masses were sponsored by the pan-Arab Istiqlal Party and different Muslim religious groups. Money and flour was collected for the victims of the Syrian Strike and telegrams were sent to Syria expressing the solidarity of the people of southern Syria, a term still in fashion in radical nationalist circles in Palestine

²² See Jankowski, 'The Antonius Memorandum, No. 17 (Jerusalem), 8 Feb. 1936, Middle East Centre, St Antony's College, Oxford; FO 371/1293, Vol. 2018, Palestine CID to Colonial Office, 18 Feb, 1936.

and Syria.²³ The Syrian strike was an event closely followed in Palestine where the Arab leadership had been unable to register any significant concessions from the British mandatory authorities on the question of restricting Jewish immigration (which had been accelerating since 1933) and land sales to Jews. Just as the Syrian nationalists could not but notice that the use of militant tactics seemed to bring favourable political results.

Syrian aid to the Arab Revolt in Palestine took several forms. To start with, there was considerable media support. The Syrian propaganda machine launched a war of words through pamphlets and anti-British and anti-Zionist petitions and letters to the British consulate in Damascus, the High Commission in Palestine, London, and the League of nations. Most active on this front was Fakhri-al-Barudi's National Bureau of Propaganda.

Strikes and demonstrations were another expression of moral solidarity with Palestine and these were frequent in the late 1930s. At the forefront of such activities were the League of National action and various Islamic benevolent societies (*Jam'iyyat*), which were there prototype for the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood.²⁴ A Palestine Defence Committee was hurriedly established in Damascus to co-ordinate all support efforts in Syria. Headed at first by Yusuf al'lssa, it was taken over in the spring of 1937 by more experienced members of the Syrian Istiqlal Party whom the French, much to the dismay of the British, had recently amnestied.²⁵

As for material aid to Palestine, in the first month of the strike the Palestine Defence Committee reportedly sent \$4,500 and contributions increased significantly in the months ahead. A variety of voluntary associations

²³ *George Antonius File*, Antonius Memorandum, No. 17 (Jerusalem). 8 Feb. 1936, Middle East Centre, St Antony's college Oxford; FO 371/1293, VOI. 20018. Palestine CID to colonial office, 18 Feb. 1936.

²⁴ On the emergence of *Jam'iyyat* in Syria See Johannes Reissner, *Ideologie und Politik den muslimbruder Syria* (Freiburg, 1980), Muslim societies in Egypt, Most notably the Muslim Brotherhood, were instrumental in organizing support for the Palestinian Arabs during the revolt. See Gershoni, *The Emergence*, p. 37.

²⁵ In 1938 the Defence Committee included Nabih al-'Azma (President), Lutfi a- Haffar, Sabri al-Asali, Fa'iz al-Khuri, Fakhri al-Barudi, 'Afif al-Sulh, Bashir Shihabi, Hajj Adib Khayr (Treasurer), Muhammad al-Sarraj, Fu'ad Mufarrij (Secretary), *Nabih al-'Azma Papers* (Syria), File 6383, pp. 399, 565.

led by the Islamic societies conducted fund-raising drives in the Syrian towns.²⁶ Women were noticeable active, contributing jewellery and participating in solidarity demonstrations.²⁷ Palestine day activities were especially successful.²⁸ Meanwhile, arms smuggling to Palestine was on the upswing.

Another way in which Syrians demonstrated their solidarity was by boycotting Jewish products; however, the enforcement of a Syrian boycott of British goods was less successful.²⁹ In the late summer of 1937, the Palestine Defence Committee sponsored a major pan-Arab Congress at Bludan which helped to launch the second and most intense stage of the rebellion. The Syrian government, by that time under National Bloc control, immediately granted (in spite of strong British protestations) political asylum to numerous Palestinian leaders and guerrillas who escaped the British dragnet. Meanwhile, Syrians continued to smuggle arms and guerrillas into Palestine, and Syrians were leaders of some of the most effective guerrilla bands.

Although Syrian activities on behalf of the Palestinian Arabs escalated as soon as the General Strike began to take hold in Palestine,³⁰ these revealed contradictory developments. From the rebellion's start, the natural impulse of the Syrian people to assist the Palestinians conflicted with the objective political and economic interests of Syria's intertwined political and commercial elites, in particular those resident in Damascus. This conflict lasted for the duration of the revolt and obstructed the flow of Syrian assistance to Palestine.

During the initial phase of the revolt (the period of the General strike) two major factors one economic and the other diplomatic-contributed to the reluctance of nationalist circles in Syria to mobilize fully behind Palestine.

²⁶ *Oriente Moderno*, 16 (1936), pp. 399, 565.

²⁷ FO 684/10'1692/2. Davis to FO, 9 Oct. 1937, R. Tresso, 'Manifestations feminines a Damas aux XIX et XX siecles', *Entretiens sur l'evolution des pays de civilization arabe*, III (Paris, 1939), 115-25.

²⁸ *Oriente Moderno*, 18 (1938), p. 293.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 18 (1938), p. 292.

³⁰ FO 64/9/19562. F.C. Ogden Memorandum (Damascus), 21 Aug. 1936.

From an economic perspective, the Palestine strike, coming as it did at the tail end of a paralyzing Syrian strike that had severely damaged Syria's economy, posed a serious danger. The strike severely impeded trade since Palestine was Syria's (and Lebanon's) most valuable export market, causing heavy losses to local merchants. The inability of Palestinian agents to repay their bill as they fell due aggravated this situation.³¹ Indeed, for many Syrian merchants the timing of the strike could not have been worse; the Syrian economy had yet to rebound from the Syrian strike and to compound matters, as the rebellion spread in Palestine during the summer and fall of 1936, Syria faced an unusually poor grain harvest and a new devaluation of the Syrian lira, after a decade of relative stability. Not only was the Palestinian market unresponsive, preventing Syrian merchants from taking advantage of the devaluation to boost their exports, but the Syrian cost of living index rose by 30 to 40 per cent during 1936,³² and doubled by the fall of 1937, when the second and longer phase of the revolt began,³³ in Syria, wholesalers and middlemen who had to pay the producers of grain and other goods in gold did not hesitate to raise their prices to retailers. Retailers of local goods and imports from countries with non-depreciated currencies, in imports were also able to raise their prices.³⁴

The inaccessibility of the Palestinian market in this period, while not the principal cause of Syria's economic plight, certainly contributed to it. In Damascus, some of the leading merchants and industrialists trading with Palestine were also active supporters of the National Bloc. Almost from the beginning of the strike, they counselled Bloc chiefs to apply pressure on the Palestinian leadership to end it.

³¹ FO 371/3716, vol. 20069. Furlonge to Eden, 22 Oct. 1936. The irony of course, is that during the Syrian Strike, the Palestinian market absorbed a considerable amount of Syria's surplus, helping to ease the pressures which that strike caused.

³² FO 371/6716, vol. 200066. Ogden to Eden, 3 Oct. 1936.

³³ Haut-Commissariat de la Republique Francaise en Syrie et au Liban, *Bulletin Economique Trimestriel*, No. 3(1936), p. 313 S; no. 4 (1936), p. 633 S; No. 2, (1937), pp. 135-9; *graphiques*, Nos. 1-3, pp. 207-9; No. 4 (1936), pp. 799- S-811 S; Youssef Khoury, *Prix et monnaie en Syrie* (Nancy, 1943), p. 91.

³⁴ FO 371/6899, Vol. 20069. Furlonge to Eden, 27 Oct. 1936.

The other major factor restraining the National Bloc was the fear that the rebellion might jeopardize Syria's current diplomatic activities in France. This fear assumed two dimensions. Above all, nationalist leaders feared that full and open support for the revolt would ultimately alienate the British, whose backing at this time or at some later date might help to finalize negotiations with the France. Britain was after all the most influential imperial power in the Arab East and Syrian leaders did not wish to burn their bridges with London. These same leaders also feared that the revolt might spark a revolutionary situation that could spill over in to Syria.³⁵ The last thing the National Bloc needed in the summer of 1936 was anew wave of disturbances that would almost certainly upset the delicate political balance, which it had recently established with the Frence through the medium of the Syrian General Strike. An upheaval at the moment when Syrian prospects for independence were better than at any other time since the French occupation of Syria was politically unthinkable. Moreover, the National Bloc had staked its future on a peaceful resolution of Franco-Syrian relations through a treaty.

Sympathy for the Palestinian cause was undeniably strong in Syria and it reached up into the highest ranks of the nationalist elite. In 1936, Palestine received much more than lip service from its Arab neighbours, and especially from Syria, but with negotiations going full steam ahead in Paris, the National Bloc regarded any call for pan-Arab solidarity at best as inconvenient, and at worst, as calamitous.

The National Bloc immediately recognized that it had to find a way to reduce the potential dangers of the Palestine rebellion to Syria. But to do so required great discretion, for no external issue aroused the passions of the Syrian masses more than the question of Palestine. Furthermore, the Bloc leadership was not in full agreement over how to deal with Palestine. The British consul in Damascus whose task it was to discourage Syria involvement was perhaps over optimistic when he reported that at a secret meeting in the capital in late April 1936, the Bloc leadership, while openly expressing anti-British activities in Palestine so that they might not interfere in any way with

³⁵ These same fears were expressed in Egypt (See Coury, 'Who Invented', Part 2, p. 463), and in Trans Jordan (see Wilson 'King Abdullah', Ch. 7).

the treaty negotiations.³⁶ Whether this decision was unanimously approved is unknown, but it would seem unlikely, since the acting President of the Bloc at the time was Shukri al-Quwwatli the leader of the Bloc's radical pan Arab wing in Damascus.

There is considerable evidence that Quwwatli and his Istiqlali network of pan-Arabists still in exile in Palestine and elsewhere were actively campaigning on behalf of Palestine at this time. Moreover, their activities proved indispensable to Palestinian strikers and rebels. Once the rebellion erupted, Quwwatli used his position in the National Bloc and his growing influence with the young, militant League of National Action, whose leaders he was simultaneously wooing, to collect funds in Damascus and other towns. The contribution he secretly transferred to Nabih al-'Azma, in exile in Jerusalem, who passed them to the Palestinian Arab Higher committee,³⁷ Meanwhile, 'Azma's older brother, 'Adil in exile in Amman, was a leading arms distributor for the revolt. He headed a small group of Syria and Trans Jordanian Istiqlais who supplied weapons stored in Irbid and Ma'an to representatives of the Mufti, and at rock bottom prices according to the Jewish Agency.³⁸ Whether a source of these arms was Saudi Arabia where Istiqlali sympathizers were prominently placed in Meccan religious circles and in Ibn Saud's administration is not known, but it would not be unlikely given what we know about the Istiqlai network and, in particular, Quwwatli's ties to the House of Saud.³⁹ In any case, the Azma brothers and Quwwatli had long experience in this kind of activity, much of it acquired during the Great Syrian Revolt of 1925.⁴⁰ That Quwwatli was active in solidarity work, despite the reluctance of Bloc moderates to become too involved in the Palestine imbroglio, suggests that the Bloc's Palestine policy would eventually create awkward problems for its leadership. Syrian nationalists were torn between ideological belief and personal ambition, between the natural attraction of Pan-Arabism and the increasingly powerful pull of Syrian provincialism.

³⁶ FO 371/2177, Vol. 200065. MacKereth to High commissioner (Palestine), 21 April 1936.

³⁷ *Nabih al-'Azma Papers* (Syria), File 4/147. Shukri al-Quwwatli to Nabih al-'Azma 4 June 1936.

³⁸ CZA (Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem), 525/ 1022 Dr. Joseph to Mr Sasson, 1 July 1937.

³⁹ MAE, Syrie-Liban 1930-40, Dossier, 22 Aug, 1936. Vol. 493, pp. 201-3.

⁴⁰ Khoary, 'Factionalism', 441-69.

In the first stage of the rebellion, the British do not appear to have been particularly alarmed by Syrian aid to Palestine. British intelligence source only began to acknowledge a significant movement between Syria and Palestine in July 1936, when they reported that Syrian ex-army officers were reorganizing the loose network of rebel bands in Palestine. In August, one of the heroes of the Great Syrian Revolt, Fawzia al-Qawuqjis, himself an ex-Syrian Legion captain, arrived in Palestine from Iraq where he immediately declared himself the Commander in chief of the Arab Revolution in Southern Syria.⁴¹ The recently established Palestine Defence Committee in Iraq had sent Qawuqji, it appears at the instruction of Adil al- 'Azma in Amman and Mu'in al-Madi, a member of the Palestinian Istiqlal heading efforts of recruit guerrillas and collect arms and money in Syria at the time. Soon after Qawuqji's arrival, 650 armed recruits, mostly from the lower classes of the Maydan and Kurdish quarters in Damascus, plus another 50 volunteers, many from notable families in Homes the major stronghold of the League of National action-entered Palestine.⁴² By early September, a number of Syrians had assumed the command of rebel bands in Palestine. Some came with prior experience acquired during the Great Syrian Revolt: best known among them was Shaykh Muhammad al-Ashmar a popular religious figure from the Maydan quarter of Damascus, who had close ties with the Hashemites in Trans Jordan.⁴³

Although British representatives admitted that the arrival of Qawuqji and other Syrians in Palestine caused a perceptible improvement in rebel tactics' and the bands began to show signs of effective leadership and organization,⁴⁴ their dispatches suggest that apart from a few demonstrations, reams of printed propagandas, and the requisite rhetoric in the name of Palestine, the Syrian attitude and contribution to the revolt remained rather subdued by the autumn

⁴¹ Kayyali, *Modern Palestine*, p. 198; *Filastin fi mudhakkirat al-Qawuaqqi 1936-1948*, vo. 2, (ed) Khayriyya al-Qasmiyya (Beirut, 1975). A creation of the French Mandate administration, the Syrian Legion was recruited almost entirely from the native population and it became the embryo of Syria's National army after independence.

⁴² FO 371/5149, Vol. 20069. Ogden to FO. 14 Aug. 1936; FO 371/6709. MacKereth to FO, 15 Aug. 1936; *Alif Ba'*, No. 4696, 15 Aug. 1936; MAE, Syrie-Liban 1930-40, 'Dossier', 21 Aug. 1936, Vol. 493, pp. 201- 3.

⁴³ George Fairs, *Man huwa fi suriyya 1949* (Damascus, 1950), p. 27; Adham al-Jundl *Tarikh al-thawrat al- suriyya fi and al-initdab al-faransi* (Damascus, 1960), p. 561.

⁴⁴ Kayyali, *Modern Palestine*, p. 199.

of 1936. That the National Bloc acted rather half-heartedly towards Palestine during the first phase of the Revolt seems plausible. Syria, after all, had yet to recover from its own exhausting strike and negotiations in Paris absorbed its leaders. And it was not long after the nationalist delegation returned to Syria that the Arab Higher committee finally called off its strike. In any case, faced with preparations for national elections and the problems of forming Syria's first nationalist government, the National Bloc would not be free to turn its attention to Palestine until the beginning of 1937.⁴⁵

Yet, the evidence also suggests that as long as Quwwatli was in charge of bloc activities in Syria, he and his Istiqlai comrades consistently aided the Palestinian nationalist leadership. For Quwwatli, the disturbance in Palestine could not have been timelier. Although he had devoted much attention in recent years to channelling pan-Arab sentiments in Syria to his political advantage, he nevertheless advocated a Franco-Syrian treaty, and therefore saw it as his duty to prevent disaffected Syrian radicals from upsetting the negotiations. Events in Palestine conveniently diverted their attention from National Bloc activities in Paris where radicals suspected that the Syrian delegation might strike some unsavoury deal. By tooting the Palestinian horn, Quwwatli not only boosted his own image as a dedicated pan-Arabist, but he also took advantage of the absence of his bloc colleagues to situate himself better for the various factional struggles ahead.

There is no evidence to suggest that the Syrian nationalist leadership actually pressured the Mufti and the Arab Higher committee to end the strike in 1936. But the British government made concerted efforts in the summer and fall of 1936 to convince Arab leaders, including Abdullah, Ibn Saud,, Nahas Pasha of Egypt, and Nuri Said of Iraq to apply such pressures on the Palestinian leadership, which they did.⁴⁶ Why the British did not consult Syrian leaders as well not entirely clear; but it may have been because there was not yet a representative government in Syria, with influence among Palestinian leaders, to which the British could turn. This was not the case after the National Bloc took office at the end of the year, but by then the Arab Higher Committee had already called off the Strike.

⁴⁵ FO 371/6716, Vol. 20066. Ogden to Eden, 3 Oct. 1936.

⁴⁶ See Porath, *op.cit.*, pp.199-216, and Wilson, 'King Abdullah', Ch. 7.

If the British were not unduly alarmed by Syrian activities on behalf of Palestine in 1936, the Zionists were, and they actively tried to influence individual National Bloc leaders to call for restraint both in Syria and in Palestine. In the course of treaty negotiations, members of the Jewish Agency paid frequent visits to Syrian and other Arab political leaders in Paris and Damascus to explore the problem of Arab-Jewish relations and to learn more about internal developments and forces in the Arab countries. Among the Agency members engaged in such activities were Chaim Weizemann, David Ben Gurion, Moshe Shertok (Sharett), and Eliahu Epstein Leaders; Fa'iz al-Khuri, and Lutfi al-Haffar. The Jewish Agency also approached influential Syrian political exiles such as Dr Shahbandar, Shakib Araslan, Ihsan al-Jabiri, and the Drue Chieftain, Sultan al-Atrash.⁴⁷

French sources reported that in June 1936, Chaim Weizmann held a secret meeting with Jamil Mardam in Paris. Mardam failed to inform his colleagues on the Syrian delegation beforehand at which the Zionist leader proposed a Jewish Arab accord and asked Mardam, who personally with other Arab leaders to achieve their goal. Mardam, who personally favoured Weizmann's proposal, hoped to get Zionist banking in return for this support.⁴⁸

A month later, Jewish Agency representatives were in Damascus trying to reduce Syrian activities in Palestine. The focus of their attention appeared to be Fakhri al-Barud. In his capacity as a member of the National Bloc central committee, patron of its paramilitary youth organization, the Steel shirts and director of the National Bureau of Propaganda, Barudi was probably the most respected nationalist leader in Syria at this time. In mid-July, Eliahu Epstei, a young member of the Agency's Arab Affairs Department, and a recent graduate of the American University of Beirut (class of '34), paid a visit to

⁴⁷ A list of conversations Jewish Agency representatives had with Arab leaders in 1935-6 on Jewish-Arab relation and internal development in the Arab countries can be found in CZA, S25/3051. (n.d.) I am indebted to Mary C. Wilson for making available copies of various reports and memoranda by members of the Jewish Agency on the subject of Syria and the revolt in Palestine. For further details on the role of the Jewish Agency see Porath, *Palestinian Arab National Movement*, pp. 271-3.

⁴⁸ MAE, Syrie-Liban 1930-40. Bargeton Telegram (Paris), 17 June 1936, Vol. 492, p. 227. It is not entirely clear who first proposed the Mardam-Weizmann meeting.

Barudi who was summering on his estate in Duma.⁴⁹ Epstein's account of their meeting (they had met once before in Palestine) is interesting; it reveals Zionist concern with Syrian participation in the Palestine prepared to offer Syrian leaders to bring about its halt.

Barudi initiated the discussion by attributing the disturbances in Palestine to increasing Jewish immigration and economic activity. Epstein politely disagreed with his host and then shifted the subject to concessions the Zionists could grant the Arabs at this stage; Jewish would not force Arab exceed Palestine's ability to absorbed immigrants; Jews would not force Arab peasants off lands purchased by Jews; and Jew would not attempt to repress the Arab population politically provided the Arabs did not repress the Jews. He added that the Jews were interested in the materials and spiritual development of the Arabs in order to narrow the difference between both peoples and thus to ensure the development of the country (Palestine) as a whole. He said that Zionism considers the national awakening...among the Arabs as a natural phenomenon', but that he expected the Syrians.

Who strive for national emancipation, to understand and appreciate the difficulties of establishing national independence because such an establishment requires many material and spiritual resources... in the first place it requires good relations with... neighbours and internal peace. And on the basis of such mutual understanding the Jews will be ready to help Arab nationalist in a constitutional respects, i.e., to establish their independence and to forward the development of Arab countries.⁵⁰

Epstein then lamented how the Arabs did not appreciate the importance of the Zionist movement for the development of the Middle East', and suggested that Syrian nationalist should develop such an appreciation since they are both neighbours and leaders of the Arab nationalist movement'.⁵¹

⁴⁹ American University of Beirut, *Directory of Alumniaffairs 1870-1952*(Beirut, 1953), p. 235.

⁵⁰ CZA, S25/9783, Minutes of Conversation with Fakhir Bey al-Barudi at Duma (near Damascus) on 17 July 1936.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

Barudi responded candidly that in the case of the disturbances in Palestine.

I did all I could to calm things down. Thousands of people wanted to go from Syria to Palestine to help their brethren but we (Nationalist leaders) prevented them from doing so. We sabotaged many attempts to smuggle arms. This smuggling is done by people who profit from it and are not inspired by national motives. We also defended Syrian Jews from attacks by the press and the street mob. As to the clashes themselves no power in the world can out an end to them without certain preconditions even the Prophet Muhammad cannot do this The Slogans which are raised now and around which the struggle takes place are, 'an end to immigration.' And the Arab leaders cannot stop the clashes unless some gain is made in relation to stopping immigration. You (Zionists) are very enlightened and farsighted people. You must make the first signal and the Arab leaders will reciprocate. If you only promise to accept this condition then together with other Syrian leaders... we will intervene with the Palestinian leaders. Otherwise, we will not be able to take upon ourselves such a task.⁵²

Obviously unable to reconcile his movement's difference with Barudi's interpretation of events, Epstein shifted the discussion to his forthcoming trip to Paris. Barudi promised to send him a letter of introduction to the Syrian delegation there. Epstein then asked Barudi if he could do anything to assist the delegation. Barudi said that Epstein should tell the French not to repeat their mistakes, because an unprecedented uprising will break out if the delegation returns empty handed. Barudi in turn promised to report their meeting to the National Bloc and to discuss Epstein's suggestions on how to improve relations between Arabs and Jews. Barudi then concluded the meeting by suggesting that if the Jewish Agency helped the Syrian delegation in Paris then Arab leaders could use this gesture as a proof of Jewish sympathy and goodwill, in spite of the latest clashes between Jews and Palestinian Arabs.⁵³

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid*

Fakhri al-Barudi reported his conversation with Epstein to the National Bloc leadership and there was enough interest to warrant another meeting. It took place in the summer resort of Bludan in the hills west of Damascus on 1 August. Representing the Bloc's central committee were Barudi, Shukri al-Quwwatli and Lutfi al-Haffar. Epstein headed a three man delegation from the Jewish Agency. From the start Barudi made it clear that the purpose of the meeting was to gather further information from the Jewish agency, on the basis of which the bloc would decide whether or not to begin official negotiations'. But he also affirmed that with this meeting the question of Jewish-Arab relations 'had now left the stage of personal conversations and has entered into its formal phase'. The National Bloc considered the meeting 'official'.⁵⁴

Epstein took the opportunity to elaborate some of the points he had made privately to Barudi about the national aspirations of the Jewish people, their compatibility with Arab national aspirations, the benefits the Arabs could expect by co-operating with the Jews, and the critical role Syria should play in bringing about a Jewish Arab accord. He added little that was new to his pitch.

Shukri al-Quwwatili, in his capacity as acting President of the National Bloc, handled the Syrian response. Favourably impressed by the depth of Epstein's understanding of the Arab National movement, he prefaced his remarks by stating that we sincerely wish that we may come to an understanding with you on our own accord and not by means of cannon and fire.⁵⁵ But then he offered some criticisms of Epstein's analysis. He questioned the Jews' claim to Palestine on the ground of historical connections 2000 years earlier, asking what if we (the Arabs) claimed Andalusia on similar grounds. He went on to say that what makes the problem still more complicated and acute is the ignorance in which you leave us as to the exact interpretation and meaning of ... a national Home. He asked whether the Jewish agency intends

to make of Palestine a Jewish national home or to make a Jewish national home in Palestine. If the former, then we are categorically opposed to it and there is no way to come to an understanding. But if it means the latter then we are ready... to find a solution to the mutual advantage of both parties...⁵⁶

⁵⁴ CZA, S25/10093. Minutes of the Meeting with the Arab National Bloc of Syria (Arab Nationalist Party) at Bludan (near Damascus) on 1 August 1936.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*

⁵⁶ *Ibid*

Quwwatli then concluded by stating that the Syrian independence movement has always borne high the flag of Arab independence but that if Syrian were to get its independence first then it could devote its attention to the question of Arab independence and an Arab Jewish entente. He suggested to Epstein and his colleagues that the Jews should therefore help us in every way to gain this independence, which would also be of real advantage to you'. Epstein in turn thanked the National Bloc leaders and announced that the Executive of the Jewish Agency... has appointed an official delegation, which will soon proceed to Damascus and join us in our further deliberations.⁵⁷

Whether another round of official meetings between the National Bloc and the Jewish agency ever took place is not entirely clear. But, for the agency to have significantly improved Syrian Jewish relations, it would have had to intervene on behalf of the National Bloc with the French government before the conclusion of the treaty negotiations in Paris in early September. It seems unlikely that this happened. In retrospect, the various conversations between the Jewish agency and the National Bloc do not appear to have amounted to much. Barudi and Quwwatli were not persuaded by the agencies arguments. The forces that combined to exercise leverage over the bloc's approach to Palestine were mainly associated with the Syrian economy, and, above all, with the treaty. And although it is possible that some National Bloc chiefs thought the Zinists had direct influence with the French Prime Minister, Leon Blum, because he was both a Jew and a socialist, this thesis was quickly disproved in practice.

When the Arab higher committee called off the General strike in October 1936 and then finally agreed a few months later to testify before the Royal (Peel) Commission investigating the cause of the disturbance in Palestine, a lull fell over the country for nearly a year. Fighting continued in parts of Palestine but not with the intensity witnessed in the summer of 1936 or after the Peel Commission released its report a year later. During this respite, Syrian rebel leaders, including, Quawuqji and Ashmar, left Palestine along with many of their fighters.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ *Ibid*

⁵⁸ FO 371/697, Vol. 20848, MacKereth to Eden, 5 Jan. 1937.

British pressures to halt Syrian aid to Palestine only began to be felt by nationalist leaders in the spring of 1937, several months after the formation of the National Bloc government throughout the period of the revolt, Britain's relations with the Syrian leadership were maintained almost exclusively by colonel Gilbert Mackereth, the British consul in Damascus. The historian Elie Kedourie, a server critic of the behaviour and abilities of many British officials who operated in the Middle East during and after the First World War from Lawrence and Stores to Wauchope and Ormsby Gore-has written of MackKereth that he was one of the Shrewdest and most knowledgeable of British representatives in the Middle East perhaps even the most intelligent and the soundest of Judgment during this particular period (1936-1939).⁵⁹ Indeed, MacKereth's dispatches from Damascus were not only perceptive and exacting, reflecting his familiarity with the politics of nationalism and above all with the social and political habits of the Syrian upper class, but also scathing and witty enough to annoy his seniors at Whitehall. Perhaps most revised and updated in 1937, in which few Syrian politicians were spared his caustic wit.⁶⁰

MackKereth's first opportunity to intervene with the Syrian government came in May 1937, when he met with Prime Minister Jamil Mardam, with whom he was on very good terms,⁶¹ and who was one of the few nationalist he sincerely admired on the grounds that he was popular, ambitious, skilful, and had an agreeable personality,⁶² Despite their disagreement over whether Syrian fighters in Palestine were brigands (as MacKereth contested) or partrious (as Mardam assured him), Mardam promised that the British... could count on the energetic co-operation of his government plotting hostile to British administration in Palestine. Mardam also added that his government would not shriek their international responsibilities. He and his colleagues certainly feared for their Arab brothers south of the border (in Palestine) but they had to think of Syria first, and he for his part was most anxious to live on the best of terms with Great Britain.⁶³

⁵⁹ Elie Kedourie, 'The Bludan Congress on Palestine, Sep. 1937, 17 (Jan. 1981), *Middle Eastern Studies*, p. 108.

⁶⁰ FO 371/2142, Vol. 20849, 'Personalities, 6 May 1937, e.g.

⁶¹ FO 371/2579, Vol. 20840, 'Mackereth to Eden, 5 May 1937.

⁶² FO 371/2142, Vol. 20849, 'Personalities, 6 May 1937.

⁶³ FO 371/2579, Vol. 20850, 'MacKereth to Eden, 5 May 1937.

The British did not find the need to press the issue of Syrian support to Palestine until the following month, after rumours regarding the recommendations of the Peel Commission became more persistent. The Mufti had already visited Damascus on 27 June, where he discussed the idea of fusing the Palestine Istiqlal party with the Syrian National Bloc and the impending scheme for the partition of Palestine. According to MacKereth, Haji Amin sought National Bloc support against his political rivals in Palestine. Meanwhile, Amir Abdullah, eager to keep a finger in the affairs of Palestine, sent two agents from Amman to Damascus to shadow the Mufti.⁶⁴ One outcome of the Mufti's visit was the decision to convene a pan Arab congress in order to rally Arab forces against the idea of partition, which the British were rumored to have decided upon.

In early July, the Royal Commission published its recommendations; the abandonment of the British Mandate and the partition of the country into a Jewish state, and an Arab state which might be merged with Trans Jordan. A day after the report's release, the Arab Higher Committee rejected it and the Mufti appealed to the Arab states and to nationalist groups to support this decision. From his perspective; the partition scheme redounded to the benefit of the Zionists and his archrival, Amir Abdullah, who was the only Arab ruler to endorse the report.⁶⁵

In order to rally Arab public opinion, the Mufti activates the idea of pan-Arab congress, to increase the pressure both on the British and Arab government.⁶⁶ The congress was held at Bludan in the second week of September. The principal organizer of the congress, which attracted over 400 nationalist leaders from Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Palestine, Trans Jordan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, was the Palestine Defence Committee in Damascus, now headed by Nabih al-Azma who along with several other radical nationalist leaders had been amnestied in April.⁶⁷ Azma had been the main go-between for radical pan Arabists in Palestine, especially the Istiqlais, many of whom had taken refuge in Damascus from British security forces.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ FO684/10/581. MacKereth to Eden, 1 July 1937.

⁶⁵ Wilson, 'King Abdullab, Ch. 7.

⁶⁶ Kedourie 'Bludan,' p. 107.

⁶⁷ FO 684/10/1692/2. MacKereth Memorandum (to Eden), 14 Sept. 1937; FO 371/2142, Vol. 20849, 6 May 1 937; al-Jundi, *Tarikh*, p. 541.

⁶⁸ FO 684/10/16922, MacKereth to Eden, 14 Sept. 1937; Nabih al-Azma Papers (Syria), File 4/146, Quwwatli to 'Azma, 25 May 1936. *Palestinian Arab*, pp. 243- 3.

On the eve of the Bludan congress consul MacKereth intervened again with the nationalist government in Damascus, this time to ensure that no official Syrian delegate be sent to Bludan. He also took the occasion to suggest that the unfortunate impression might be made were the Syrian government to take part in discussion concerning the internal affairs of a neighbouring and friendly country. But just to make certain that Mardam got the message, MacKereth shared his fears with the French Delegate who spoke emphatically to the P.M. (Mardam), explaining that it would be embarrassing to France were a member of the Syrian government to attend the Congress'. As a result of Mackereth's demarches no official delegate was present.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, a number of prominent Syrians were at Bludan and played a leading role in its organization and deliberations, including members of the central committee of the National Bloc and its paramilitary steel shirts, who handled security.⁷⁰

Although the Bludan Congress was a landmark in the increasing involvement of the Arab world in the Palestine problem,⁷¹ its solutions were surprisingly mild in their criticism of Britain, though vehemently anti-Zionist and categorically opposed to the Peel recommendations. This moderation can be attributed to the role of certain Arab politicians who were quite well disposed to the British government.⁷² Indeed, the mild tone officially adopted toward the British at Bludan so angered a large number of radical Syria and Palestine nationalists that they decided to convene a secret meeting early in the morning on the day after the Bludan Congress ended. It was held at the Damascus home of Hani Jallad, a former National Bloc steward and commission agent, where plans were discussed for escalating pan-Arab resistance in Palestine.⁷³ This meeting and others, which followed it, truly alarmed the British consul. They foreshadowed a second stage of rebellion; indeed they served as final preparation for its launching.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ FO 684/10/16922. Mackereth to Eden, 14 Sept. 1937.

⁷⁰ Al-Ayyam, (Damascus), No. 1479, 9 Sept. 1937.

⁷¹ Kedourie, 'Bludan, p. 107. Additional information on the Bludan Congress can be found in R. Montagne, *Reactions arabes contre le Sionisme, Entretiens sur l'Evaluation des pays de civilisations arabe, III* (Paris, 1939) pp. 43-55, Al-Ayyam, No. 1479, 9 Sept. 1937 and No. 1477, 7 Sept. 1937; Alif B, No. 5001, 9 Sept. 1937; The Palestine Post, 11 Sept. 1937.

⁷² FO 684/10/16922. Mackereth Memorandum, 14 Sept. 1937.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ Porath, *op.cit.*, p. 232.

MacKereth's alarm increased during the early fall as members of the Arab Higher Committee and Istiqlal Party of Palestine piled into Damascus, where other leaders had already taken refuge. The British had declared martial law in Palestine, closed down the Arab Higher committee and other nationalist associations, and issued arrest warrants after disturbances broke out again. Granted asylum and protection by the Syrian nationalist government, Palestinian exiles formed the Central Committee of the Jihad in Damascus headed by several Istiqlalis, including Izzar Darwaza and Akram Zu'aytir.⁷⁵ This committee took charge of the Revolt's organization and had the close co-operation of the Syrian led Palestine defence committee in the areas of fund raising, arms purchases, the recruitment of Syrian resumption of the rebellion, security on the borders slackened, and the smuggling of Syrian fighters and arms into Palestine increased. The complicity of the Syrian gendarmerie assigned to police the borders in aiding and abetting rebels received the full encouragement of the Syrian Interior Ministry, whose director was none other than Adil al-Ama.⁷⁶

There is no doubt that the unattractive recommendations of the Peel Commission coupled with the appearance of popular Palestine leaders in Syria intensified pro-Palestinian activity. That the radical wing of the National Bloc, led by Shukri al-Quwwatli, turned these pan-Arab sentiment to its advantage in its internal struggle with Bloc moderates is certain Palestine was another thorn in the side of the already problem ridden Mardam government.

Meanwhile, Colonel MacKereth intervened more actively and regularly with both the French authorities and the Syrian government. Immediately after the Bludan Congress, he assembled considerable documentation on the growing traffic in arms from Syria to Palestine and on preparations to enlist Syrians in rebel bands. He discovered that a gang of Palestinian belonging to the 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam brotherhood were plotting from Damascus a series of assassinations in Palestine. Mackereth also obtained information on the recruitment of bands by two agents of the Mufti, Mu'in al-Madi and Fakhir Abd

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 242-3; Conversation with Akram Zu'aytir (Beirut, 11 Aug. 1975).

⁷⁶ FO 684/10/1692/2. Davis (Aleppo) to FO, 9 Oct. 1937; Conversation with Zu'aytir (Beirut, 11 Aug. 1975. Cited in hereafter, Khoury, Vol. 21, MES, p. 340.

al-Hadi, both Palestinian Istiqlalis. He presented this information to French authorities in Syria in a bid to have the most dangerous Palestinian plotters expelled from Syria to Palestine; a request which Mackereth cynically noted would most probably not bear much fruit. His numerous meetings in the fall of 1937 with the French delegate in the Syrian capital, Count Ostrorog failed to achieve the desired results. Ostrorog told him there seemed to be insuperable practical difficulties in carrying out the operations of expelling the undesirables.⁷⁷ French authorities did, however, order Mu'in al-Madi to leave Syria, but he was deported to Iraq where he received the protection of the Baghdad government.

At the same time, the British ambassador in Paris also made a demarche at the Quai d'Orsay on the subject of Syrian involvement in the Palestine disturbance. In early October, Jamil Mardam, in a surprising public declaration, deplored the terrorism going on in Palestine adding that the Syrian government, in concert with French and British authorities, was taking all steps to prevent arms smuggling and rebels into Palestine. Although Mackereth acknowledged that Mardam's pronouncement demanded considerable personal courage in face of violent pan-Arab and anti-Zionist prompted by the intervention of the French High Commissioner and in any case, his declaration was openly reported in the French language papers of Damascus, and was never reproduced in the Arabic press.⁷⁸

Less than a week after Mardam's announcement, Mackereth had established

beyond a reasonable doubt that small bands of Syrians had been formed under group leaders, had received earnest money in amounts varying between two and four Palestinian pounds, a rifle, a few rounds of ammunition, a warm *jalabieh* and a water bottle. They were only waiting a signal from Palestine to make their way across the frontier in parties of three or four to a rendezvous somewhere in the Nablus hills.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ FO 684/10/2207/2. Mackereth to Eden, 19 Oct. 1937.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

This evidence and other information that he had been accumulating since September prompted MacKereth to return to Ostrorog's office on 12 October with a number of proposals for French action to improve the situation. Ostrorog promised to notify the French High commissioner and to confront the Syrian prime minister, which he did.⁸⁰

The High Commissioner, also under pressure from Paris, sought to convince the Mardam government to end Syrian assistance to Palestine. But Mackereth was noticeable apprehensive that Syrian rebel leaders like Muhammad al-Ahamr would not obey the Syrian government and that the French would never be willing to accept a British request for direct French military intervention. That the French planned to drag their feet at this time is certain, they had not forgotten that the British failed in 1925. To show adequate sympathy with the difficulties the French had themselves in Syria at that time. As Mackereth reminded his superiors in London,

it is a noteworthy fact that the British authorities in Palestine and particularly in Trans Jordan showed hospitality to Syrian bandits and rebels which now we must ruefully regret. A sharp thorn in our side today is Mahomet al-Ashamr. A bandit chief...who was directly responsible for the death of two French officers and three French non-commissioned officers in 1925, he had a previous criminal record and was condemned to death by French court martial. He escaped in Palestine where we insisted on treating him as a political refugee. His French force, was only one of many. Most of those who they benefited from British asylum are now planning to go, or have already gone, to Palestine, to continue their acts of terrorism, this time directly against the British administration.⁸¹

Faced with this dilemma, MacKereth chose the highly irregular course of, in his own words, endeavouring to frighten the Syrian government into taking steps to half Syrian aid to rebel forces in Palestine.⁸² His opportunity came at an informal dinner party on 17 October at the Syrian prime minister's residence. He was able to discuss the situation with Mardam and two other

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.* A British official in Labanon and Syria during the inter-war period claims that Amir Abdullah harboured Druze and other agitator during the Syrian revolt and the French blamed the British for supporting this policy. Conversation with Sir Geoffrey Furlonge (London, 26 March 1975).

⁸² *Ibid.*

members of his cabinet, Dr Abd al Rahman al-Kayyali and Shukri al-Quwwatli never one to nice his words. MacKereth immediately raised the question of Muhammad al-Ashmar and several well known political agitators, in Damascus. Madam responded that he had only the day before 'sent for and warned' Ashmar to stop meddling in the affairs is of Plaestine. But Mackereth already knew that Ashmar, on returning to his followers in the Maydan, a quarter in which the National Bloc and little influence,⁸³ had replied to Mardam that he had no intention of being dictated to by the Syrian or any other government.⁸⁴

Mackereth then opened up with his threat which he had designed to hit Mardam and his colleagues where it hurt the most in the area of future this support for the completion of the treaty and the ultimate realization of Syrian independence. The treaty question was indeed a sore spot for the nationalist government and especially for Mardam, whose political career hung in the balance. The alarming events in the Sanjak of Alexandrtta, which the French were in the process of ceding to Turkey, and an increasingly fragile Syrian economy, did not brighten his future. Already the Blum government, which had negotiated the treaty in Paris, had fallen and an administration with members who were actively opposed to the treaty had elements in the Bloc itself, the League of National action, and a nationalist faction associated with Dr. Shahbandar. They accused him of covertly making amendments to the treaty which seriously compromised the future of Syrian independence.

MacKereth prefaced his threat with the comment that he had noticed.... With growing concern for Syria many outspoken articles which had been recently appearing in the British press stating openly and with some truth... that troubles in Palestine were being actively fomented in Damascus. He suggested that this rising anger in British public opinion was not only harming the Arab cause, of which perhaps England was its only western friend, but might in time strike vitally at Syrian independence itself. He then went on to say that even though the British and French government had a united policy in

⁸³ See Philip S. Khoury, *Syrian Urban Politics in Transition. The Quarters of Damascus During the French Mandate,* *International Journal of Middle East studies*, 16 (1984), 507-540.

⁸⁴ FO 684/10/2207/2. Mackereth to Eden, 18 Oct. 1937.

the Near East as elsewhere... they (the British) would not, out of respect for France dream of opposing French plans for Syrian independence...' yet public opinion in England had before now been lashed into a vehement fury such as had obliged the government radically to change its plans. He mentioned a notable instance of this that had occurred two years earlier (most probably the public outcry against the Hoare-Laval agreement over Ethiopia, which compelled Hoare to resign as Foreign secretary) and added that he... could readily conceive of a similar reaction were public disturbance to continue in Palestine where so much of its inspiration could be laid at the door of Syria. He concluded his demarche by suggesting that one result of raising public opinion the admission of Syria to the League of Nations.⁸⁵ Mackereth's threats were certainly not veiled.

The British consul left the party confident not only that he had stirred Mardam, who as always had assured him that notwithstanding the very real pressures of pan Syrian and pan Arab sentiment in Syria on his government (which MacKereth naturally believed were exaggerated) it would make a very real effort to end Syrian activities on behalf of Palestine, but that he had also shaken the hardliner, Quwwatli, out of his complacency, In his dispatch to London recounting his evening at Mardam's he remarked, with a touch of arrogance, that he left feeling that (he) had sown the seeds of real alarm in their minds which would grow and embolden them to face public opinion to take some practical steps to stop the abuses...⁸⁶

For a brief while his optimism seemed warranted. That very same evening he learned from the head of French Intelligence (commandant Bonnet), that four emissaries were sent from Damascus to urge the Arabs in Palestine to halt their terrorist activities and that four Syrians who had been recruited in Damascus for action in Palestine had been arrested while trying to enter Trans Jordan from Syria, a hitherto unheard of proceeding'.⁸⁷ Not long after his most recent demarche, MacKereth could write his foreign secretary,

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* Cited in hereafter, Khoury, Vol. 21, MES, p. 343.

Anthony Eden, that Syrian government actions had already produced a marked change in the position of the rebels, and that the situation no longer presented the dangers it did a month ago.⁸⁸

British intervention did have a lasting impact on the Syrian government. But it was not exactly what they had hoped for. Rather than clamping down on pro-Palestinian activities, the Mardam government tried to distance itself as much as possible from them. The pattern was familiar. Given the narrow area left for the government to maneuver in, there was the best that could be expected. The Government responded to British pressure but within the domestic structural constraints imposed upon it.

The ever visible presence of the Palestinian leadership in Damascus (in October 1937 the Mufti had sought refuge in Lebanon)⁸⁹ made it well nigh impossible for the Syrian government to do more than caution the Palestine Defence Committee and through it, the Palestinian leadership against excesses. The revolt was still gaining momentum at the time of Mackereth's demarches in the fall of 1937, and did not reach its zenith until the following September. Syrian activity correlated closely with the revolt's momentum.

Other factors contributed to the position taken by the Syrian government was divided over how to vis-à-vis the revolt. To start with, the government was divided over how to treat the events in Palestine. While Jamil Mardam wanted to keep it out of the thick of things, Shukri al-Quwwarli did not; Quwwatli was a committed pan Arabist and intimately tied to the radicals on the Palestine Defence committee and the exiled Palestinian leadership. He resigned from the government in 1938 in part because he sensed that his own credibility had suffered by his identification with policies opposed by growing numbers of nationalists.⁹⁰ Among them was the government's Palestine policy. As long as he was part of the government he protected it against attacks by radicals in his own Istiqlal group and the young militants in the League of

⁸⁸ Fo 684/10.22072. Mackereth to Eden, 25 Oct. 1937.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Quwwatli resigned in early March 1938. See *L'Asie Française*, No. 358 (March 1938), p. 93.

Nationals Action. His departure now unleashed these forces against a beleaguered Mardam. No one realized more clearly than Quwwatli that in order to prevent the traditional political framework in Syria from completely collapsing, the National Bloc government had to accommodate the interests of new, ascendant classes and forces, which by the late 1930s threatened to break out influence with the young radicals, but if he continued to support the government even he might be swept aside. Mardam, on the other hand, had staked his own career on a policy of honourable cooperation with the French and believed that giving in to the radical's demands would surely upset his delicate negotiations with the French.

Since taking over government, Jamil Mardam had purposely kept the National Bloc loosely organized so that none of his bloc colleagues could use it to challenge him. But, by 1938, Quwwatli's resignation, a widening split in the Aleppo Bloc over whether to support Mardam and the defection of several bloc stalwarts to Dr. Shahbandar's camp virtually incapacitated the bloc, which now looked like a skeleton.⁹¹

Shahbandar's return to politics in Damascus after his release from house arrest at Bludan, his large following among veterans of the Syrian revolt of 1925, his longstanding pro-Hashemite and anti-Istiqlal stance,⁹² his persistent criticism of Mardam's collaboration with the French, and his known flirtations with the British made him suspect in the eyes of radical pan Arabists the Mardam government, and the French. Moreover, on the question of Palestine Shahbandar supported the ambitions of Amir Abdullah, a position which was hardly considered more attractive than the Mardam government's. Yet, no Syrian politician rivaled Shahbandar in terms of his following among veterans of the Syrian revolt of 1925. His continuing the struggle in Palestine⁹³ was an indication of his personal strength, something he did not hesitate to demonstrate daily before Mardam and his government.

⁹¹ Al-Mudhik al-Mubki (Damascus), No. 400(31 dec. 1938), p. 14. Cited in hereafter, Khoury, Vol. 21, MES, p. 344.

⁹² See Khoury, 'Factionalism', 441-69.

⁹³ Porath, *op.cit.*, p. 244; Conversation with Akram Zu'aytir (Beirut, 11 August. 1975).

Given the extent of internal opposition to Mardam's domestic policies in 1938, the events in Palestine actually served to divert some of the antagonism away from his government. The revolt's escalation at this time also relieved some of the pressures on Mardam. So did French reluctance to force his government to curtail pro-Palestinian activities in Syria. Since the Syrian revolt of 1925, the French had wanted to even the score with the British and they quite enjoyed British discomfort in Palestine.

Therefore up until the autumn of 1938 public support in Syria for the revolt, even among National Bloc cadres, remained strong. Money flowed into the coffers of the Palestine Defence Committee from Syria and other Arab territories, the rest of the Muslim world, and the Americas as never before; more funds, arms and fighters were smuggled from Syria into Palestine; the wheels of anti-British and anti-Zionist propaganda turned faster; and boycotts of Jewish and British products organized by Muslim benevolent societies in the Syrian towns were never more successful.⁹⁴ But as the revolt lost its momentum, owing to division within its leadership command, to the attacks of peach bands organized by the rival Nashahibi faction (and supported by Amir Abdullah and the British)⁹⁵ and above all to a massive and exhausting British counter offensive towards the end of 1938, pro Palestinian activities in Syria also waned. By the end of the year solidarity groups and especially the Palestine Defence Committee, were preoccupied with local Syrian politics. Nabih al-'Azma was reported to be diverting funds earmarked for Palestine to his Syrian Istqalali comrades who, with a number of Muslim religious societies, were actively pressuring the Mardam government to resign, which it did in February 1939.⁹⁶

The French government refusal to ratify the treaty of 1936, coupled with the French cession of Alexandretta to Turkey, had finally ruptured the National Bloc's policy of honourable co-operation. With Franco-Syrian relations polarized

⁹⁴ Syria: Markza al-Wanth'iq al-Tarikhiyya. *Dakhiliyya*, 72/547-1547. Sayf al-Din al-Ma'mun to Ministry of Interior (Damascus), 26 April 1938; *Oriente Moderno*, 18 (1938), p. 293. FO 371/6597, Vol. 21914, Mackereth to Baxter, 28 Oct. 1938.

⁹⁵ Swedenburg. *The 1936-39 Revolt*, pp. 36-8

⁹⁶ FO 371/677, Vol. 23276. MacKereth to Baxter, 20 Jan. 1939.

the British army about to reconquer Palestine, and a new world war looming large, French authorities no longer found it advantageous to allow Syria to continue as a base for radical pan Arab activities, in particular those associated with the revolt in Palestine. They had settled their score with the British and now saw greater advantage in emphasizing their historic alliance rather than their rivalry.⁹⁷ Their arrest of Nabih al 'Azma in Damascus in the second week of March and other efforts to curtail the movement of Palestinian leaders in Damascus like Akram Zu'aytir spread alarm among members of the Palestine Defence Committee, which quickly lost its cohesion and unity.⁹⁸ Already the French authorities in Damascus had suspended publication of two radical nationalist newspapers controlled by the Defence Committee,⁹⁹ and encouraged a Syrian and Lebanese press campaign against the Mufti, with the object of discrediting the leaders of the revolt as little more than self seekers.¹⁰⁰ These attacks and the publication of evidence that Azma pilfered Defence Committee funds¹⁰¹ sealed the fate of Palestinian activities in Syria. Soon afterwards, the national bureau of propaganda reduced its own press campaign¹⁰² and the structure of pro-Palestinian organizations that had played such a decisive role in the prolongations of the revolt in Palestine disintegrated. By the summer of 1939, with the simultaneous collapse of the revolt in Palestine and the nationalist government in Damascus and with radical pan-Arab elements in jail or underground, the politics of pan Arabism in Syria receded into the background.

The struggle within the ranks of Syrian nationalists over participation in the pan Arab issues which emerged in the inter war period has haunted Syrian politics ever since. All Syrian regimes have had to legitimize their rule

⁹⁷ Conversation with Akraw Zuaytir (Beirut, 11 Aug. 1975). Cited in hereafter, Khoury, Vol. 21, MES, p. 345.

⁹⁸ FO 684/12/27462 Mackereth to Halifax, 28 Oct. 1939; FO 371/2996. MacKereth to Halifax, 28 Oct. 1939.

⁹⁹ The Newspapers were *Al-Istiqla al'Arabi* and *Al-Amal al_Qawmi*, See FO 371/265, Vol. 23276 Mackereth to Baxter, 2 Jan. 1939; FO 684/12/27462. Mackereth to Halifax, 28 Oct. 1939.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*; FO 684/12, 5422, Mackereth to High Commissioner (Palestine), 10 Jan. 1939.

¹⁰¹ FO 684/12/27462. Mackereth to High Commissioner (Palestine), 31 May 1939.

¹⁰² FO 371/2996, Vol. 23276. Mackereth to Baxter, 13 April 1939.

in terms of Arab nationalism (far more than any other Arab states), but all of them sooner or later have come up against an awkward contradiction between pan Arab ideology and Syrian self-interest, whether of state or regime. In the late 1930s, the National Bloc government in Damascus faced just such a situation over the question of leading support to the rebellion in Palestine. Other Syrian regimes have faced similar situations in the independence era. The consequences of this dilemma for Syria have at times been grave.¹⁰³

Iraq

Preoccupation with the Palestine question began to penetrate the domestic and foreign policy of Iraq in the late 1920s, and principally in the early 1930s. The awareness of the Palestine question in Baghdad, both among politicians and as part of political public opinion, was related to the anti-British feelings aroused by nationalist elements, as well as to the increased Iraqi activity in Syria initiated in the early 1930s by King Feisal I and the pan-Arabist, politicians.

Identification with the Arabs of Palestine, and the Palestine question in general became the concrete expression of the pan-Arab facet of anti-British nationalism in Iraq. The strike and the Arab revolt of 1936 in Palestine increased the awareness of the Palestine question, both among the *efendya*, in Baghdad, and among those politicians of the ruling elite who support the pan-Arab ideology or used it to strengthen their political position by enlisting the support of the new middle class. Despite the fact that public identification with the Arabs of Palestine and their claims rapidly became a yardstick used by politicians and nationalist segment of the middle class to measure nationalism, awareness of and sympathy toward the Palestine question remained characteristic of a relatively limited stratum in Baghdad and the other large cities. Most of those who favoured pan-Arabism and identified with the Arabs of Palestine were, in fact, members of the middle class, concentrated in Baghdad, and comprised but a small minority compared with

¹⁰³ The one attempt to pursue a pan-Arab Policy regardless of the consequences that of the Ba'th regime of 1966-led to the disaster of June 1967.

the largely tribal rural population of Iraq. At the same time, the pan-Arabists were noted for their political consciousness and involvement and their place in Iraqi society and politics soon made them extremely influential due to their role in education, administration, the military and the press.

The politicians of the ruling elite used pan-Arab, anti-British nationalist slogans in their efforts to enlist the support of the *efendyas*, in order both to strengthen their own position and to undermine that of their – the framework of the personal power struggles. This enlistment of support by means of pan-Arab slogans, in addition to the influence exerted by pan-Arab activists on the education system and the press, made the Palestine question something of a fixture in Iraqi politics. The Arab strike and revolted in Palestine in 1936 marked a turning point in the nature of the Jewish-Arab conflict in Palestine, and in the involvement of the Arab world in events taking place in that country.

In 1936, the government was headed by Yasin al-Hashimi, considered a heroic leader in pan-Arab circles, and expected to become the Bismarck of Arab world. In fact, however, al-Hashimi, despite his nationalist anti-British image, did his best to stay on good terms with Britain and to prevent the Palestine question from affecting relations between Baghdad and London, going so far as to develop a new, moderate image, which he took pains to show off to British official.¹⁰⁴ The effect of the Palestine question on Baghdad nationalist public opinion contained al-Hashimi with a severe dilemma: on the one hand, the nationalist elements comprising his political backing were pressuring him to adopt a severe anti-British line; on the other, his good relationship with the British kept him from wanting to support the Arabs of Palestine.

In the late summer and fall, of 1936, Baghdad witnessed an intensification of nationalist, anti-British sentiments among its population, in the wake of the news from Palestine and the activity of Iraqi pan-Arab elements and of Palestinian exiles. However not all political forces were

¹⁰⁴ Clark Kerr (British Ambassador in Iraq) to John Simon (Foreign Secretary), No. 28, 9 April, PRO/FO/ 371/ 18937/E/2291/3/93. Clark Kerr to Eden (Foreign Secretary since 22 November 1935), *Iraq Annual Report 1935*, 31 January 1936, PRO/FO/371/20010/E/ 851/851/93 ; cited in Michael Eppel, "The Hikmat Sulayman - Bakr Sidqi Government in Iraq, 1936-37, and the Palestine Question", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 24, January, 1988, No. 1, p. (hereafter Eppel, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 24.)

pleased by the preoccupation with the Palestine question, nor did they all infinity with the pan-Arab orientation. This trend became surprisingly evident in the *coup a etat* which took place in October, 1936.

In the days immediately following the *coup d'etat*, members of the new government - principally Hikmat Sulayman and Bakir Sidqi - hastened to deny the allegation that their government was not truly an Arab, but Kurdish- Shiite. In light of the attacks by pan-Arab circles and supporters of Yasin al-Hashimi, Hikmat took pains to ensure that the policy of his government did not conflict with the realization of Arab unity, but rather, emphasized internal affairs. In an interview given in early November 1936, Bakir Sidqi denied the claim that his government was Kurdish-Turkish in nature, explaining that there was no intention of turning away from Arab unity; rather he emphasized, the policy favoured the concentration of efforts on internal Iraqi matters.¹⁰⁵ In conversations held by emissaries of explaining Jewish Agency's Political Department, Eliyahu Epstein (Eilat) and Eliyahu Sasson, with prominent supporters of the government in Iraq, the views expressed by the latter stressed both the trend to substitute the slogan 'Iraq for the Iraqis' for pan-Arabist ideology and to formulate an Iraqi-nationalist ideology, and the need to cloak this, trend by claiming that the government intended only to favour the promotion of internal affairs without abandoning pan-Arabism.¹⁰⁶ Meanwhile, Hikmat continued to sound out British officials on the possibility of establishing a loose federation between Iraq, Trans Jordan, and Palestine, and thus providing a solution to the Palestine question.

In the first months of his administration, Hikmat attempted to reduce Iraq's involvement in pan-Arabist activity and in the Palestine question without losing prestige or supplying ammunition to the opposition, who had already begun to accuse him of abandoning the pan-Arab idea. As his Foreign

¹⁰⁵ *Filastin*, 13 November 1936. Cited in Michael, "The Hikmat Sulayman- Bakr Sidqi government in Iraq, 1936-37, and the Palestine Question", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol, 24, January 1988, No. 1, p. 28.

¹⁰⁶ Part of the report by the emissaries to Iraq appears in Eliyahu Sasson, *On the Way to Peace* (Tel Aviv, 1978 Hebrew), pp. 55-71 (hereafter Sasson). The complete report appears in CZA, S 25/5675, and especially in Eliyahu Epstein, *Report on a Visit to Iraq*, Private and Secret (February 1937), CZA, S 25/5575 (hereafter Epstein, *Report*).

Minister, Hikmat appointed Naji al-Asil, a politician with pan-Arab views and a past record of pan-Arab activity.¹⁰⁷ Al-Asil's pan-Arab image, views, and style furnished a convenient camouflage for Hikmat's general political line. In the winter of 1936-37, a rapprochement took place between Iraq and Saudi Arabia, resulting from Ibn Saud's satisfaction with the fact that the new, non-pan-Arab government of Iraq had reduced Iraqi pressure on Syria. As far as Hikmat Sulayman was concerned, the rapprochement with Saudi Arabia constitutes an attempt to win legitimacy, at least among Ibn Saud's supporters in pan-Arab circles.¹⁰⁸ In the framework of his endeavour to improve Iraq's status in the Arab world, Naji al-Asil attempted to continue the efforts initiated by Nuri al-Said toward bringing Egypt into the Iraqi-Saudi alliance.¹⁰⁹ Naji al-Asil's activity in this line, however, was rejected by Egyptian Prime Minister Mustafa Nahas.¹¹⁰ Regarding Palestine, al-Asil attempted to continue the policy set forth by Nuri as-Said,¹¹¹ which favoured establishing a large Arab federation under Hashimite rule.

Bakir Sidqi and Hikmat were well aware of the suspicion and antipathy with which they were viewed by pan-Arab circles. In the light of the unrest evoked by the pan-Arabists in the matter of the Palestine question during the summer and fall of 1936, and being more vulnerable than their predecessor, Yasin al-Hashimi, to attack by pan-Arab activists, Hikmat and Bakir Sidqi were forced to act with extreme caution in the matter of Palestine. Among a number of declarations expressing a generalized loyalty to Arab unity, they, included promises that Iraq would maintain its current political line *vis-a-vis* the Palestine question. In a statement published on 2 November, Bakir Sidqi explained that there would be no change in Iraq's policy, this policy was not

¹⁰⁷ Al-Asil was active in the service of Hussein, King of Hejaz, as early as the last days of the First World War, and represented Hussein in London during the British-Hejazi negotiations, 1920-25.

¹⁰⁸ Conversation between Eliyahu Eilat and Yahya Qassim, Secretary of the Iraqi Cabinet, 5 February 1937 (see Epstein Report).

¹⁰⁹ Clark Kerr to Eden, 18 January 1937, PRO/FO/406/75/46/E/698/698/-93.

¹¹⁰ Lampson (Cairo) to Eden, 394, 26 March 1937, PRO/FO/406/75-E/1870/698/93.

¹¹¹ See the discussion of a proposal for the solution of the Palestine question submitted by Hikmat and al-Asil, Winter/Spring 1937, further in this article.

the policy of one Cabinet or another, but that of the Iraqi people.¹¹² In accordance with this position, in order to reassure pan-Arab circles and to prevent them from exploiting the Palestine question to undermine the government, Hikmat met on 2 November Said Thabet Head of the Committee to support the Palestinian Arabs. In another meeting with heads of the Committee for the Defense of Palestine, Hikmat stressed that he agreed to Qawuqji's return to Iraq.¹¹³

A Palestinian delegation headed by Awni al-Hadi visited Iraq in December 1936, in order to ensure Iraq's continued support of the Palestinian Arabs, especially in view of the expected arrival of the Royal Commission of Inquiry.¹¹⁴ The delegation met with Hikmat and al-Asil, who exerted pressure on the Palestinians not to ostracize the Commission.¹¹⁵

The promises made by Bakir Sidqi and Hikmat that Iraq would maintain the policy laid down by Yasin al-Hashimi were kept at least, as far as anyone could tell. The fact that Hikmat's own Foreign Minister displayed a pan-Arab attitude enabled the government to demonstrate, for the benefit to the Palestinians and pan-Arabists that Iraq had not changed its position, *vis-a-vis* Palestine and Arab unity. The initiatives of the Iraqi Foreign Minister served Hikmat's purpose: reduction of actual Iraqi involvement in Palestine and the other Arab nations, putting on an outward show of continued pan-Arabism, in order to reduce attacks by the pan-Arabist opposition.

The new government as an outstanding example of its continued pan-Arab policy portrayed the Iraqi-Saudi rapprochement. During his visit to Riyadh, al-Asil proposed Iraqi-Saudi co-operation in the Palestine question. The plan put forth by him corresponded to that originally set down by Nuri as-Said.¹¹⁶ According to that plan, the Mandate authorities in Palestine were to announce

¹¹² *The Iraq Times*, 2 November, 1936. Cited in hereafter Eppel, MES, Vol. 24, No. 1, p. 32.

¹¹³ Zu'aytar, p. 225.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

¹¹⁵ (a) Our representative in Iraq informs, 28 December 1936, CZA S 25/4127. (b) Clark Kerr to Foreign Office, 29 December 1936, PRO/FO/371-20029/E/8063/ 94/31.

¹¹⁶ Clark Kerr to Rendel, 7 November 1936, PRO/FO/371/20029/E72171-94/31. Cited in hereafter Eppel, MES, Vol. 24, No. 1, p. 33.

a general amnesty for Arab prisoners, the payment of compensation to victims, and the deferment of all Jewish immigration pending the completion of deliberations by the Royal Commission. The establishment of an Arab federation or confederation, including Palestine, was proposed as a final solution of the Palestine question. In addition, al-Asil attempted to obtain Saudi approval of Iraq as mediator between the Arabs and Britain.¹¹⁷

Regarding the British, al-Asil endeavoured to prove Iraq's importance and the strength of its influence by proposing a meeting between himself and the Mufti, with a view to convincing him not to ostracize the Royal Commission.¹¹⁸ Both the Saudis and the British rejected al-Asil's attempts. The Saudis were pleased with the trend exhibited by the Hikmat government of reducing the extent of Iraq's pan-Arab activity; they were, however, not prepared to give Iraq the status of mediator with Britain, and opposed any sort of proposal for federation. Wauchope, the British High Commissioner for Palestine and the Colonial Office in London objected to a meeting between the Iraqi minister and the Mufti, fearing that the expansion of Iraqi involvement in Palestine would reinforce the Mufti's position.¹¹⁹ Wauchope felt that the proposed meeting, which was supposed to have been held in Amman, would damage Emir Abdallah while strengthening, Iraq's demands for direct intervention in the affairs of Palestine.¹²⁰

As time went by, internal and external pressure on the Hikmat Sulayman government increased, and its position began to deteriorate. The limited plans to allocate public land to fellahin aroused the specious of landowners and tribal chiefs. The proposals of several Ahali ministers to nationalize a few industrial plants, no less than the attempts to outlaw corruption and institute proper administration, incurred the objections of officials and businessmen, who enjoyed the benefits of the prevailing

¹¹⁷ Rendel to Clark Kerr, 24 November 1936, PRO/FO/371/20029/E/7297/-94/31.

¹¹⁸ Clark Kerr to Foreign Office, 22 November 1936, PRO/FO/371/20029-E/7297/94/ 31.42.

¹¹⁹ Williams (Colonies Office) to Rendel, (Secret), 25 November 1936, PRO/FO/371/20029/E/7358/ 94/31.

¹²⁰ British High Commissioner of Palestine to Minister of Colonies, 23 November 1936, PRO/FO/371/ 0029/E/7358/4/31. Cited in hereafter Eppel, MES, Vol. 24, No. 1, p. 34.

system.¹²¹ The opposition succeeded in provoking tired rebellions and spreading rumors to the effect that the government was anti-Arab, anti-religious and influenced by Communism. The opposition within Iraq drew strength from conservative elements, which feared the supposedly radical plans of the government. Outside Iraq, those Iraq politicians who had fled in the wake of the *coup d'etat* were now busily engaged in subversion against the government, assisted by pan-Arab personages and groups in Syria and Palestine.¹²²

In addition to attacks by the opposition, interpersonal conflict and strife increased within the coalition. Attempts by the Ahali ministers to initiate limited social and administrative reforms, as well as their agrarian and industrial proposals, met with disapproval by more conservative ministers, and especially by the armed forces, whose support was vital to the government's continued existence.¹²³ At the same time, Hikmat's efforts to negotiate with the chiefs of the rebellious tribes in the Middle Euphrates failed.¹²⁴

The constant pan-Arab pressure led Hikmat to repeated attempts to prove the supposed pan-Arabist motives of his government. As early as March 1937, the government organized a delegation to Yemen, with a view towards obtaining the latter's signature to a pact modelled after that concluded between Iraq and Saudi Arabia. The government's aim in this venture was to prove, both to the pan-Arab opposition within Iraq and to pan-Arab groups outside its borders, that it was truly working for Arab unity.

The delegation included three personalities linked to pan-Arab circles.¹²⁵ Two of them Said Thabet and Muhammad Mahdi Kubbah, were central pan-Arab figures in Iraq, active in the Committee for the Defence of

¹²¹ (a) Zislani to D. Yosef, 8 April 1937, CZA, S 25/3540. (b) Letter from Baghdad (secret), 16 April 1937, CZA S 25/0097.

¹²² 'Ovadia' reports (secret), 27 April 1937, CZA, S 25/10097.

¹²³ Majid Khadduri, *Independent Iraq* (London: 1960), pp. 111-113.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 113-114.

¹²⁵ From Elias (Baghdad) to Moshe (Shertok), 23 March 1937, CZA S 25/5633. See also Hikmat Sulayman's letter to the Damascus newspaper *Alif ba*, 31 March 1937, in which he cited the delegation to Yemen a proof of his government's pan-Arab policy. His words were aimed at both the pan-Arabs within Iraq and the anti-Hikmat activists in Syria.

Palestine; Hikmat, by including them in the delegation, achieved the dual purpose of getting them out of Iraq while making them appear to represent the government. Heading the delegation was Jamil al-Madfa'i, a moderate pro-British politician, yet accepted by pan-Arab circles. The members of the delegation did not remain-loyal to the government in whose service they purported to be; while passing through Palestine and Egypt on their way to and back from Yemen, they met such Iraqi politicians as Nuri as-Said¹²⁶ and his fellows, who were working from their places of exile toward the downfall of the Hikmat government. In these meetings, the delegates did not conceal their negative attitudes toward the government, which had sent them on their mission to Yemen.¹²⁷ Jamil al-Madfa'i himself during this visit of Cairo, discussed the future of Iraq with Nuri as-Said.

In April 1937, in the framework of its efforts to improve its position in the eyes of other Arab nations, the Hikmat government placed Mahmud Azmi in charge of pro-Iraqi propaganda in the Middle East, and primary in the Arab countries. Efforts toward the support of Iraq were renewed in the Arab press outside Iraq. Chief among those supporting Iraq in Palestine was Isa Bandak of Bethlehem, whose newspaper *Sawt ash-Sha'b* maintained a pro-Iraqi line.¹²⁸

In late March and April of that year, the position of the government on the Palestine question began to change. It attempted to prove, both to its pan-Arab critics and to the British, that it was concerned over Palestine and able to promote a solution for the problem. In a memorandum submitted to the British Ambassador by the Foreign Minister, Iraq demanded the cessation of Jewish immigration, the prohibition of land sales to Jews, and the establishment of a percentile quota of Jews in Palestine.¹²⁹ According to the memorandum, the Jewish national home in Palestine had already been established, in the

¹²⁶ Discussion between Nuri as-Said and Squadron Leader Hindle James quoted in a letter from Lampson (Cairo) to the Foreign Office (London), 13 January 1938, PRO/FO/371/21846/E458/45/93. Cited in hereafter Eppel, *MES*, Vol. 24, No. 1, p. 35.

¹²⁷ Eppel, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 24. p. 35.

¹²⁸ R. Zislani to Dr B. Yosef, 8 April 1937, CZA S 25/3540.

¹²⁹ A copy of the memorandum issued by the Iraqi Foreign Minister on 15 April 1937, concerning Iraq's position on the solution of the Palestine question, appears in Clark Kerr's letter to the Foreign Office of 16 April 1937, PRO/FO/371/ 20806/E/ 2714/22/31.

spiritual sense, accordingly. Britain could be said to have fulfilled its promise to the Jews, and must now respond to Arab claims. The memorandum opened with emphasis on the Iraqi interests in Palestine, especially as regarded the oil pipeline to Haifa and transport from Iraq to Haifa Port as an outlet to the Mediterranean. This emphasis on economic interests stemmed from their increased importance, following the activation of the pipeline from Iraq to Haifa and the 1937 agreement granting Iraq special privileges in Haifa Port. In his notations in the margins of the Iraqi memorandum, Bagallay noted that the document had been composed by Iraqis, with the assistance of British advisers.¹³⁰ As they had done as early as the summer of 1936, the officials of the British Embassy in Baghdad and the British advisers, to the Government of Iraq displayed great understanding and sensitivity toward the pan-Arab pressures. These advisers hoped to ensure that the country in their charge would preserve its economic interests especially those linked with Britain, such as the oil pipeline; some of them went so far as to favour the involvement of Arab nations in Palestine and British reliance on pan-Arabism. Accordingly, Bigallay's remark may definitely be considered reliable, even though we have no direct proof of the function fulfilled by the British advisers in this new Iraqi effort on the Palestine question.

The tension between the *Ahali* ministers and the armed forces soon brought about an open rift over the violent suppression of the tribal revolts in the Middle Euphrates following Hikmat's failure in negotiation with the tribal chiefs and the declared intention of both the government and the armed forces to strengthen control of the tribal areas.¹³¹ Hikmat attempted to conciliate the pan-Arabist groups by replacing the Mali -ministers, who resigned in protest, with persons of pan-Arab leanings. In order to maintain accord between Hikmat and the nationalists, the government now had to adopt a pan-Arab line, to do away with 'the Communist elements', and to fight against the *Ahali* group.¹³²

¹³⁰ Notes by Bagallay, 29 April 1937, *Ibid*.

¹³¹ Khadduri, pp. 114-116. Cited in hereafter Eppel, MES, Vol. 24, No. 1, p. 36.

¹³² Taleb Mushtaq: *Awraq Ayyami* (Beirut, 1968), pp. 262-263.

On 7 July 1937, the Royal Commission published its findings; its principal recommendations involved the partition of Palestine into a Jewish state, an Arab section to be united with Trans Jordan, and an area to remain under British mandate. Immediately following the publication of these proposals, the Supreme Arab Committee dispatched telegrams to the Arab rulers, appealing for their aid and support in the rescue of Palestine. In his reply to such a telegram, Hikmat expressed Iraq's intense objection to the partition plan and its support for the Palestinian Arabs.¹³³ The partition plan was roundly censured in the Iraqi press, and the Prime Minister submitted a strong protest to the British Foreign Office.¹³⁴ In an interview granted to the Baghdad newspaper *Al-Bilad* on 11 July, Hikmat expressed his opposition to the partition plan, to Zionism, and to Jewish immigration to Palestine. During the interview, he made frequent use of pan-Arab terminology, and demanded the cessation of Jewish immigration and the establishment of an Arab government in Palestine.¹³⁵

Hikmat, who considered the Iraqi interest in the oil pipeline to Haifa as of importance, feared that the partition of Palestine would bring about the inclusion of Haifa in the Jewish section.¹³⁶ This fear was also the underlying motive of a partition plan submitted by Tawfiq al-Suwaydi in September 1937 (after the fall of the Hikmat government), proposing that the Jews receive the southern section of Palestine, in order to keep the north (and the pipeline) in Arab hands.¹³⁷ This idea ran counter to the Peel plan, which stipulated that the Jewish section should run along the coastline and include Haifa. Another factor in Iraq's objection to the partition plan was the Peel Commission's proposal to turn the Arab section over to Trans Jordan. Despite the external appearance of a united Hashimite front, Iraq was actually in competition with

¹³³ (a) *Ibid.* (b) Sharett, 1937, p 484. (c) *Al-Bilad*, 11 July 1937.

¹³⁴ Clark Kerr (Baghdad) to Anthony Eden (British Foreign Minister), 12 July 1937, PRO/FO/406/ 75/E/ 3965/22/31.

¹³⁵ *Al-Bilad*, 11 July 1937.

¹³⁶ Y. Taggar, 'The Iraqi reaction to the Partition Plan for Palestine 1937' in Gabriel Ben Dor (ed.), *The Palestinians and the Middle East Conflict* (Haifa, 1976), p. 199.

¹³⁷ Conversation between Tawfiq al-Suwaydi and Rendel and Shuckburgh in Geneva, quoted in letter from the United Kingdom delegation to the League of Nations to the Foreign Office, 13 November 1937, PRO/FO/371/20812/E/5392/22/31.

Trans-Jordan, and was therefore not interested in strengthening Abdallah's position. Even before the official publication of the partition plan, Hikmat claimed that the Arabs of Palestine would not agree to partition, because of the annexation of the Arab section to Trans-Jordan.¹³⁸

British pressure also resulted in increased moderation in Iraq's position before the League of Nations, where it had originally taken a rigid stand, aimed at the crystallization of an anti-British policy among the Muslim countries. In the wake of British pressure, *al-Asil* sent a letter on 30 July, which while it did reject the findings of the Peel Commission, expressed Iraq's obligations toward Palestine, and criticized Britain's policy, was moderate in its formulation. In his letter, the Iraqi Foreign Minister demanded that the Palestine question be solved by emancipation, not partition: 'The government of Iraq believes that the way to protect the Jews is by recognition of an independent, undivided Palestine, which will take its place among the Arab nations'.¹³⁹ Two weeks after this letter, the Foreign Minister displayed an even more moderate position implying criticism of the Palestinians. He noted that the uncompromising attitude of both Jews and Arabs would lead nowhere, and that Iraq was interested in solving the Palestine problem, and therefore interested in co-operation with Britain.¹⁴⁰

Hikmat's desperate efforts to conciliate the pan-Arab circles and obtain their support were of no avail. His administration had been branded anti-nationalist, anti-pan-Arabist, and separatist. Moreover, Bakir Sidqi had lost the support of the armed forces.

Throughout its existence the Bakr Sidqi government was in dilemma over the question of Iraqi nationalism as a unifying national identity and on the other, the maintaining of pan-Arab ideology and the attempt to prove its loyalty to the cause of Arab unity. The constant tension between these two orientations was the underlying cause of the conflicts and instability in Hikmat's policy on Palestine, Zionists and the Palestinian nationalists. The pragmatic approach,

¹³⁸ Moshe Sharett, *Political Diary*, Vol. 1937 (Tel Aviv: Hebrew, 1937), p. 226.

¹³⁹ Scott to Foreign Office, No. 318, 6 August 1937, PRO/FO/371/20811/ E/ 4579/ 22/31.

¹⁴⁰ Scott to Foreign Office, No. 195, 14 August 1937, PRO/FO/371/20811/ E/ 4579/ 22/31.

and the attempt to free itself from the influence of Pan-Arab circles and from the ambitions of the Hashimite royal house, led the government to an attitude devoid of hatred toward Zionism and the Jewish Settlement in Palestine. *Never the less, it was which underlined the strength of the pan-Arab ideology and of the political forces acting in its name, as well as the unique importance of the Palestine question as a weapon in internal Iraqi politics.*

Saudi Arabia

In the 1930s, the question of Palestine did not become an issue between Ibn Sa'ud and Britain. Prior to the 1936 disturbances in Palestine, it seems that Ibn Sa'ud had paid little attention to events in this part of the Arab world, perceived as both physically remote and culturally alien to his realm: 'Ibn Sa'ud had been noticeably unwilling to allow himself to be used by either Palestinian or Syrian agitators, although the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem had complained to Ibn Sa'ud about Britain's Zionist policy, which was depicted as being calculated to destroy the Arab nation'.¹⁴¹

Britain made it clear that 'the Sa'udi King would neither promote his friendship with Britain, nor enhance his prestige in the Arab world at large if he concerned himself with a purely British problem in Palestine'.¹⁴² In 1937, it became obvious that the British mandate in Palestine was entering its final phase and the territory was going to be partitioned an Arab and a Jewish state. Britain informed Ibn Sa'ud of the decision, but no Sa'udi reaction comparable to those of other Arab countries was noticeable. In fact, Ibn Sa'ud's initial response to the partition of Palestine was muted.¹⁴³ It seems that 'Ibn Sa'ud was more concerned with the ambitions of the Hashemite 'Abdullah, who was actively intriguing with the Palestinian Arabs and who, with the support of Iraq, made no secret of hoping to absorb Palestine into a greater Jordan'.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ Leatherdale, C., *Britain and Saudi Arabia 1925-1939: He Imperial Oasis* (London; Frank Cass, 1983). p. 268.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 274

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

Ibn Sa'ud's policy towards Palestine in the 1930s was cautious; he was determined not to open up his Kingdom for the benefit of pan-Arab conference. Neither did he send a delegate to the Arab Conference at Bludan, in Syria, in 1937. It was one thing for Ibn Sa'ud to outwardly support Muslim solidarity movements: it was quite another to encourage the popular xenophobia, intellectual agnosticism, and reformist ideals which could permeate his Kingdom.¹⁴⁵

Ibn Sa'ud's indifference towards the Palestinian problem was maintained until the outbreak of the Second World War, 'The attitude was summed up by his famous saying: *'ahl filistin adra bi shi'biha'* (Palestinians know better their own valleys). While this saying implies reluctance to interfere in the Palestinian conflict, it reflected both a deep-seated reservation and a desire to remain aloof from an Arab crisis that Ibn Sa'ud considered irrelevant to the preservation of his realm. Saudi Arabia did not take a serious part in the Arab-Jewish war of 1948 although it sent one battalion which acted as a unit of the Egyptian army.¹⁴⁶ The declaration of the state of Israel in 1948 resulted in the expulsion of thousands of Palestinians, who fled as refugees to neighbouring Arab countries. Ibn Sa'ud made a concession to the Palestinian problem when in 1949 he informed ARACO of his desire that the company should employ at least a thousand Palestinian refugees. ARAMCO immediately sent officials to recruit Palestinians in Beirut where they received more than 5,650 applications. In December 1949 ARAMCO employed 100 Palestinians; a year later their number rose to 826.

In the late 1940s Ibn Sa'ud's main concern was the two Hashemite kingdoms of Iraq and Trans Jordan, both of which had important tribal populations that originated in Saudi Arabia. Also, both monarchs had legitimate claims to leadership on the basis of their holy descent. Saudi Arabia opposed King 'Abdullah's ambition to annex eastern Palestine and used the Arab League, which it joined in 1945, to curb Hashemite influence in the Arab world.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 282

¹⁴⁶ Vassiliev, A., *The History of Saudi Arabia* (London: Saqi Books, 1998), p. 349.

Chapter 6

Events and Involvement of the Arab States since 1948 till 1978

Arab-Israel War of 1948

It has already been stated earlier in the chapter fourth that the state of Israel was proclaimed on the 14th May 1948 as soon as the British mandate was terminated. The United States under President Truman immediately recognized it. Other European powers also gave recognition. But Great Britain delayed to do so. The Arab states opposed the establishment of the Jewish state and tried to nullify it in the UNO as they thought that Palestine belongs to the Arabs. The Arab states surrounding Palestine protested against it and sent their regular armies to undo the illegal Jewish state of Israel. These Arab states were - Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Iraq. To some extent Lebanon was also involved. So war took place in 1948. In the fighting the Arabs were not at an advantageous position because they could not establish any unified command. There was also lack of co-operation among the Arab states. The leadership of the Arab states was also very poor. So they did badly. People often wondered why the five Arab states were defeated by a handful number of Jews.

The Arab armies failed to form a unified command. There was no plan of action. They were fighting as disorganized bodies and in a haphazard manner. The political leadership in almost all the Arab countries was very much immature. They could not give proper leadership. Many of them got independence very recently. They did not know how to run the government and how to organize the army during war. The military commanders of the Arab countries were not experienced. On the contrary the Zionists got training during the Second World War.

The number of the Arab army was smaller in number in comparison to the fighting forces of the Jews. Though five countries took part, the number of soldiers was not higher. The total number of the Arab armies was only 25 thousands. The Jews had over 60 thousands fighters of all categories. They organized themselves in a nice way. So the strength of both the armies was

not equal. The Arab armies had to operate from a long distance of their base. The Egyptian army had to go from Cairo to Palestine crossing the Sinai Peninsula. The Iraqi army had to cross seven hundred miles. So it was not possible to fight in an effective way. On the other hand, the Jews had to fight around their bases which were very much communicated. They could supply arms and ammunition very quickly. Lastly, the Arab armies specially the Jordanian which is called the Arab Legion, was disorganized. When the British left Jordan, the Arab Legion had to face many difficulties. It was fully depended on the British for arms, ammunitions and spare parts etc. But the British stopped supply of arms and ammunitions to both the Arab Legion and the Jewish army. In spite of that the Jews could organize themselves very effectively but the Arabs failed to do so.

Whatever it may be the Arabs did well in the beginning. But when the ceasefire took place on the 21st June they had to insure losses. Because of the fact that during this period the Jews could collect arms and ammunitions from the USA. In addition, US soldiers also arrived to the assistance of the Jews. They also purchased weapons from Czechoslovakia. When the war again broke out the Arabs were defeated. The Arab Legion under Glubb Pasha was only able to occupy the western part of the Jordan River. But the Arabs had to expel from various other occupied places.

Ultimately the Jews come out victorious and captured a vast Arab area including the Nagev desert and the coastal area of the Gallili Sea. The West Bank and Gaza Strip were occupied by the Arab Legion and the Egyptian forces respectively. The conclusion of the Rhodes Armistice in 1949 under UN mediation, however, brought an end of the war. But the occupied Arab territories were not ceded. The Elat Port was captured even after the armistice, 'So the Arab-Jewish tension remained in tact. Subsequently the UN mediator count Folke Bernadotte recommended ceding the occupied Arab territories including the Nagev desert to the Arabs. But he was assassinated and thenceforth the matter had been kept postponed.

The Arab League and the Palestine Question

In the aftermath of Second World War, when the struggle for Palestine was approaching its climax, the Palestinians were in a weak and vulnerable position. Their weakness was clearly reflected in their dependence on the Arab states and on the recently-founded Arab League. Thus, when the Arab Higher Committee (AHC) was re-established in 1946 after a nine-year hiatus, it was not by the various Palestinian political parties themselves, as had been the case when it was founded in 1936, but by a decision of the Arab League. Internally divided, with few political assets of its own, the new AHC was unable to pursue an independent policy or to act decisively. Consequently, the Arab League became the principal forum for determining the all-Arab policy on the political disposition of Palestine.

Within the Arab League, however, there was no consensus on the future of Palestine. Most members, at least at the declaratory level, stood for an uncompromising policy in the fight against Zionism. They denounced the United Nations partition plan of 29 November 1947 as illegal, impracticable, and unjust, as did the AHC. The Arab League was fully behind the Palestinians in opposing partition, and from the time it was founded in March 1945 until Britain confirmed its decision to withdraw from Palestine in the autumn of 1947, there was consistent support for creating a unitary and independent Palestinian state.

After that, however, there were conflicting views concerning the positive policy to adopt on the future of Palestine. On the one hand there was Hajj Amin al-Husayni, the Mufti of Jerusalem, who pursued a maximalist programme for an independent and sovereign Palestinian state over the whole of Palestine.¹ On the other hand there was king Abdullah of Trans

¹ For a revisionist biography of the Mufti that stresses his essential moderation in the period up to 1937, see Philip Mattar, *The Mufti of Jerusalem: Al-Hajj Amin al-Husayni and the Palestinian National Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).

Jordan, whose undeclared aim was to partition Palestine with the Zionists and to annex the Arab part to his kingdom.²

After Britain's September 1947 announcement of its intention to withdraw from Palestine, the AHC appealed to the Arab League for support in setting up a Palestinian government to fill the power vacuum that was going to be created.³ But most members of the League were reluctant to extend active support to a government that would be headed by the Mufti, or to entrust him with the leadership of the Arab war effort in Palestine. At the meetings of the Arab League Council in Aley, Lebanon, in October 1947 and in Cairo in December 1947, the Mufti pleaded passionately for the establishment of a shadow government under the aegis of the AHC. His pleas fell on deaf ears, however, as did his warnings against deploying in Palestine the armies of the neighbouring Arab states. In February 1948, the League not only rejected the Mufti's demand for the establishment of a Palestinian government in exile and for the appointment of Palestinian military governors for the country, but declined even to extend a loan to the AHC to cover its administrative expenses. During March, April, and the first half of May, the AHC kept up the pressure for the establishment of a government to manage the affairs of the country, but the Arab League persisted in its negative stand. The Mufti and his colleagues were progressively marginalized during this unofficial but critical phase of the struggle for Palestine. By 14 May 1948, when the State of Israel

² For two recent studies see Mar/C. Wilson, *King Abdullah, Britain and the Making of Jordan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); and Avi-Shlaim, *Collation Across the Jordan: King Abdullah, the Zionist Movement, and the Partition of Palestine* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988)

³ Muhammad Amin al-Husayni, *Facts About the Palesine Question* [in Arabic] (Cairo Dar al-Kitab al- Arabi, 1956), pp. 22-23. For a comprehensive and well- documented survey of the deliberations of the Arab League on the Palestinian question, see Walid Khalidi, "The Arab Perspective" in Wm. Roger Louis and Robert W. Stookey, eds., *The End of the Palestine Manaate* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1936), pp. 104-136.

was proclaimed, only one solitary member of the AHC, Ahmad Hilmi Abdul Baqi, remained in Palestine.⁴

Thus, when the regular Arab armies marched into Palestine the following day and the official phase of the war began, the Arabs of Palestine in sharp contrast to the Israeli side did not have a responsible government, an administrative regime, or a unified military command. The Palestinian community was decimated and pulverized in the course of the fighting and successive waves of refugees were expelled or left the country. At the time the first truce was declared on 11 June, the Israeli Defense Forces were in control of areas beyond what had been assigned to the Jewish state under the partition plan; the Egyptian army held onto the coastal strip to about 14 miles above Gaza; the Iraqi forces held the mountainous region constituting the northern part of central Palestine; and King Abdullah's forces were in control of the central part of Palestine including East Jerusalem, the Hebron Hills, and Lydda and Ramle in the coastal plain. When Count Bernadette, the UN mediator, recommended in his initial proposals on 27 June that the Arab parts of Palestine be attached to Trans Jordan, King Abdullah's opponents within the Arab League decided to act.

On 8 July 1948, the Political Committee of the Arab League met in Cairo and reached a decision to set up a temporary civil administration in Palestine that would be directly responsible to the League. This decision, which marked a partial reversal of the League's previous policy of rejecting any solution that would give a prominent place to the Mufti, was based on a compromise that failed to satisfy either of the two principal claimants. Out of deference to King Abdullah, the decision spoke not of a Palestinian government but of a temporary administration with jurisdiction only in civic

⁴ Khalidi, p. 126; Pamela Ann Smith, *Palestine and the Palestinians, 1870-1983* (London: Croom Helm, 1984), pp. 84-86; Barry Rubin, *The Arab States and the Palestine Conflict* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1981), chapter II; Naji Allush, *Arab Resistance in Palestine, 1917-1948* [in Arabic] (Beirut, 1970), pp. 157-62; and Iazar Tannous, *The Palestinians: A Detailed Documented Eyewitness History of Palestine under British Mandate* (New York: IGT Company, 1988), pp. 507 and 609.

affairs. Nevertheless, the King, with British encouragement, remained implacably hostile to the whole idea. The AHC, on the other hand, had serious reservations about the proposed body both because it would be dependent on the Arab League and because of the threat it was expected to pose to its own position.⁵ With strong opposition from King Abdullah, and only half-hearted support from the AHC, the new body never got off the ground.

The Rise and fall of the All- Palestine Government in Gaza

Thus after the establishment of Israel an important development took place over the question of the formation of all Palestine Government. It is to be noted that the Arab states failed to take concerted decision over the question of its formation and recognition. The All-Palestine Government established in Gaza in September 1948 was short-lived and ill starred, but it constituted one of the more interesting and instructive political experiments in the history of the Palestinian national movement. Any proposal for an independent Palestinian state inevitably raises questions about the form of the government that such a state would have. In this respect, the All-Palestine Government is not simply a historical curiosity, but a subject of considerable and enduring political relevance in so far as it highlights some of the basic dilemmas of Palestinian nationalism and above all the question of dependence on the Arab states.

It is to be noted that over the question All Palestine Government King Abdullah`s increasingly overt use of the Arab Legion to make himself master of Arab Palestine and his claim that the Trans Jordanian delegates rather than the AHC represented the Palestinians inside the Arab League antagonized the other member states, especially Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia. Britain`s support of Abdullah`s claims further fuelled the Arab League`s anti-Abdullah forces. Led by Egypt, these Arab states began to maneuver for the creation of an Arab government for Palestine.

⁵ Muhammad Kalil, *The Arab States and the Arab League* (Beirut: Khavats, 1962), Vol. II, pp. 566-68; and Samikh Shabib, "Introduction to the Official Palestinian Sources, 1948-1950", *Shulun Filastiniyah*, no. 129-131., (August-September, 1982).

The proposal for turning the "temporary civil administration" that had been agreed upon in July into an Arab government for all Palestine was placed at the top of the agenda of the Arab League's Political Committee meeting, which opened in Alexandria on 6 September and lasted for ten days. Jamal al-Husayni, the Mufti's cousin and a prominent member of the AHC, visited several Arab capitals, including Amman, to mobilize support for this proposal. After a series of meetings, the Political Committee, despite the doubts expressed by the Trans Jordanian delegates, reached an agreement on the establishment of an Arab government for Palestine with a seat in Gaza. A formal announcement of this decision was issued on 20 September to forestall Trans Jordanian objections that the decision implied Arab acceptance of partition and of the State of Israel, the new body was called the Government of All-Palestine, or the All-Palestine Government (APG).⁶

The motives for this major Arab League decision were diverse and contradictory but, in more than one way, they were antagonistic to Trans Jordan. The desire to placate Arab public opinion, critical of the governments for failing to protect the Palestinians, was one consideration. Another was the determination to safeguard the Arab claim to sovereignty over the whole of Palestine by providing an alternative to international recognition of Israel and by preventing any Arab government from recognizing the Jewish state. But at the same time, the decision to form an Arab government of Palestine and the attempt to create armed forces under its control furnished the Arab League members with the means for divesting themselves of direct responsibility for the prosecution of the war and of withdrawing their armies from Palestine with some protection against popular outcry.⁷ Whatever the long-term future of the proposed Arab government in Palestine. Its immediate purpose, as perceived by its Egyptian sponsors, was to provide a focal point of opposition to Abdullah and serve as an instrument for frustrating his ambition to federate the Arab regions of Palestine with Trans Jordan.

⁶ "The All-Palestine Government", in *Al-Mawsuah al-Filastiniyah* (Encyclopaedia Palestina), (Damascus, 1984), Vol. III, pp. 342-44; "How the All-Palestine Government Was Established in Gaza in 1948", *Filastm.* no. 30 (August 1963), pp. 6-11; and interview with Akram Zuaffar, *Al-Quds*, 10 No, 1988. cited in Avi Shlaim, "The Rise and Fall of the All-Palestine Government in Gaza", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. XX, No.1, Autumn 1990, issue 77, p. 40.

⁷ Evans (Beirut) to FO, 21 September 1948, FO 371/68376, Public Record Office (PRO).

Britain had been lending discreet support to King Abdullah's plan for a Greater Trans Jordan because this held out the best hopes of safeguarding its own strategic interests following the termination of the mandate over Palestine. Hostility to the Mufti and to the idea of a Palestinian state under his leadership was a constant and important feature of British policy in 1948, and it goes a long way to explain Britain's attitude towards the Egyptian-led initiative. In British eyes a Palestinian state was equated with a Mufti state, and the rationale against a Mufti state was that it would be "a hotbed of ineffectual Arab fanaticism" that would very likely be taken over by the Jewish state.⁸

The Foreign Office, therefore, exerted heavy pressure in Arab capitals to prevent the proclamation of the All-Palestine Government, arguing that such a move would be ill-timed and likely to serve the interests of the Mufti. Azzam Pasha, the Secretary-General of the Arab League, down-played the significance of the Mufti issue and told a senior British diplomat that if the Palestine problem could be solved within six months they would join those who wanted to "cut the Mufti's throat," but since it would not be solved for at least ten years, the Mufti could still be Azzam added that the Mufti would remain in Egypt and that he would be able to exercise influence over Palestine only indirectly, from Cairo.⁹

Although Britain's concern about the role of the Mufti was widely shafted in Arab political circles, he and the AHC in fact played a major part in the formation of the new government. The government was headed by Ahmad Hilmi Abdul Baqi, who had recently left the AHC by accepting King Abdullah's offer to become military governor of Jerusalem, and was now being lured away from the King by the Mufti and the Egyptians.¹⁰ Hilmi's cabinet consisted largely of followers of the Mufti but also included representatives of the other factions of the Palestinian ruling class and a number of prominent Palestinians who had previously supported Abdullah. Jamal al-Husayni became foreign minister, Rajai al-Husayni (the former head of the Arab office

⁸ Minute by B.A.B. Burrows, 17 August 1948, FO/371/68822, (PRO).

⁹ Ilan Pappé, *Britain and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-51* (London: Macmillan, 1988), p. 83.

¹⁰ Muhammad Nimer al-Hawan, *The Secret of the Catastrophe* [in Arabic] (Nazareth, 1955), p. 271.

in Jerusalem) became defense minister, and Michael Abcarius, (a senior civil servant in the British administration) finance minister, while Anwar Nussaibe, (a former judge), became secretary of the cabinet. There were twelve ministers in all, most of whom had also been members of the "temporary civil administration" of the previous July. They were living in various Arab countries and now headed for Gaza to take up their new positions.

On 22 September a communiqué was issued in the name of the AHC about the formation of the All-Palestine Government. Whereas the Arab League announcement had spoken modestly of the decision to turn the Palestine civil administration into a Palestinian government, the AHC resoundingly stated that "the inhabitants of Palestine, by virtue of their natural right to self-determination and in accordance with the resolutions of the Arab League, have decided to declare Palestine in its entirety.....as an independent state under a government known as the All-Palestine Government which is based on democratic principles."¹¹

In addition to this official communiqué, an appeal was broadcast to the Arabs of Palestine calling on them to rally around their national government and help with the liberation of their homeland.¹² Word was sent out to the supporters of the Mufti to assemble in Gaza, while Egyptian troops were sent to Bethlehem to distribute small arms to anti-Hashemite elements. Most of the Palestinians, and especially the refugees, received the news with great joy. For the first time in their lives they heard of a Palestine government and it sparked in them a ray of hope amidst all the gloom and doom of the previous year. When the Mufti, who had been living in Cairo, the most recent stop in his eleven-year exile, defied the Egyptian authorities and turned up in Gaza, he was welcomed by local inhabitants in a display of great excitement and jubilation.

The sporadic displays of popular support did not blind the Mufti and his colleagues to the need to endow the new government with real legitimacy and

¹¹ *Al-Ahram*, 26 September, 1948.

¹² Muhammad Lazar Darwaza, *The Palestinian Problem* [in Arabic] (Sidon: al-Maktara al-Assyria, vol.II, pp. 211-12.

substance. During the first week of its life in Gaza, the All-Palestine Government revived the Holy War Army (Jaish al-Jihad al-Muqaddas), the Mufti's irregular forces which had played a major part during the unofficial phase of the Palestine war, and began to mobilize with the declared aim of liberating Palestine. On the diplomatic front, the new government sought international recognition, and even designated a delegation to represent it at the United Nations even though the world body had not acknowledged it. Finally, any member of the Palestinian people was declared eligible for a Palestinian passport, and within a short period some 14,000 of these documents were issued, mostly to notables and businessmen from the Gaza Strip.

Given the Arab League's increasingly ambiguous stand and King Abdullah's repeated claims that the APG had been set up against the will of the Palestinian people, the new government decided to convene a constituent assembly aimed at securing a more broadly-based and legitimate source of authority and at refuting Abdullah's claims. Accordingly, invitations were sent to Palestinian representatives from all parts of the country, including the members of the AHC, the mayors and heads of local councils in Palestine, heads of chambers of commerce and trade unions, Palestinian members of the National committees, leaders of political parties, and military commanders.¹³

The Palestinian National Council convened under the chairmanship of the Mufti in a semi-derelict school building in Gaza on 30 September 1948. Only half of the 150 delegates had been invited made it to Gaza, partly because of the restrictions on travel imposed by the Trans Jordanian and Iraqi armies which were in control of central Palestine. Nevertheless, a mood of elation and even euphoria permeated the deliberations of the Council. First, Hajj Amin al-Husayni was unanimously elected as President of the Council. Second, the Council passed a vote of confidence in the government headed by Ahmad Hilmi and endorsed its plans for the liberation of Palestine. Then a long series of resolutions was passed, including the adoption of a provisional constitution, the original flag of the Arab Revolt of 1916, and Jerusalem as the capital. Finally, a declaration of independence was signed by the delegates

¹³ *Filastin*, no. 30 (August 1963).

and issued to the press. It asserted the right of the Palestinian people to a free, sovereign, and democratic state with borders defined as "Syria and Lebanon in the north. Syria and Trans Jordan in the east, the Mediterranean in the west, and Egypt in the south."¹⁴

But the contrast between the pretensions of the All-Palestine Government and its capability quickly reduced it to the level of farce. It claimed jurisdiction over the whole of Palestine, yet it had no administration, no civil service, no money, and no real army of its own. Even in the small enclave around the town of Gaza its writ ran only by the grace of the Egyptian authorities. Taking advantage of the new government's dependence, on them for funds and protection, the Egyptian paymasters manipulated it to undermine Abdullah's claim to represent the Palestinians in the Arab League and in international forums. Ostensibly the embryo for an independent Palestinian state, the new government, from the moment of its inception, was thus reduced to the unhappy role to a shuttlecock in the ongoing power struggle.

Jordan's Views Regarding All Palestine Government

It is to be noted that from Amman King Abdullah pursued his campaign against the All-Palestine Government with renewed vigor. At the time of its proclamation, he had not only refused to recognize it, but had sent angry telegrams of protest to Ahmad Hilmi and Azzam Pasha. Abdullah soon served notice that the All-Palestine Government would not be allowed to operate in any of the areas occupied by the Arab Legion. To Mahmud Nuqrashi, the Egyptian prime minister, he said quite bluntly that he had no intention of allowing a weak Palestinian government to take charge of the Arab part of Palestine when it had no army to protect it from Jewish attacks.¹⁵ And while waging this open campaign, King Abdullah also took practical steps to formalize Trans Jordan's authority over the areas it held to the west of the

¹⁴ Aref el-Aref, *The Catastrophe* [in Arabic] (Sidon: al-Maktaba al-Assriya, 1956), vol. III, pp. 703-4; Hawari, pp. 275-83; Darwaza, pp. 211-14; Kahlil, Vol. II, p. 579, "The Gaza Congress", *Al-Mawsuah al-Filastiniyan*, pp. 398-99; and *al-Ahram*, 3 October, 1948.

¹⁵ Tannous, p. 658.

Jordan River and to organize his own Palestinian supporters in opposition to the government in Gaza.¹⁶

Thus, on 30 September 1948, the very same day that the Mufti's Palestinian National Council issued its declaration of independence in Gaza, the rival "first Palestinian Congress" convened in Amman, its several thousand participants swearing allegiance to the Hashemite monarch. The Amman Congress denounced the formation of the Gaza government as being contrary to the wishes and interests of the Arabs, declared that Trans Jordan and Palestine constituted a single territorial unit, and resolved that no Arab government should be set up for Palestine until the entire country had been liberated.¹⁷

Popular support for the high-sounding but largely illusory All-Palestine Government had never developed into a groundswell, and it began to dwindle after rival Congresses were held. Many of the Arab towns and villages in Palestine sent delegations to Amman to pledge their loyalty to the King and to give him power of attorney to solve the Palestine problem as he saw fit. In some cases these delegations were the result of local political initiative; in others it was the Trans Jordanian military governors who helped in collecting the signatures and dispatching the delegations to Amman.¹⁸ The Trans Jordanian regime also used bribery to induce some of the supporters of the Mufti's government to transfer their loyalty to King Abdullah.

Outside Palestine, the Gaza government was largely unsuccessful in its efforts to gain international recognition as the representative of the Palestine people. London, of course, had no intention of recognizing "this so-called government," and most other members of the United Nations followed the British example in ignoring it.

Meanwhile, intense negotiations were taking place within the Arab camp concerning the stance to adopt on the All-Palestine Government. On the one hand, the Arab leaders almost without exception were prepared for

¹⁶ Joseph Nevo, *Abdullah and the Arabs of Palestine* [in Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: Shiloah Institute, 1975), p. 100.

¹⁷ Shabib, pp. 77-79; and *Al-Ahram*, 3 October 1948.

¹⁸ Nevo, pp. 108-10.

purely local ends to sacrifice Arab interests in Palestine. The Arab reluctance fully to back the new body was increased by the continuing and general aversion to the Mufti; indeed, the prominence of his role in directing events in the APG had given them second thoughts concerning the entire process leading up to the Arab Palestine Government that they themselves had unleashed to check King Abdullah's annexation of Arab Palestine. As events progressed, they were anxious not to escalate the conflict with Abdullah and risk the break-up of the Arab League. Azzam Pasha had even tried, unsuccessfully, to stop the proclamation of the government.¹⁹

On the other hand, the Arab regimes had to consider domestic public opinion, which across the Arab world cared passionately about Palestine and was adamant in its opposition to partition. At the same time, opposition to Abdullah ran high, and preventing the expansion of his kingdom was almost on a par with opposition to partition as one of the few goals behind which nearly all the Arab states could rally. Abdullah's loyalty to Britain was increasingly equated with disloyalty to the Arab cause. Abdullah's position in the Arab world was not helped by the mismanagement that characterized his handling of the Palestinian population that came under his control. From being a hero a few months previously for heeding Palestinian calls for help and going to the rescue, Abdullah had sunk almost to the level of pariah among his brother Arabs. A more pragmatic reason for the other Arab regimes opposition to Abdullah was his usefulness as a scapegoat for the failure of their own Palestine policy.

Thus, the need to protect their Arab nationalist credentials combined with their antipathy to Abdullah and ultimately took precedence over their misgivings regarding the Mufti. Once the APG was declared, the Arab states began, however half-heartedly, to rally behind it. Predictably enough, Egypt, which after all had sponsored the new government, was its chief backer. Riad al-Sulh, the Lebanese prime minister who was savagely anticay of King

¹⁹ Nevo, pp. 271-72; and *New York Time*, 25 September 1948.

Abdullah, also played a leading role in pressing the Arab League's political committee to give its blessing to the All-Palestine Government.²⁰

Much of the diplomatic activity concerning the All-Palestine Government centered on Iraq, whose position was particularly crucial since it held the northern half of central Palestine (the West Bank). Iraqi cooperation with the Egypt-sponsored body would have made Trans Jordan's position very difficult. King Abdullah, therefore, called his nephew Abd al-Ilah, the regent in Baghdad, to ensure that this did not happen but was not given a clear reply.²¹ Less than a week later, Jamal al-Husayni, soliciting Iraqi support for the All-Palestine Government on a visit to Baghdad and in an effort to circumvent opposition deriving from the Mufti's prominence in the project, suggested that the Mufti might be gotten rid of later and went so far as to suggest that if Palestine were saved for the Arabs the throne could be offered to king Abdullah.²²

Despite the dynastic consideration that generally allied Iraq with Abdullah to form the Hashemite bloc within the Arab League, and despite a deep aversion to the Mufti stemming from his involvement in the anti-Hashemite Rashid Ali coup in 1941, Iraq had good reason to support the APG. The Palestine problem was the litmus test of commitment to pan-Arabism, and the Regent had worked hard to establish his Arab nationalist credentials by taking a strong stance against partition and by sending troops to Palestine. Siding with Abdullah, whose prestige among the masses in Iraq and elsewhere in the Arab world was at a low ebb, could compromise the measure of domestic credibility the regime had thus acquired. For various reasons, then, the Regent of Iraq joined in the general campaign of vilification against his uncle; his criticisms were heartily reciprocated, and the

²⁰ Beirut to FO, 9 October 1948, FO/371/688642; Beirut to FO, 10 October 1948, FO/371/68862, (PRO).

²¹ Foreign Relation of the United States, 1948, Vol. V. (Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing House, 1976), p. 1947 Kirkoride to FO, 25 September 1948, Fo/371/ 68641, (PRO) and King Abdullah, My Memotrns Completed: "*Al Takmilah*" (London: Longman, 1978), pp. 11-12.

²² Sir H. Mack (Baghdad) to FO, 30 September 1948, FO/371/68642, PRO.

relationship between them became so sour that they could no longer have a sensible discussion about Palestine.²³

But Iraq, mindful of the risks Abdullah was running vis-à-vis his own public opinion, continued to exert efforts to bring Abdullah into line with the common Arab stance. The Iraqi prime minister, Muzahem al-Pachachi, advised Abdullah to go slowly²⁴ and with the tacit support of the Regent did his utmost to induce the King to recognize "temporarily" the All-Palestine Government. Al-Pachachi, unable to declare open antagonism towards the Mufti, used the argument with Abdullah that the new government would fail and Arab Palestine would be bound to go to Trans Jordan ultimately. The King countered that recognition would merely implement the partition of Palestine before it was known what the United Nations was going to decide.²⁵ Meanwhile, the Foreign Office pointed out to the prime minister and the Regent the dangers of going along with Egypt in encouraging the Mufti to extend his influence in Palestine. To the Regent in particular, it was emphasized that any growth of the Mufti's influence would necessarily be dangerous to the Hashemite house. The Regent was told, in what amounted to a rebuke, that he could not sit back and allow attacks on the position of King Abdullah without danger to himself. Whatever the Regent's own views on the matter, the British view was that a strong and enlarged Trans Jordan was in the interest of the maintenance of stability in Iraq and of the position of the Regent and the royal family.²⁶

So overwhelming was Arab resistance both to Trans Jordan's enlargement and to appearing to endorse partition that the British argument that a weak Palestinian government would facilitate Jewish expansion over the whole country made no impression. A major stumbling block in the way of the British policy of following Bernadotte's suggestion of assigning the West Bank and the Negev to Abdullah was thus Arab opposition to a plan that

²³ Kirkbride to FO/2 October 1948, FO/371/68642, PRO.

²⁴ Chapman Andrews (Cairo) to FO/2 October 1948, FO/371, 68642, PRO.

²⁵ Kirkbride to FO/12 October 1948, FO/371/68642, PRO.

²⁶ FO to Baghdad, 28 September 1948, FO/371/68641, PRO.

would reduce Arab Palestine to nothing. Paradoxically, as one British official observed, "although the primary Arab objection to the Bernadotte plan is that its acceptance would involve partition, there are clear signs that, in their hearts, all but the most rabid fanatics, like Hajj Amin, realize that the existence of the state of Israel will have to be accepted sooner or later. "What the Arabs could never agree upon was the partition of what was left of Palestine."²⁷

With the passage of time, the All Palestine Government disintegrated for not getting recognition from all the Arab states surrounding Palestine. The Palestinian Arabs were also divided over the question of this government. Some supported King Abdullah of Jordan while the rest took side in favour of it. So the fate of the government was not good.

The government's fall was no fewer swifts than its rise had been. The government's origins go a long way towards explaining its ultimate failure. For although it was projected as the nucleus of Palestinian self-government, it was a phantom deliberately created by the Arab states, with Egypt at their head, to meet their public opposition to partition and to challenge Trans Jordan's claim to the residue of Arab Palestine. It was for their own selfish reasons that the Arab states created the All-Palestine Government and it was for their own selfish reasons that they abandoned it. True, in the first three weeks of its short life this fledgling government did represent a genuine attempt by the Palestinians to assert their independence from their dubious sponsors and to assume firm control of their own destiny. But time had run out on it. Born of inter-Arab rivalries, it rapidly and inexorably foundered on the rocks of inter-Arab rivalries. For the Palestinian cause the Arab states, individually and collectively, turned out to be a broken reed.

Egypt's Role in 1948 and after Under Nasser

It is to be noted that the Egyptian army, having no experience of modern warfare did utterly bad in the Arab-Jewish war of 1948. Indeed Egyptian participation in the Palestine war was motivated to a great extent by its desire

²⁷ Minute by K.C. Buss, 11 October 1948, FO/371/68642, PRO.

to contain potential gains by Abdullah of Trans Jordan in Palestine.²⁸ The humiliating defeat of Egypt and her Arab allies in the Palestine war brought about a tremendous impact in the Arab World. It led to a vast refugee problem of the world. It was ironic that Israel, a heaven for homeless Jews, should have rendered homeless seventy percent of the Arab population of Palestine.²⁹ As a result of the Israeli refusal for granting permission of their return to their homes in Palestine and the unwillingness of Egypt and other Arab states for their assimilation, the refugees had to live in the refugee camps in sub-human condition. Since then for years together they remained a pathetic symbol of Arab opposition to the creation of Israel.³⁰ The question of the refugees created a vexatious problem for the Arab Middle East especially for Egypt. Because of the fact that it has become an obligation on the part of the Arab states to resettle the refugees in their own territories, it was much easier and much less humiliating for everyone. But the refugees demanded their resettlement in the lands, which the governments of the Arabs states had promised and failed to obtain for them by force. As far as other Arab states were concerned, the refugees were regarded as unwanted but for the Egyptians they were thoroughly unwanted. All parties in Egypt agreed tacitly to forget the Palestine adventure as early as possible. But it was not possible entirely to forget it. The emergence of Israel presents a relatively powerful and potential hostile state on the north-eastern frontier of Egypt. The performance of the Egyptian army in the war was nothing but to some extent the demonstration of her shortcomings as a modern state. The Palestine war brought Egypt up against the realities. To face Israel, she now put emphasis on the modernization of the army. For the sake of interest it was imperative on the Egyptian decision-markers to nourish and champion the cause of the Palestine Arabs.

²⁸ P.J. Vatikiotis, *The Egyptian Army in Politics: Pattern for New Nations?* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1961), p. 45.

²⁹ George Lenczowski, *The Middle East in World Affairs* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1962), pp. 400-401.

³⁰ Masuma Hasan, "The Historical Background of the Arab - Israeli Conflict", *Pakistan Horizon*, Vol. xx, Nos. 1-4, 1967, p. 235.

The Palestine war fostered political renaissance for extreme Arab nationalism. A New ruling class emerged and dominated the Arab Middle Eastern politics to regain the prestige lost by the traditional statesmen and party politicians. The share of the army in the new ruling class was immense. The new class was at once revolutionary and socialist, radical and nationalist. They put emphasis on the need to pursue an anti-western foreign policy and a military solution of the Palestine problem. The success of Nasser's revolution in 1952 gave these goals a charismatic leader to espouse them and a viable base from which to expand. But the initial years after the revolution saw minimum Egyptian participation in Arab affairs. This was because of the struggle for power that developed soon between General Neguib (whose personal tendencies were Islamic and conservative) and Colonel Nasser. In fact, this period saw almost complete isolation of Egypt from the Arab World, as the new leaders channelled their energies to Anglo-Egyptian relations and to the consolidation and legitimization of the political control within Egypt.

But in the 1950s and in most of the 1960s progressive forces of the Arab Middle East demanded a total change of the region by unifying it and by liberating it from Zionism and western colonialism. At that time, the Arab World was sharply divided along ideological lines and the struggle was intense.³¹ The struggle centered round three main issues: the type of political system an Arab country should have its choice of superpower alliance, and its Palestine policy. The third issue, Palestine policy, remained as a bone of contention between the two forces - radical reformist and traditionalist. In other words, anti - Israeli zeal was a compulsory attitude for any aspirant to the favour of the inhabitants of the area.³² Nasser, who assumed full power meanwhile, realized the gravity of the situation and made an orientation of the policy. He laid emphasis on the cause of the Palestinians saying, "The Palestine tragedy was the torch which aroused Arab consciousness in every Arab country".³³ Egypt, therefore, had to come from her self-imposed isolation

³¹ Nabeel A. Khoury, "The Pragmatic Trend in Inter - Arab Politics", *The Middle East Journal*, Vol 36, No.3, Summer, 1982, p. 374.

³² John Marlowe, *Arab Nationalism and British Imperialism*, (London: The Crescent Press, 1961), pp. 37- 38.

³³ Morroe Berger, *The Arab World Today* (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1962, p. 340.

and to pursue a more active Arab policy. The Palestine issue thus in its widest and most comprehensive sense was one of the central elements in Nasser's political outlook.

Egypt's wholehearted entry into regional Arab politics, however, did not fully emerge until January 1955. The conclusion of the Baghdad pact in that year compelled Nasser and Egypt fully to enter, participate in, and then dominate the regional politics of the Arab Middle East. In the days of the cold war that developed in the 1950s the West especially Britain tried to isolate Egypt (advocate of positive neutralism) from the rest of the Arab World as much as they could. It was a challenge to Egyptian hegemony and leadership in the Arab World. So, Egypt had to involve in struggle for power in the Arab World against Britain and her Arab allies. In order to maintain this leadership all through, Egypt had to pursue an activist Palestine policy. Naturally, the Israeli - Egyptian frontier, which at the end of 1954 had been the most peaceful, was, at the end of 1955, the most turbulent of Israel's troubled frontiers.³⁴ The Egyptian *Fedayeen* (the Egyptian guerrilla force) had become more active, and Israel retaliated by intensifying her military activity in the area. The Israeli army led invasion to Gaza and destroyed the Egyptian police outpost of Khan Yunis. The Egyptian army failed to face the invaders. Consequently, there was a danger that Nasser's insistence on Egyptian and Arab strength would begin to lose credibility among the Arabs. It was thus imperative that he should strengthen his army. On September 27, 1955, he announced the Czech's arms deal.

This step contributed immensely to enhancing Nasser's popularity and esteem in the Arab World. His paramount position as neutral and independent leader had been reinforced. Politically conscious Arabs saw in the arms deal an elimination of the Western arms monopoly and an emphatic assertion of Arab independence. Throughout the Arab World he was supported by the majority of the populations and many of their governments. By 1958 every Arab revolutionary had come to regard himself as a Nasserite irrespective of his willingness to relinquish his sovereign status in favour of Egyptian

³⁴ John Marlowe, *Arab Nationalism and British Imperialism*, *op.cit.*, p. 87.

domination.³⁵ At this stage it was argued by the Egyptian decision-makers that 'there was no conflict whatsoever between Egyptian and Arab nationalism'.³⁶ In less than five years, a radical change had thus occurred in the orientations of the policy-making elite, transforming them from Egyptian patriots to proclaimed Arab nationalists and elevating Nasser of the leadership of the Arab nationalist movement.

In the course of the development of the Palestine Problem an important development took place in 1956. This is known in history as the second Arab-Jewish War of 1956.

Arab-Israel War 1956 and Its Consequences

The second Arab-Israeli War of 1956 is an important event in Middle Eastern history. After the signing of the armistice agreements (1949) Arab and Jews threw they challenge from both sides. The terrorist organization of the refugees carried their guerrilla raids against Israel. The Jewish regular army responded by launching attack on Arab countries. Some of the refugee's camps were bombarded. This sort of barbarous activities of Israel was criticized by the UNO. As a result of the Jewish attack on the Gaza strip many refugees took shelter in Jordan and few to Southern Lebanon. Nevertheless some important factors were responsible for the 1956 Arab-Israeli War. Within the months of the signing of the 1949 armistice agreements, border incursions, raids, and other violations became the order of the day. By 1954, it was clear that the incursions of fedayeen murder groups were not isolated the incidents.³⁷ The rise of Nasser to power in Egypt was welcomed at first by Israel. But Nasser's mixture of radicalism and extreme Arab nationalism, coupled with an ambition to achieve leadership in the Arab world gradually came to expression in a bitter, behind antagonism to Israel. In late 1955, a massive arms transaction between Egypt and Czechoslovakia was

³⁵ P.J. Vatikiotis, "The Foreign Policy of Egypt" in R.C. Marcidis (ed.), *Foreign policy in world Politics* (London: Prentice - Hall, Inc., 1962), p. 336.

³⁶ United Arab Republic, *The Charter* (Cairo: Information Department, 1962), p. 21 cited in A.I. Dawisha, *op.cit.*, p. 35.

³⁷ Chaim Herzog, *The Arab_ Israli Wars*, Arms and Armour press, London, 1982, p. 111.

concluded, whereby Egypt received modern weapons. This as Nasser declared, constituted a major step toward the decisive battle for the destruction of Israel.³⁸ Jews have often violated the cease-fire line and made border raids on Egypt, Syria and Jordan in order to draw them into the war. The organized Israeli raids on Jordanian village Kibya on October 14, 1953 and on the Egyptian-held Gaza on February 28, 1955 and on Syrian territory east of Lake Tiberias on December 11, 1955 were calculated moves by Israeli adventurers to escalate the war against Arabs.³⁹

From 1949 to 1956 the armed truce between Israel and the Arabs, enforced in part by UN forces, was punctuated by raids and reprisals. Among the world powers, the United States, Great Britain and France sided with Israel, while the Soviet Union supported Arab demands. Tensions became dangerous during 1956 as Israel convinced that Arabs were preparing for war. The nationalizations of the Suez Canal by Egypt Gamal Abdul Nasser in July 1956, resulted the further alienation of Great Britain and France, which made new agreements with Israel. On October 29, 1956 Israeli forces directed by Moshe Dayan launched a combined air and ground assault against Egyptian Sinai Peninsula. Early Israeli successes were reinforced by an Anglo-French invasion along with the canal. Although the action against Egypt was severely condemned by the nations of the world. The cease-fire of November 6, which was promoted by the United Nations with U.S. and Soviet support. Israel captured Gaza strip, Sharm el Sheikh which commanded the approaches to the Gulf of Aqaba. Israel withdrew all forces from the Canal Zone in 1957 and U N emergency force deployed there.

After the Suez crisis of 1956 (the crisis took place as a result of the joint Anglo-French and Israeli attack in the canal) the Egyptian decision-makers had closed down the canal for the use of Israeli ships and cargoes. But subsequently Nasser agreed to re-open it at the end of March 1957 as a result of negotiations with UN. The Arab League criticized this Egyptian move.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

³⁹ Shamim Akter: Arab-Israeli conflict. *Islamic Studies*, Journal of Islamic research Pakistan, vol. VII, Sept., 1968, No. 3, p. 241.

Then in September, after it had pointed out that by denying passage to Israeli ships and cargoes Egypt was in breach of a Security Council Resolution. Nasser made public an ingenious and apparently realistic offer. He announced that he would obey all UN Resolutions about Palestine provided Israel too did so. This announcement could be treated as the first occasion on which any responsible Arab leader had publicly proposed any basis of negotiations with Israel. Having no immediate effect, the offer was greeted by embarrassing silence of Israel and other Arab states. But it appeared to be part of the 'new look' Nasser was injecting into the Arab approach to international affairs.⁴⁰

The outbreak of hostilities between Israel and Egypt on 29 October 1956, and the armed intervention of British and French forces against Egypt (31 October-6 November) led to a delicate situation in Iraq, where stirring elements were still opposed to all connections with the western Power. Iraq, indeed, broke off diplomatic relations with France on 9 November and announced that, for the immediate future at least, it could give no assurance of taking part in further sessions of the Council of the Baghdad Pact, if delegates from Britain were present.

The equivocal attitude of the Baghdad government during the Suez crisis had provoked unrest in Iraq. Disturbances at Najaf and Mosul resulted in some loss of life. Student demonstrations against the Anglo-French intervention in Egypt and the Israeli campaign in Sinai led the Iraqi Government to close colleges and schools. Martial law, imposed on 31 October 1956, was not raised until 27 May 1957.

The tension born of the Suez crisis persisted for some time to come. President Eisenhower, concerned over the flow of Soviet arms to Syria and Egypt's, sought from Congress permission to use the armed forces of the United States to defend nations exposed to danger from countries under the influence of international communism. He also secured authorization to disburse economic

⁴⁰ John Marlowe, *Arab Nationalism and British Imperialism*, *op.cit.*, pp. 197-198.

and military aid to the Middle East states prepared to co-operate with the West. This programme became known as the 'Eisenhower Doctrine.

The question of Palestinian refugees created some problem for Egyptian Pan-Arab policies and leadership at the end of 1950s. In 1959, the political committee of the Arab League met at Cassablanca and discarded the report of Dag Hammarskjold, the then Secretary General of the UN. In his report Hammarskjold made an obviously sensible suggestion about the Palestinian refugees that the only and ultimate solution of the problem lay in absorption of the refugees by the Arab states to which they had migrated and in which they were resident. This recommendation was vigorously opposed by the majority of the Arab states, particularly by Lebanon, whose delicate confessional balance would have been upset by the absorption of the hundred thousand or so many Muslim refugees living in Lebanon. As an alternative Lebanon had propounded a proposal by which a Palestinian government and a Palestinian army should be formed on the rump of Palestine soil west of Jordan which still remained in Arab hands and which had since the Palestine formed part of the Kingdom of Jordan. The Jordanian government reacted strongly, pointing out that Jordan had, in fact, integrated all Palestinian refugees in Jordan. The Arab rump of Palestine was an integral part of the Kingdom of Jordan and that there could be no question of the formation of a Palestine government or a Palestine army on Jordan soil. The Arab states, having quarrelled about almost everything else, were now quarrelling about the only matter - Palestine on which they had, for the last several years been unanimous. At the end of the conference it proved impossible even to draft an agreed resolution about Palestine. As a result, Nasser's pan-Arab policies experienced a series of grievous checks. By the beginning of 1959 Nasser was at odds with almost every other Arab government. In Egypt itself there were signs that the emphasis was being shifted from Pan-Arabism to Egyptian domestic affairs.⁴¹

Behind the Palestine Arab attitude was the hope and even the belief that Palestine might be re-conquered. So long as there appeared to be a

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

reasonable possibility that Nasser might accomplish this, Palestinian Arabs were his most enthusiastic supporters. But Nasser failed to carry on this. As a result his leadership was challenged by the reactionary and progressive states and his popularity and prestige gradually began to wane. This was taken by the Egyptian leaders as an attempt to isolate Egypt strategically and politically from the rest of the Arab east. So the Egyptian leaders followed the policy of propaganda campaign against the reactionary and anti-Egypt states. In the Arab League conference of summer 1962 Egypt was criticised for her propaganda campaign and as a result, she found herself politically isolated from the Arab World. In the meantime, *coup d'etat* in Yemen came as a plea to regain the lost Egyptian prestige. Egypt involved herself in the civil war that ensued following the *coup d'etat*. On the other hand while the Arab states were engaged in their various quarrels at the early part of the 1960s, for irrigation purposes. Israel was approaching the completion of her projects to divert the headwaters of the river Jordan from Lake Tiberias to the Nagev. It hurled a serious threat and in order to safeguard his credibility as an Arab leader. Nasser had to act. This time Nasser did not think it wise to face Israel alone. He put emphasis on the united Arab action. He summoned the Arab leaders to discuss the matter at Cairo in January and at Alexandria in September (1964) where decision was taken not to fight Israel but to take measures for damming or diverting the tributaries of the Jordan having their sources in Jordan. Syria and Lebanon, so as to cut off the sweet water.⁴² To carry it out, an all-round improvement in Egypt's relation with the other Arab states was achieved. Consequently, in the Cairo summit the King of Jordan raised no objections to the creation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) or to the establishment of an Egypt-dominated Arab military command. The second summit at Alexandria also agreed to form a Palestinian army to be financed by the other Arab states. As a result, the years 1964 and 1965 provided the most harmonious period of inter - Arab state relations, co-existence and co-operation in the Arab Middle East. In spite of ideological and political disunity among themselves, the Arab states thus in the first half of the 1960s took concerted action against Israel under the leadership of Egypt. But

⁴² *The Annual Register of World Events*, Vol. 205 (1963), p. 302: Vol. 206 (1964), p. 90.

the general atmosphere of cordiality was shattered in April 1965 by President Bourguiba of Tunisia who criticised Arab policy on Israel as unrealistic and suggested negotiation with Israel on the basis of 1947 UN partition plan. This was attacked by Egypt as a betrayal of the agreement at Alexandria in 1964 that the Arabs should work in concert.

It is to be noted here that the armistice that took place following the Palestine war of 1948 was not a peace treaty. Consequently, Egypt and other Arab states remained officially at war with Israel. For various reasons tension continued in the 1960s. Nasser's fundamental enmity with Israel was unwavering, and many times he said, as in his interview on the American Columbia Radio and Television Station on July 3, 1965: "war is the only solution for the Palestine problem."⁴³ But in actual politics he was guided by the conviction that war against Israel should be waged only after certain conditions had been achieved: 1) clear military superiority of the Arabs, 2) realization of Arab unity, 3) isolation of Israel from the western powers. Clearly those conditions did not exist.

The Arab-Jewish tension remained but no armed struggle took place for a decade. Within the period situation changed to a great extent. The Palestinian resistance force, i.e., PLO was formed in 1964. This organization took decision to free the Arab lands from the hands of the Jews. So new dimension took place in the problem.

Arab-Israel War of 1967 and Its Aftermath

The third Arab-Jewish War of 1967 is an important phase in the course of the development of the Palestine Problem. The War took place as a result of continuous tension and misunderstanding plus Jewish continuous colonization in Palestine. Before the War the friction of Israel with the neighbouring Arab states continued which flared up from time to time into violent conflict. Mainly driven by Syrian activist agitation in the first half of 1967, by bad Soviet advice

⁴³ *Al-Jumhuriyya*, 14 July 1935, cited in Eliezer Be'eri, *Army Officers in Arab Politics, and Society* (Pragger: Pall Mall, 1970), p. 124.

and by emotions, Nasser provoked war.⁴⁴ For years together Nasser had been the sole director and spokesmen for Egypt's external policies, and he could not evade accepting responsibility for the defeat. On June 9, he declared his resignation over the radio address. But under public pressure, he withdrew his resignation and enjoyed subsequently greater popularity and esteem than ever.⁴⁵

The Arab-Israel war started in 5 June 1967 between Israel and the Arab states of Egypt, Syria and Jordan. In six day war Israel conquered the Gaza strip, the Sinai Peninsula, West Bank and the Golan region of Syria which became collectively known as the occupied territories.⁴⁶ Before the six-day war the Arab countries continually refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of the Jewish state. Arab nationalists led by Nasser called for the destruction of Israel. Egypt and Jordan supported Palestinian fedayeen (guerrillas) who attacked troops and civilians in Israeli territory. From Golan Heights region Syria regularly shelled to Israeli farms. Israel refused to receipt Jordan's control of Jewish holy places in East Jerusalem. Israel also kept tensions high by responding to Arab incursions with reprisals on Arab territory.

A second wave of Palestinian refugees led the fighting, worsening the problem created by first exodus in 1948. With the armies of its enemies crushed, Israel felt it could wait for the Arab states to offer peace on terms it found comfortable. Many UN members were less confident that peace would follow and generally did not approve of Israel's territorial gains. In late November the UN Security Council passed Resolution 242, which called for an exchange of territory for peace and for a resettling of Palestinian refugees.

The implications of the catastrophe of 1967 were only gradually realized. The immediate aftermath of the war found Egypt in an almost hopeless position. The defeat prompted self-criticism of the Arabs. It contributed to modifications in Arab perceptions and opened the way to a

⁴⁴ Elizer Be'eri, *Ibid.*, p. 124.

S.N. Fisher, *The Middle East: A History* (London: Rout ledge & Kegan Paul, 1st ed., 1960, 2nd ed. 1971), p. 703.

⁴⁶ Henry Cattan, LL.M, *Palestine, the Arabs and Israel*, Longmans 1969, London, p. 91.

more rational assessment of the future reality. Gradually the Arabs recovered from the initial shock of the defeat. This idea found confirmation when an Arab summit meeting took place in Khartoum on September 1, 1967 to decide the future strategy of the Arabs towards Israel. Nasser's endorsement of the Security Council's Resolution 242 (1967), his efforts to establish a coherent eastern military front consisting of Jordan, Syria and Iraq, his participation in the peace missions undertaken by the United Nations Ambassador, Dr, Gunnar Jarring and the United States Secretary of State William Rogers, his initiation of the war of attrition, and finally his acceptance of the cease-fire along the canal zone, were all measures in consistent with the dictates of the Khartoum resolution. In addition, the resolution also called for upholding the rights of the Palestinian people to this land. This meant refusal to recognize Israel to have negotiations with her. As per decision of the Khartoum conference Nasser, however, no longer possessed the capability of or motivation for pursuing a revolutionary policy in the Arab World. Massive domestic problems and economic dependence on other Arab states necessarily relegated Egypt's revolutionary ambitions in the Arab World to a secondary role with the overall policy priorities.⁴⁷

After the encounter of 1967 tensions continued in the Canal Zone. Israel did not halt her air raids. As a result, Egypt declared 'war of attrition'. But its total failure was due to Israel's deep 'penetration bombing' in Egyptian territory. It brought Egypt's morale to a low ebb and seriously undermined Nasser's prestige and credibility. At this stage there took place an international initiative to establish peace in the area. The failure of both Egypt's 'war of attrition' and Israel's 'deep penetration bombing' led to a period of relative calm and military stalemate on the Israeli - Egyptian front. This was utilized by Rogers to announce an American proposal for peace in the area. This included three-month cease-fire by Egypt, Jordan and Israel, their agreement to peace talks thorough Dr. Jarring under the Security Council's 1967 Resolution 242 the Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories and recognition by the Arab states of Israel's right to independent existence

⁴⁷ A.I. Dawisha, *Egypt in the Arab World, Elements of Foreign policy* (London: The Mcmillan Press, Ltd, 1976), p. 44.

within peaceful and secured frontiers. As regards the attitude of the Egyptian government to this US peace plan, it was stated by Dr. Mahmoud Riad, the Egyptian Foreign Minister; "In our view the most effective way to agree on a settlements would be for the parties to begin to work out, under Ambassador Jarring's auspices, the detailed steps necessary to carry out, Resolution 242".⁴⁸ Egypt accepted Rogers' proposals on July 23, 1970. Heikal explained that four major reasons motivated Egypt's acceptance of the American plan: First, to set the Middle East crisis in motion politically alongside to military action. Secondly, to test US intentions after the awakening caused by the domestic international dimensions of the crisis. Thirdly, the fact that the invitation was within the framework of Security Council Resolution 242. Fourthly, whether Israel accepted or rejected the plan, the result would be great change, which would not necessarily work against Arab aspirations.⁴⁹ The Israeli leaders surprised by Egypt's unexpected acceptance of the plan, had no alternative but to follow suit on July 30. London soon emulated Egypt and the proposals were endorsed by the Soviet Union, France and Britain.

Egypt's acceptance of the US peace proposals led directly to a split in the Arab World as the proposals were rejected outright by Syria, Iraq and the Palestinian Guerrilla Organization. Suspicious of any US initiative the different guerrilla organizations perceived Rogers proposals as an offensive undertaken with object of inducing the Arab states to freeze the conflict at the expense of the Palestinian rights and interests. On July 27 and subsequent days guerrilla organizations staged demonstrations in Amman denouncing the cease-fire and the peace proposals. Some of the demonstrators were carrying placards attacking Nasser. In retaliation, two Palestinian Arab radio stations in Cairo-the "Voice of Palestine" (mouth-piece of the PLO) and the "Voice of Assifa" (run by Al-Fatah) - were closed down by the Egyptian government on July 28. But an official statement in Cairo said that the closure of the radio stations were temporary and would not affect Egypt's moral and material support for the commandoes.⁵⁰ As the guerrillas were not strong enough to

⁴⁸ *Keesings Contemporary Archives*, Vol. XVII (1969-70), p. 24119 (hereafter *KCA*).

⁴⁹ *Al-Ahram*, July 31, 1970 cited in A.I. Dawisha, *op.cit.*, p. 58.

⁵⁰ A.I. Dawsiha, *Ibid.*, p. 55.

denounce Nasser directly they made Hussein, the King of Jordan, the target of their anger. In early September 1970 clashes broke out between Hussein and the guerrillas. In this crisis of relation between Hussein and the guerrillas Nasser played the role of a mediator. While sympathising with Hussein's protestations against the 'anarchic activities of the guerrillas inside Jordan, Nasser nevertheless declared himself fully committed to offering all help to the Palestinian guerrilla action, since the emergence of the Palestinian struggle constituted a big transformation of the Arab situation. At the same time, he tried to convince Arafat that the guerrillas would be committing a blunder if they thought that they were capable of defeating Israel on their own.⁵¹ Endeavours, however, were made by the Libyan government to patch up differences among the Arab states that arose from the Egyptian and Jordanian acceptance of the US proposals. But the Libyan initiative to heal the split did not produce any fruitful result.

Formation of Israel and Role of Jordan

It is to be noted that as soon as the State of Israel was proclaimed on the 14 May 1948 the Arab armies entered into the former Palestinian territory from all sides and the first Arab-Israel War took place. Only those from Trans Jordan played any significant part in the July fighting, and by the time that major hostilities ceased in July they had succeeded in occupying a considerable area. The suspicion now inevitably arose that Abdullah was prepared to accept a *fait accompli* and to negotiate with the Israeli authorities for a formal recognition of the existing military boundaries. Moreover, whereas the other Arab countries refused to accept any other move that implied a tacit recognition of the *status quo*-such as the resettlement of refugees Trans Jordan seemed to be following a different line. September 1948 an Arab government was formed at Gaza under Egyptian tutelage, and this was answered from the Trans Jordanian side by the proclamation in December at Jericho of Abdullah as King of All-Palestine. In the following April the country's name was changed to Jordan and three Palestinians were included in the Cabinet. In the meantime armistices were being signed by all the Arab

⁵¹ KCA, *op.cit.*, p. 24120.

countries, including Jordan, and on 31 January 1949 Jordan was at last recognized by the USA.⁵²

On the three major problems confronting the Arab states in their dispute with Israel, Jordan continued to differ more or less openly with her colleagues. She refused to agree to the internationalization of Jerusalem, she initiated plans for the resettlement of the Arab refugees, and she showed a disposition to accept as permanent the armistice frontiers. In April 1950, after rumours of negotiations between Jordan and Israel, the Arab League Council in Cairo succeeded in getting Jordan's adherence to resolutions forbidding negotiations with Israel or annexation of Palestinian territory. Nevertheless, in the same month elections were held in Jordan and Arab Palestine, the results of which encouraged Abdullah formally to annex the latter territory on 24 April 1950. This step was immediately recognized by Britain.

At the meeting of the Arab League that followed, Egypt led the opposition to Jordan, who found support, however, from Iraq. The decisions reached by the Council were inconclusive; but thereafter Jordan began to drift away from Arab League policy. Though there was at the same time constant friction between Jordan and Israel the unified opposition of the Arab states to the new Jewish State seemed to have ended, and inter-Arab differences were gaining the upper hand.

With the passage of time in January 1960, both the King and the Prime Minister condemned the Arab leaders' approach to the Palestine problem, and in February Jordanian citizenship was offered to all Arab refugees who applied for it. On the other side of the balance sheet, King Hussein paid a flying visit to King Saud in February, 1960, and in March strongly anti-Zionist statements appeared in the Jordanian press. Nevertheless there seemed to be no change in the general position that Jordan wished for formal recognition of her absorption of the Palestinian territory west of the Jordan, while the

⁵² Europa Publications Limited, *The Middle East And North Africa 1976-77*, Twenty Third edition, 1976, p. 447 (hereafter EPL, *The Middle East And North Africa 1976-77*).

United Arab Republic and other Arab countries favoured the establishment of an independent Palestine Arab government.⁵³

The Guerrilla Challenge and Jordan

The instability in Amman after the June War was reflected in the short life of Jordanian cabinets — it became rare for one to remain unchanged for more than three months. A careful balance had to be struck between the Palestinians and the King's traditional supporters. Thus, in the new cabinet announced after the June 1970 crisis, Palestinians were given more of the key ministries, including that of the Interior. Abdul Munem Rifai, Jordan's senior diplomat, became prime minister for the second time.

The main factor in Jordan's internal politics between June 1967 and 1971 was the rivalry between the official Fatah. These organizations gradually assumed effective control of the refugee camps and commanded widespread support amongst the Palestinian majority of Jordan's present population. They also received arms and training assistance from other Arab countries, particularly Syria, and finance from the oil-rich Gulf States. Some camps became commando training centres, the younger occupants of these, almost all unemployed, welcoming the sense of purpose and relief from idleness and boredom that recruitment into became group offered. The fedayeen movement virtually became a state within a state. Its leadership has stated that we have no wish to interfere in the internal affairs of Jordan provided it does not place any obstacles in the way of our struggle to liberate Palestine. In practice, however, its popularity and influence represented a challenge to the government, whilst its actions attracted Israeli reprisals that did serious damage to the East Bank, now the only fertile part of Jordan, and generally reduced the possibilities of a peace settlement on which Jordan's long-term future depended.⁵⁴

A major confrontation between the two forces occurred in November 1968, after massive demonstrations in Amman on the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration. Extensive Street fighting broke out between guerrillas and the army and for a short period a civil war seemed possible, but both

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 449.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 450.

sides soon backed down. Similar confrontations followed in February and June 1970, and on both occasions the Government was forced to yield to Palestinian pressures. King Hussein and Yasir Arafat, the Al Fatah leader (whose own position was threatened by the rise of small extremist groups in Jordan), jointly drew up and signed an agreement redefining their respective spheres of influence. The guerrillas appeared to have granted little or nothing, but Hussein was forced to dismiss his Commander-in-Chief and a Cabinet minister, both relatives. These were regarded as the leaders of the anti-fedayeen faction, which remained strong amongst the Bedouin sheikhs. Despite the agreement, the tension between the government and the guerrillas continued, aggravated by opposition to the government's concessions from hard-line army officers.⁵⁵

A new and dangerous stage in the relations between the two sides in Jordan developed with the acceptance by the government of the American peace proposals for the Middle East. The guerrilla groups, with few exceptions, rejected these, and, as the cease-fire between the UAR and Israel came into operation on 7 August, it was clear that the Jordanian government was preparing for a full-scale confrontation with them.

As result, bitter fighting between government and guerrilla forces broke out at the end of August. In the first part of September the violence was increased by two factors: the assassination attempt on King Hussein and the hijackings by PFLP of four Western airliners. The threat of intervention on the side of the commandos by Iraq and Syria; the transference of Libyan aid from the Jordanian Government to the guerrillas; a succession of cease-fire agreements between the two sides; the release of all but 54 hostages taken from the aircraft to secure the release of Palestinian commandos held by Western governments; none of these developments was enough to prevent the escalation into full civil war in the last half of the month, and thousands of deaths and injuries. The continued detention of any hostages by the PFLP was a direct challenge to the government's authority. On 16 September a military cabinet was formed under Brig. Muhammad Daoud — in any case

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 451.

martial law had been in force since the end of the June 1967 war — and immediately Field Marshal Habis Majali replaced as commander-in-chief Lt. Gen. Mashour Haditha, who had been sympathetic to the commandos and had tried to restrain their severest opponents in the army.⁵⁶

In the fighting that followed, the guerrillas control in the north, aided by Syrian forces and, it was later revealed, three battalions of the Palestine Liberation Army sent back by President Nasser from the Suez front. The Arab states generally appealed for an end to the fighting. Libya threatened to intervene and later broke off diplomatic relations; Kuwait stopped its aid to the government; but the Iraqi troops stationed on the eastern front against Israel notably failed to intervene. On the government side talks were held with the USA about direct military assistance. In the event such a dangerous widening of the Palestinian confrontation was avoided by the scale of the casualties in Jordan and by the diplomacy of Arab heads of state (reinforced by President Nasser's reported threat to intervene on the guerrillas' behalf) who prevailed upon King Hussein and Yasser Arafat to sign an agreement in Cairo on 27 September ending the war. The previous day a civilian cabinet had been restored under Ahmed Toukan. Five military members were retained.⁵⁷

A definitive agreement, very favourable to the liberation organizations, was signed by Hussein and Arafat on 13 October in Amman, but this proved to be simply the beginning of a phase of sporadic warfare between the two parties, punctuated by new agreements, during which the commandos were gradually forced out of Amman and driven from their positions in the north back towards the Syrian frontier. At the end of October a new government, still containing three army officers, was formed under Wasfi al-Tal. By January 1971 army moves against the Palestine guerrillas had become much more blatant, and the UAR, Syria and Algeria issued strong protests at the Jordanian Government's attempt to 'liquidate' the liberation movements. All but two brigades of Iraqi troops were, however, withdrawn from Jordan.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

By April the Jordanian Government seemed strong enough to set a deadline for the guerrillas' withdrawal of their remaining men and heavy armaments from the capital. On 13 July a major government attack began on the guerrillas entrenched in the Jerash-Aljoun area. Four days later it was all over. The government claimed that all the bases had been destroyed and that 2,300 of 2,500 guerrillas in them had been captured. Most of the Palestinians taken prisoner by the Jordanian Government were released a few days later, either to leave for other Arab-states or to return to normal life in Jordan.

The 'solution' (in King Hussein's word) of the guerrilla 'problem' provoked strong reaction from other Arab governments. Iraq and Syria closed their borders with Jordan, Algeria suspended diplomatic relations; and Egypt, Libya, Sudan and both Yemens voiced public criticism. Relations with Syria deteriorated fastest of all, but normal trading and diplomatic relations were restored by February 1972.

It is to be mentioned that throughout the period since the liquidation of the guerrillas in July 1971 Hussein had been seeking to strengthen his political position.

The King's boldest political move, and an obvious attempt, to regain his standing in the eyes of Palestinians, was the unfolding of plans for a United Arab Kingdom in March 1972. This kingdom was to federate a Jordanian region, with Amman as its capital and also federal capital, and a Palestinian region, with Jerusalem as its capital. Each region was to be virtually autonomous, though the King would rule both and there would be a federal council of ministers.

Outside Jordan there was almost universal criticism of this plan from interested parties — Israel, the Palestinian organizations and Egypt, which in the following month broke off diplomatic relations. Jordan's isolation in the Arab world had never been more complete.

Throughout the rest of 1972 and the first half of 1973 Hussein continued to standby his original plans for a United Arab Kingdom, but at the same time insisting that peace with Israel could be arrived at only within the framework of UN Resolution 242 and hotly denying suggestions from other Arab states that he was considering signing a separate peace treaty with Israel.

During the Middle East War in October 1973 Jordan sent troops to support Syria on the Golan Heights but was otherwise not actively involved, and did not open a third front against the Israelis as in the 1967 War. Jordan was represented at the Geneva talks in December 1973.

During most of 1974 the main characteristic of Hussein's policy towards the PLO and the status of the West Bank was extreme ambiguity. He continued to try to preserve the West Bank as part of his kingdom despite strong pressure from other Arab states and the increasing influence of the PLO. In September 1974 after a meeting between Egypt, Syria and the PLO expressing support for the PLO as the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people', Jordan refused to participate in further Middle East peace talks. However, in October 1974 at the Arab Summit Conference at Rabat, representatives of twenty Arab heads of state unanimously recognized the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of Palestinians, and its right to establish a national authority over any liberated Palestinian territory. Effectively ceding Jordan's claim to represent the Palestinians and reincorporate the West Bank, when recaptured, into the Hashemite Kingdom, Hussein reluctantly assented to the resolution. He said that Jordan would continue to strive for the liberation of the West Bank and recognize the full rights of citizenship of Palestinians in Jordan. The prospect of a separate, independently ruled Palestinian state was strongly condemned by Israel.⁵⁹

Jordan after the Rabat Summit

Following the Rabat Conference Hussein was given more extensive powers in revisions to the Jordanian Constitution approved by Parliament in November. He was allowed to rule without Parliament for a year and reorganizes his Kingdom in order to lessen the numbers of Palestinians in the executive and legislative branches of government, his 1972 plan for a United Arab Kingdom now being wholly defunct. Parliament was dissolved and a new government formed in Palestinian representation was decreased, and the question of citizenship of the estimated 800,000 Palestinians on the East Bank became contentious.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 452.

The success of the PLO at the Rabat Conference had, despite internal feuds considerably strengthened its position. This was further the case when the UN acknowledged the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinians by an overwhelming majority in November. The PLO was also granted observer status at the UN.

One of the most notable results of the Rabat summit conference and Hussein's virtual abandonment of his claim to the West Bank was an improvement in relations with the Arab world in general, and with Syria in particular. During 1975 various links with Syria were forged and strengthened. In August a Supreme Command Council, headed by the King and President Assad, was formed to direct military and political action against Israel.

This close relationship, however, was put into jeopardy by President Sadat's visit to Israel in November 1977, and subsequently threatened by Syria's proposed rapprochement with Iraq. Since then closer economic links have been forged with Iraq. Jordan, unlike Syria, was anxious not to condemn Sadat's peace initiative, but did not want to destroy its growing relationship with Syria. King Hussein, therefore, 'sat on the fence' and tried to act as a conciliator between Egypt on the one hand and the 'rejectionist' states on the other (Algeria, Libya, Iraq, Syria and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen). Jordan, however emphatically rejected Israel's peace proposals which were put forward by Prime Minister Begin in December 1977, and maintained its policy of demanding an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, leaving no Jewish settlements. Jordan also wanted the creation of a Palestinian homeland, the nature of whose link with Jordan should be decided by a referendum.⁶⁰

It was these factors, which helped to determine Jordan's attitude to the Camp David agreements in September 1978 and the subsequent peace treaty between Egypt and Israel in March 1979. Jordan refused to be drawn into the Camp David talks by the United States, and joined the other Arab states at the Baghdad Arab summit in drawing up a list of sanctions against Egypt.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

Immediately prior to the signing of peace treaty Jordan showed its commitment to the PLO by welcoming Yasir Arafat on an official visit, and after the treaty was signed Jordan was the first Arab country still having diplomatic relations with Egypt to break them off. In the months that followed the signing of the peace treaty, however, Jordan's hostility to Egypt subsided, and was replaced by the souring of relations with Syria.⁶¹

Involvement of Lebanon

It is to be noted that involvement of Lebanon in the Palestine issue was limited. May 1968 had seen the first clash between Lebanese and Israeli forces on the border for over two years. But as the activities of the Palestinian guerrillas increased, so the Lebanon became more and more the scapegoat for Israel's grievances against the Palestinians. On December 26th an Israeli airliner was gunned by Arab guerrillas at Athens airport, causing two casualties (one fatal). Two days later Israeli commandos raided Beirut airport and destroyed thirteen aircraft, all belonging to Lebanese lines, without loss of life. Israel said the raid should be seen as a reprisal for the Athens attack, a warning to the Arab world not to make any repetition of it, and a further warning to the Lebanon to police the activities of the fedayeen movement in the country more effectively. The major after-effects of the raid were, firstly, the widespread criticism it attracted even from countries normally favourable to Israel. The Lebanon was seen as a country which had taken little active part in the campaign against Israel, while the *fedayeen* within it were only enjoying the freedom available to them in Lebanon's open, tolerant society. The UN Security Council unanimously condemned Israel for the raid. The second effect was the fall of the Government on January 7th, 1969, its alleged lack of preparedness for Israeli aggression being the final blow to bring down a weak administration. After much political manoeuvring, a new ministry was formed on January 20th headed by Mr. Rashid Karami, Prime Minister for the seventh time.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

In the late summer of 1969 a number of guerrilla groups were reported to have moved to new bases better suited for attacks on Israel, which continued to raid these bases in reprisal; the combination of these factors created some friction between the guerrillas and the Lebanese army. In October the army apparently attacked some of these camps in an attempt to restrict or direct their activities. This triggered off a crisis that continued through the second half of October and threatened to develop into a full-scale civil war. The caretaker government resigned, claiming that it had not authorized the army's actions, and the President and the armed forces administered the country directly. Radical elements and guerrillas took over Tripoli, the second largest city, for several days, and most of the Palestinian refugee camps became fully converted into military training and equipment centres. Militant support for the guerrillas was voiced throughout the Arab world, and there were threats of military intervention by Syria and Iraq. Despite the tension, no extensive fighting occurred and there were few deaths.

On November 2nd Lebanese Commander-in-Chief and Yasir Arafat, the leader of Al Fatah, signed a ceasefire agreement in Cairo. This limited the guerrilla freedom of movement to certain areas; as further defined in January 1970, it also provided that camps had to be set up some distance from towns, that military training must cease in refugee camps, and that guerrillas must enter Israel before starting to shoot. The intention was not to prevent guerrilla attacks, but to stop innocent Lebanese getting hurt, or their property being damaged, by Israeli counter-attacks.

The calmer atmosphere that followed the ceasefire enabled Mr. Karami to form another cabinet towards the end of November. There was much concern about the weakness of the country's southern defence, and in January 1970 the new ministry felt strong enough to fire the Commander-in-Chief, appointing instead Brigadier Jean Njeim. In March there was a series of street battles in the Beirut area between the Palestinian guerrillas and militant right wing *Falangist* groups, but the Government and the army managed to avoid becoming involved. In May Israel launched a major air and ground attack on guerrilla positions in southern Lebanon, a substantial area being

occupied for nearly two days. Syria sent air assistance for the small Lebanese air force. The result of the raid was as usual disputed.

Involvement of Saudi Arabia in 1971 and after

Saudi Arabia also played an important role in mediating between the Palestinian guerrillas and the Jordanian Government after the final confrontation between them in northern Jordan in July 1971.

Saudi Arabia, however, warned the USA that it might be prepared to withhold petroleum supplies unless the US Government changed its attitude in the Arab-Israeli dispute.

The warning was prophetic but went unheeded. When the Arab-Israeli war of October 1973 broke out and US aid to Israel continued. Saudi Arabia, despite its traditionally good relationship with the West, led a movement by all the Arab petroleum-producing countries to exert political pressure by cuts in petroleum production. Since there was no immediate response from the USA, OPEC members placed an embargo on petroleum supplies to that country and to several other developed Western countries as well. Supplies to the western world were not cut off entirely, but it was announced that production would be progressively reduced until attitudes towards support for Israel changed. The Arab states having shown the strength of their determination to achieve a Middle East settlement which was more favourable to the Palestinian cause, there began, in the closing months of 1973 and the first months of 1974, a period of extremely active negotiating for a settlement that would mean more than simply an end to Arab-Israeli hostilities. Western nations attempted to repair their links with the petroleum producing countries, which were debating among themselves how far they should wield the oil weapon to achieve their ends.⁶²

As the possessor of 40% of the Middle East's petroleum reserves, and one-quarter of world reserves, Saudi Arabia, together with Egypt, was in the very forefront of these negotiations. It soon became apparent, however, that

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 597.

the Saudis held different views from those of other producer nations (notably Libya, Algeria and Iran) on the extent to which their control of petroleum supplies could safely be used to put pressure on the West. It was feared in Riyadh that too much of this pressure would have unwanted economic repercussions. The more radical OPEC members wanted to retain the October hostilities was reached. At a meeting in March 1974, however, Saudi Arabia pressed for a resumption of supplies to the USA and, when this was agreed, resisted and moves to increase prices for petroleum, which had risen to nearly four times the pre-hostilities level. It was reported that, in order to achieve their aim the Saudis threatened to leave OPEC and to lower prices unilaterally. Reluctantly therefore, the radical OPEC members agreed to a freeze on oil prices.

Meanwhile, in negotiation with consumer countries the Saudis made it clear that the continued supply of petroleum was dependent not only on a change in attitudes towards Israel but on assistance to Saudi Arabia itself in industrializing and diversifying its economy, in preparation for the time when reserves of petroleum have been depleted. The USA, in particular, showed itself eager to satisfy these conditions, and an important economic and military co-operation agreement was signed in May 1974.

After the assassination of King Faisal in 1975 Khalid became the King. No major change of policy resulted from Khalid's succession. He quickly announced that Saudi Arabia would follow the late King Faisal's policies of pursuing Islamic solidarity and the strengthening of Arab unity, and that Saudi Arabia's objectives remained the recovery of occupied Arab territories, and the liberation of the City of Jerusalem from the claws of Zionism.

Saudi Arabia traditionally supported President Sadat of Egypt fearing that his fall from power would result in Egypt's moving to the left. When Sadat visited Israel in November 1977, Saudi Arabia gave him discreet support in his peace initiative. This position, however, was abandoned following the signing of the Egyptian-Israeli treaty in the following spring. At the Arab Summit meeting held in April 1979, Saudi Arabia aligned itself with the 'moderate' states in supporting the sanction against Egypt, which had been

outlined at the Arab League meeting the previous November. In July 1979 the Saudi Government withdrew from its arms manufacturing with Egypt. Nevertheless, fights between Egypt and Saudi Arabia continued, and there was no ban on the employment of Egyptian workers in Saudi Arabia.⁶³

War of 1973 and After

It is to be mentioned at this stage that the Arab states continued to call for the destruction of Israel. Israel was reluctant to withdraw their forces from the territories, which had been occupied in 1967 war. The Arab increasingly threw their support behind the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), a political body that had been formed in 1964 to create a Palestinian state. The PLO attacked Israel from their bases in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. Palestinian Arabs combat Gaza strips and West Bank. That time Israel's positions hardened and little progress towards achieving peace was made in late 1960s or early 1970s.

The long-standing conflict between Jews and Arabs over control of historic Palestine had resulted in wars in 1948, 1956, and 1967. The Arab opposition to the Jewish state of Israel included neighbouring Arab states and, after 1964, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) political body working to create a state for Palestinian Arabs. In the six-day war of 1967 Israel occupied the control of Sinai Peninsula and Gaza strip, previously controlled by Egypt, the Golan Heights formerly belonging to Syria, and West Bank and East Jerusalem, formerly administered by Jordan. Later that year the United Nations (UN) adopted a resolution calling for Israeli withdrawal from these areas in exchange for Arab recognition of Israel's independence and security. Nevertheless cross-border attacks and reprisals continued. In 1969 Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser launched a campaign on the Suez Canal known as War of Attrition. The conflict, which did not escalate into a full-scale war, ended with the US brokered cease-fire in 1970.

In the early 1970s Nasser's successor Anwar al- Sadat, pushed for Israeli withdrawal through diplomatic steps, while simultaneously preparing Egypt's military for war. Each year the UN passed resolutions calling for Israeli

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 598.

withdrawal from the occupied territories. Israel discarded to withdraw, and the United States suffered criticism from the international community for its support of Israel. Meanwhile, the stalemate continued. The Arab nations generally refused to negotiate until Israel withdrew. Israel, which refused to withdraw without guarantees for peace and security, fortified its positions in the occupied Arab territories.

Neither the United States nor Israel believed that Arab forces could challenge Israeli's proven military power. The USSR which had supported the Arab nations during previous wars with Israel and had re-supplied Egypt militarily, knew that Egypt was preparing for war, but underestimated Sadat's commitment to use a military option against Israel. Furthermore, neither Washington nor Moscow was fully aware of the profound differences in policy between the Egyptian and Syrian leaders. Although the ultimate goal for both leaders was to regain their territories from Israel. Sadat was willing to combine military means with the initiation of a diplomatic process, whereas Syrian president Hafez al-Assad did not want to sign any agreement with Israel that might recognize Israel's legitimacy.

Sadat, unlike Assad, also was willing to orient Egypt's foreign policy away from the USSR and towards the United States, with mounting economic pressures at home. Sadat believed that the United States, rather than the USSR, would help Egypt more in the long term.

Despite these differences, mutual frustration and impatience with the diplomatic *status quo* led Sadat and Assad to plan an attack in collusion. Because the two Arab leaders were focused more on their own particular national interests, rather than on other Arab-Israeli issues such as the future of the West Bank and Jerusalem and the issue of Palestinian statehood. They omitted Jordan and the PLO from the planning of the war. Egypt and Syria launched their attack on Israel on October 6, 1973. It was Yam Kippur,⁶⁴ the holiest day of the Jewish year. With much of its citizen army in synagogues its national radio off the air, and its people in a generally relaxed mood, Israel was caught of guard by the coordinated attacks. Israeli intelligence sources

⁶⁴ Chaim Herzog, *op.cit.*, p. 229.

had discounted the probability of an Arab assault, and Israel's military was not fully prepared for war. Sadat's armies quickly crossed the Suez Canal. In doing so, Egypt overcame the Israeli string of fortifications along the Canal's east bank known as *Bar-Lev line*, which Israel had believed to be impenetrable. Egypt set up strongholds to defend its position and Syrian forces advanced into Golan Heights.

During the first week of the war both Syria and Egypt could have done more damage to Israel's army, taken more territory and inflicted severe damage on Israeli civilian centres. However both armies failed to take advantage of the early gains, Israel's lack of preparedness, and initial Israeli losses.

By mid October Israel had mobilized its troops and launched a series of counter attacks on both fronts. Despite severe initial casualties, Israeli forces retook the land that Syria had captured. Meanwhile Israel also launched a counter-offensive against Egypt.

The precarious state in which the Arab states found themselves hastened the war's conclusion. It also prompted immediate intervention by the United States, which had supplied weapons to Israel during the fighting and by the Soviet Union, which had supplied Arab forces. Israel's threat to eradicate the Egyptian Third Army prompted U.S. secretary of state Henry Kissinger to visit Moscow to negotiate a cease-fire resolution with Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev. On October 22 the UN passed the resolution, which also called for direct negotiations between the Israelis and Arabs.

Aftermath a peace talk was arranged under the American diplomacy. The peace talk continued almost 30 days. According to the desire of Kissinger there took place a conference in Geneva, Switzerland, on December 21, with the co-chairs of the Soviet Union. Although Jordan participated, Syria declined to attend, and PLO was not invited. After two days of public posturing, the conference was suspended and failed to reconvene.

During the next two years, Kissinger used a negotiating technique called "shuttle diplomacy" flying back and forth between Arab capital and

Israel and acting as a mediator. This technique yielded the first Egyptian - Israeli military disengagement agreement, calling for Israel's withdrawal back across the Suez Canal, the restoration in January 1974 of a UN peacekeeping force the Canal Zone.

The second Egyptian-Israeli disengagement agreement in Sinai, signed in September 1975, met with Syria's strong condemnation. Syria accused Egypt of acting without the agreement of other Arab states and, by agreeing to three years of peace with Israel, weakening the general Arab position and betraying the Palestinians.

Syria had shown considerable interest in the Lebanese civil war since it began in April 1975. Initially, Syria wanted to protect the position of the Palestinians in Lebanon and perhaps also further plans for a 'greater Syria', sending in about 2,000 Saiqa troops in January 1976. After having secured a cease-fire, Assad pledged that he would control the Palestinians in Lebanon, and the core of the PLO, under Yasir Arafat, began to be apprehensive that they would be dominated by Syria. By early June 1976 the fighting in Lebanon was so fierce that Syria felt obliged to intervene militarily and overtly. This time, Syria's intervention was welcomed by the Christian right-wing parties and condemned by the Palestinians and the Muslim left (and also Egypt).

A meeting of the Arab League foreign ministers on 8-9 June agreed that an Arab peacekeeping force should be sent to Lebanon to affect a cease-fire. After some delay, a peacekeeping force, consisting of Syrian and Libyan troops in equal proportions, did arrive in Lebanon, but the fighting continued unabated until October 1976, when Arab summits, at Riyadh and Cairo, secured a more lasting cease-fire. A 30,000-strong Arab Deterrent Force, consisting largely of Syrian troops, was given authority by the Arab summits to maintain the peace. President Assad's prestige, in Syria and the Arab world, was considerably strengthened by this success. Relations with Egypt improved after a tacit understanding that Syria would end its criticism of the September 1975 Egyptian-Israeli agreement on Sinai in return for Egypt's acceptance of Syria's intervention in Lebanon.

Camp David Agreements in its Features

The continuing stalemate and the coming of a rightist government to power in Israel after 1977 elections made Sa'dat think that only a spectacular move could break the vicious circle of mutual distrust and continuous hostility in the Middle East. His trip to Jerusalem on November, 19, 1977 during which he talked with the Israeli leaders including the new Prime Minister Begin and addressed the Knesset was such a move. Though Sa'dat maintained in course of his discussions that a comprehensive peace plan ensuring the legitimate rights of the Palestinians was a prerequisite for a durable peace in the Middle East, the Israeli leaders did not commit themselves. The subsequent talks between the two countries – in Ismailia on December 25, 1977, in Cairo on January 11, 1978 and in Jerusalem on January 16 did not achieve much partly because of the small degree of autonomy that Israel was prepared to concede to the West Bank and Gaza and partly because of the continuation of the programme for the establishment of settlements in the occupied territories.⁶⁵

The massive invasion of Southern Lebanon by Israel in March, 1978 further worsened the situation. The Carter administration, eager for an Egyptian-Israeli *detente*, arranged for the Foreign Ministers of the two countries to meet in Leeds Castle, England. This meeting held on July 18, 1978 also failed, again on the question of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories. With a view to breaking this deadlock, Carter invited the leaders of the two countries to meet him in the Presidential lodge at Camp David in September, 1978.⁶⁶

The talks between Carter, Sa'dat and Begin took place in the Presidential Lodge at Camp David from September 4 to September 17, 1978, and the 'agreements' were signed ceremonially amidst jubilation on the lawn of the White House on September 17. In reality, two documents were signed: (a) "A Framework for Peace in the Middle East Agreed at Camp David", and (b) "Framework for the Conclusion of a Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel".⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Safiuddin Joarder, *The Dhaka University Studies*, pp. 64-65.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, p. 65.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

The most important section of document (a) is that devoted to the West Bank and Gaza (Section A). It is maintained in the preamble that the agreed leases for a peaceful settlement of the conflict between Israel and its neighbours is the UN Security Council Resolution 242 in the all its parts. Regretting the absence of peace in the Middle East 'the cradle of civilization' for years, the signatories maintain in the preamble that the people of the Middle East longed for peace so that the vast human and natural resources of the region could be turned to the pursuits of peace' and so that this area could become 'a model for co-existence and co-operation among nations'.

Section a relating to the West Bank and Gaza begins by saying that the negotiations relating to these two areas were to proceed in three stages:

First stage: There was to be transitional arrangement for the West Bank and Gaza for a period no exceeding five years during which self-governing authority elected by the people would be established and the Israeli military government and its civilian administration withdrawn. The government of Jordan was to be invited to join the negotiations regarding the details of the transitional arrangement. "The new arrangements were to take into consideration both the principle of self-government by the inhabitants of these territories and the legitimate security concerns of the parties involved.

Second stage: Egypt, Israel and Jordan would on the modalities for establishing the elected self-governing authority in the West Bank and Gaza and would delineate the powers and responsibilities of the authority. The delegations from Egypt and Jordan might include Palestinians from West Bank and Gaza or other Palestinians as mutually agreed. "Withdrawal of Israeli armed forces will take place and there will be a redeployment of the remaining Israeli forces into specified security locations. The Negotiations which were to be based on the UN Security Council Resolution 242 would resolve the location of the boundaries, the nature of the security arrangements and the question of the 'legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and their just requirements.'

The agreement would also include arrangements for assuring internal and external security and public order. A strong local force was to be established which could include Jordanian citizens. Israeli and Jordanian forces would participate in joint patrols and in manning the 'control posts' to assure the security of the borders.

Third stage: The transitional period would begin with the establishment and inauguration of the self-governing authority. As soon as possible out not later than the third year after the beginning of the transitional period, negotiations were to take place to determine the final status of the West Bank and Gaza, its relationship with its neighbours and to conclude a peace treaty between Israel and Jordan.

All necessary measures were to be taken and provisions made to ensure the security of Israel and its neighbours during the transition period and beyond. To this end a strong local police force was to be constituted by the self-governing authority. It was to be composed of the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza. The force was to maintain 'continuing liaison' on internal security matters with the Israeli, Jordanian and Egyptian officers.

During the transitional period the representatives of Egypt, Israel and Jordan and the self-governing authority were to constitute a Continuing Committee to 'decide by agreement on the modalities of admission of persons displaced from the West Bank and Gaza in 1957 together with the necessary measures to prevent disruption and disorder'. Other matters of common concern could also be dealt with by his committee.

In the second document – the Framework for the conclusion of a Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel – Sa'dat and Begin undertook to solve the problems between their countries through a peace treaty the conspectus of which was outlined and which was to be signed within three months from the signing of the Camp David Agreements. A number of specific problems cropped up in course of the negotiations between the two countries in the subsequent months. The points raised and demands made by Egypt were as follows:

- (a) Establishment of a 'linkage' between the signing of the Treaty and the beginning of the 'autonomy procedure';
- (b) A definite time – table for the implementation of the various stages of the re autonomy procedure';
- (c) A symbolic Egyptian presence in Gaza. Without committing herself to any of the demands, Israel brought forward her own set of demands;
- (d) the treaty to be signed was to have precedence over the other treaties that Egypt has with the various Arab countries;
- (e) the guaranteed supply of oil to Israel' from the Abu Rudies oilfield in the Sinai;
- (f) an immediate exchange of ambassadors.

A number of meetings between the two sides led to no result, and December 17 the deadline for the signature of the agreement saw the two sides as far apart as before on these vital questions. To break the deadlock, Carter himself visited the two countries in March 1979 and succeeded in narrowing the differences between them to some extent. The draft treaty was then signed in Washington on March 26, 1979 by Sa'dat and Begin with Carter as the witness. The Egyptian – Israeli Peace Treaty has 9 articles and the following annexes:

- (a) Annex I "Protocol concerning Israeli withdrawal and security Arrangements" (9 articles);
- (b) Appendix to Annex I "Organization of movements in the Sinai" (8 articles with clauses and sub-clauses);
- (c) Annex III "Protocol Concerning Relations of the Parties" (8 articles).

The state of war between the two countries was to be terminated, and Israel was to withdraw all its armed forces and civilians from the Sinal (article I). They were to recognize and respect each others sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence (art. III). In order to provide maximum

installations and field fortifications. The most significant aspect of this 'Zoning' is that the Gaza strip was left outside of this arrangement and hence under the complete control of Israel.

There could be only civilian airfields in the Zones and the flights of the Egyptian and Israeli combat aircraft and reconnaissance flights could take place only in Zones A and D respectively (Annex I article III). The type of naval vessels that Egypt and Israel could operate along the coasts of Zones A and D respectively has also been stated (Art. IV clauses 1 to 6).

The powers and functions of the UN personnel have been enumerated, and there is a provision for an Egyptian liaison office in El Arish and an Israeli liaison office in Beersheba.

A long Appendix to Annex I describes in detail (a) the subphases of withdrawal to the interim withdrawal Line, (b) the composition, powers and functions of the Joint commission and the Liaison office. (c) the creation of the Interim Buffer Zones, and (d) disposition of 'Installations and Military Barriers'.

Annex III discusses matters concerning economic and trade relations (Annex III, art 2), cultural relations (art.3), freedom of movement of citizens (art.4) and co-operation in the fields of transportation and telecommunications (art.6)

Following the signing of the Treaty, there were a number of meetings between the two countries on the *modus operandi* of Israeli withdrawal and the establishment of Egyptian authority over the Sinai in stages and on the larger question of Palestinian self-rule. While Sa'dat's credibility in the Arab world depended on the kind of self-rule for the Palestinian that he could extract from Israel, for Israel, it was just a 'talking point'. It became quite clear as the negotiations preceded that to Israel Palestinian self-rule did not mean more than the rule through the autonomous municipal and local councils under the watchful eye and the military might of Israel. As the concept of 'linkage' between the conclusion of the peace treaty and the establishment of Palestinian autonomy was whittled away in the pre-treaty negotiations, Sa'dat actually had no bargaining power on this point and had to be satisfied with the assurance that Israel would implement the provisions for the establishment of

Palestinian autonomy in good faith and in good time. In *realpolitik* this sort of naiveté can only lead to disillusionment, and it did not take long for Sa'dat to be disillusioned.⁶⁸

Admitting that Sa'dat was eager to have some kind of an agreement with Israel in order to recover the Sinai, why was the Carter administration interested to see an improved relationship (possibly through a treaty) between Egypt and Israel? And why did Israel respond favourably?

To a superficial observer, it would seem that Carter tried to achieve some success in the foreign policy area in order to regain his sagging popularity as a leader. The fact is that Carter's involvement in the Egyptian Israeli negotiations was dictated by the wide-ranging geo-political interests of the U.S.A. In this respect the following points should be taken into consideration:

- i) The Middle East is an extremely important area to the policy planners in the State Department due as much to its strategic location astride three continents as to the fact that the area possesses a very substantial portion of the world's crude oil reserve.
- ii) America has a vital interest in the uninterrupted flow of this oil not only for its own use but more especially for its West European allies and Japan. While the U.S.A. depends for about 20% of its oil consumption on Middle East oil, the dependence of the European allies and of Japan is almost total.
- iii) In order to ensure the flow of oil, the U.S.A. built in the area a 'security system' based on a string of 'friendly' government which are liberally provided with American weapons. These are Turkey (a NATO partner). Iran (till 1979), Saudi Arabia, Oman and (recently dropped) North Yemen.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 68-71.

⁶⁹ For the 'Iranina Scenario', see Shahram Chubin "Soviet Policy toward Iran and the Gulf", *Adelphi Paper* No. 157 (London: Institute for Strategic Studies, 1980).

- iv) The American policymakers are said to be haunted by the possibility of a Soviet thrust for the Persian Gulf either through Iran or Afghanistan or South Yemen. A possible Soviet control over the Strait of Hormuz is regarded as a calamity for the West. It has been maintained, for example that "a dominating Soviet position in the Gulf" could lead to the Finlandization of Western Europe, Japan and many other states dependent on this oil, all of which would be afraid of antagonizing Moscow".⁷⁰
- v) To safeguard this vital interest, the U.S. has a number of 'forward posts': Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, the NATO (mainly American personnel) bases in eastern Turkey and the American base on the Masirah Island of Oman'. Then, (until 1979) there was the friendly Iranian government heavily armed by the U.S. and, of course, the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean'. The intensification of troubles in Iran in 1972 made it necessary for the State Department and the Pentagon to search for a substitute pillar' and they found it in Sa'dat's Egypt. It was thought that a friendly' Egypt suitably armed could be expected to ensure law and order in the Gulf area. It was thought that the Egyptian presence could be a 'shield' for protecting the other pro-American governments i.e. in Saudi Arabia and Oman against leftist radical elements. Shoring up the military strength of countries like Saudi Arabia and North Yemen went hand in hand with building up a Rapid Deployment Force (RDF) for the Persian Gulf area.

From the time the Soviet advisers were expelled by Sa'dat in 1972, the U.S.S.R., seemed to be grouping for a policy for the Middle East. When Kissinger was engaged in his 'Shuttle diplomacy', the U.S.S.R. did little more than issuing statements from time to time about the futility of piecemeal solution of the Middle Eastern problem. Even though the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. issued a joint declaration in October 1977 emphasizing the need for reconvening the Geneva conference, nothing was done when it became clear

⁷⁰ Tomas T. Hammond, "Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf", *Survey: A Journal of East and West Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Spring, 1982). Also see Rouhollah K. Ramazani, *The Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz* (Sijthoff & Nordhoff: Alphen Aan den Rijn, Holland, 1979).

from 1978 onward that the U.S.A. was trying to play the role alone. This might be due largely to the fact that the U.S.S.R. was extremely busy with the developments in Poland and with Afghanistan, the "Russian Vietnam". The defence pact with Syria in 1980 may be the outcome of a belated realization that it was being left high and dry as far as the solution of the Middle Eastern problem was concerned.

The actual motive of Israel – or the thought – process of the ruling elites – would remain a matter of conjecture in the absence of the vital documents which will remain classified for years to come. A study of the course of action would make one think that Israel's objective was to "neutralize" Egypt, withdraw Israeli soldiers from the Sinai front and then attack Lebanon in strength with a view to destroying as completely as possible the Palestinian Resistance Movement represented by the PLO.

Even though there was widespread criticism of Sa'dat after his trip to Jerusalem and more specifically after the signing of the Camp David agreements, no action was taken against Egypt until the conclusion of a formal treaty with Israel. The general opinion in the Arab countries was that Sa'dat was about to sign a separate peace treaty with Israel in order to get the Sinai Peninsula back. This was regarded as not only a selfish move but a dangerous one in that such a settlement would weaken the Arab front and would make it possible for Israel to tackle the other frontline Arab countries in any manner she liked with impunity. When the peace treaty was really signed the reactions of the Arab countries were swift and unambiguous. An urgent meeting of the Arab League council meeting in Baghdad on March 27, 1979 adopted a number of resolutions which reflected the degree of hostility that the Arab leaders felt towards the treaty. Arab countries were to withdraw their ambassadors from Cairo immediately and political and diplomatic relations were to be severed. Egypt's membership of the Arab League was to be suspended and the headquarters of the League was to be shifted temporarily to Tunis. All bank loans, deposits and guarantees as well as financial and technical contributions were to be stopped. The Arab countries were to refrain from purchasing the bonds, shares, and postal order and public credit loans

issued by the Egyptian government.⁷¹ The Chairman of the PLO Yasir Arafat in his letter to the secretary – General of the UN on March 24, 1979 sharply criticized the proposed treaty and maintained that the treaty would encourage 'the Israeli aggressor to commit further aggression'.

"The Palestinian people have unanimously rejected this agreement and everything related to it, especially the suspect proposals for self-government' which will consolidate the occupation and submit our people to a new form of slavery".⁷² President Asad of Syria maintained that the aim of the Treaty was to help Israel consolidate its held on the occupied territories and obliterate the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and remarked: "What does autonomy for the Palestinians really mean? Doesn't it mean Arab recognition that the West Bank and Gaza strip are part of the state of Israel? Didn't begin this very week reaffirm this when he said that autonomy only applied to the Palestinian inhabitants because they were an Arab population on Israeli land?"⁷³ King Husein of Jordan whose support for the treaty was almost taken for granted maintained that when the government of the U.S.A. was asked as to whether under the arrangement the occupied Arab territories would return to the Arabs replied that they could not commit themselves to anything. "Frankly, the US has lost its reputation as a neutral mediator, and is no longer capable of performing this role alone." The conference of the Foreign Ministers of the Islamic countries held in Fez in May 1979 adopted a resolution condemning the Egyptian – Israeli treaty which was described as "flagrant in fragments of the charters of the Organization of Islamic Conference and a violation of international legality and the resolutions of the UN on the Palestine problem and the Palestinian and Arab occupied territories."⁷⁴ The Deputy Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia Prince Fahd maintained that the opposition of Saudi Arabia to the treaty came from the conviction of the Saudi government that the agreement has not even taken into

⁷¹ Text of the resolution in *Arab Report* (April 11, 1979, p. 9.

⁷² Text in Palestinian news agency *Wafa*, Beirut, March 24, 1979. Cited in Safiuddin Joarder, *Dhaka University Studies*, p.

⁷³ Interview with the *Newsweek* correspondent Arnaud de Borchgrave *Newsweek* April, 2, 1979. Cited in Safiuddin Joarder, *Dhaka University Studies*, p.

⁷⁴ Text in *al-Ba'th* (Damascus), May, 13 1979. Cited in Safiuddin Joarder, *Dhaka University Studies*, p.

account the 'fundamental principles of a real peace in the region.' Also, it ignored the PLO which was the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people', perpetuated, Israelis military presence on the West Bank, 'the Gaza strip and the Golan Heights and maintained the existing Israeli settlements.'⁷⁵

In the West Bank and Gaza, opposition to the treaty took the form of the intensification of the agitation which the Palestinians have been carrying on against the expropriation of Arab land and the establishment of Jewish settlements on it since 1967. "In seven Arab towns on the West Bank, Palestinian crowds greeted last weeks' news with jeers and barrages of stones. Israeli troops in Halhoul impetuously fired into a crowd killing two demonstrators, one of them a 17 year old girl."⁷⁶ Continuous agitation led to the postponement of municipal elections in the West Bank. On May 3, 1980 Mayors of Hebron and Halhoul were deported for being 'non co-operative'. In Hebron, 5 people were killed and 16 injured through police firing while demonstrating against the Israeli policy and the Egyptian – Israeli treaty. On November 17 and 18 police fired into the Palestinian students agitating against the closure of the Bir Ziet university. The university had earlier been closed due to the anti-treaty demonstration by the students. The president of the university Dr. Hannah Nasir was forced to leave the country. The West Bank Municipalities and professional institutions in a statement issued on March 25, 1979 condemned the treaty, especially the so-called self-government which was described' as an Israeli conspiracy to perpetuate the occupation and to enable it to achieve its objective against the Palestinian people and Arab nation "This trio is advancing rapidly towards the establishment of a political-military alliance designed to oppose the aspirations of the Palestinian people and the Arab nation and to constitute a base for the interests of imperialism, with Israel as its foundation, supported by Sa'dat's Egypt."⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Interview with the correspondent of *Le Monde*, May 15, 1979. Cited in Safiuddin Joarder, *Dhaka University Studies*, p. 72.

⁷⁶ *Time*, March 26, 1979

⁷⁷ Text in *Wafa*, Beirut, March 26, 1976. The 'trio' refers to Carter, Sa'dat and Begin. Cited in Safiuddin Joarder, *Dhaka University Studies*, p. 73.

Camp David and its success divided the Arab world as well united them: Egypt found itself boycotted by other Arab states while Arabs of all shades of opinion patched up their differences. The conclusion of two frameworks for the preparation of peace set of hurried patch-up of differences between Syria and Iraq, the two irreconcilables in the Arab world. The net result of Camp David and its aftermath was that, President Sadat was isolated from the Arab world but he was quite willing to go ahead all by himself, the Soviet Union lost Egypt; Camp David drew Syria into its orbit and even Iraq profited in securing arms from it. The so-called moderate Arab states particularly Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Yemen waited and watched for further development. Libya, Algeria and South Yemen openly showed their displeasure if not hostility towards Egypt. The Gulf states, remote from the scene of action, took a mild interest in what was happening in the Arab crescent though Kuwait was one of the states, which provided many to Egypt. Algeria sided with Libya though not so violently which Morocco counted itself as one of the pro-western countries like Saudi Arabia.⁷⁸

Though the degree of opposition to the treaty surprised the signatories and the sponsoring Power, they decided to push ahead, and despite occasional hitches and disagreements the phased withdrawal of Israel from the Sinai and the re-establishment of Egyptian control continued. On the partial withdrawal of Israel from the Sinai by January 1980, diplomatic relations were established between the two countries a month later. Even then the tardiness of Israel in implementing the programme for autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza outlined in the Camp David Agreements and the very narrow definition of the term 'autonomy' given by Israel continued to cause friction between the two parties.

The central idea of the Camp David Agreements is that it perfectly coincided with the U.S. geopolitical interests in the Middle East and the Israeli interest of neutralizing the most populous and relatively the most powerful Arab country so as to be able to deal with the twin problem of the PLO in Lebanon and the agitational activities on the West Bank and the Gaza. In

⁷⁸ Nikshoy C. Chatterji, *A History of Modern Middle East*, Sterling Publishers private Limited, New Delhi, 1987, pp. 404-405.

retrospect, it seems that the Kissingerian policy of throwing the Geneva Convention aside with a view to elbowing the U.S.S.R. out of the Middle Eastern politics has been a wrong policy: it is impossible for any U.S.S.R. government not to be vitally interested in the 'political arrangement' of an area which is so important to her from the geo-political point of view. Secondly, the U.S. policy planners displayed a good deal of naivete in buying the Israeli idea that once Egypt falls in line, other Arab countries notably Jordan and Saudi Arabia, will have little option but to go along. Thirdly, they failed to realize that the moderate Arab states can also remain moderate only when moderation shows some sign of tackling – if not solving at one go – the root of the Middle Eastern conflict – the Palestine Problem. Lastly, the gap between Israeli concept of Palestinian autonomy and that of the Egyptian was so substantive and vital, that a compromise seemed very difficult, if not totally impossible. The only way this gap could be bridged was by putting really strong pressure on Israel by the U.S. Government. However, internal politics made it difficult for any U.S. Government to undertake such a posture. This, more than anything else, made the credibility of the 'Camp David system' suspect. Even though the U.S. Government speaks about the 'Camp David system and the 'Camp David spirit' from time to time it have proved its total inadequacy in solving the Palestinian problem.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Safiuddin Joarder, *Dhaka University Studies*, p. 77.

Chapter 7

Peace Making Process after the Camp David Agreements till 1993 and Views of the Arab States

In the 1980s a good number of initiatives were taken to solve the Palestine Problem. US and Arab initiatives were the main focus of the decade. In spite of that no peace was possible due to reciprocal mistrust of the belligerents. At this stage let us examine the developments that took place in 1980s. The 1975 rise to power in Saudi Arabia of pro-American Crown Prince Fahd (who became king in 1982) created the possibility of a peace initiative backed by the wealthy and powerful Saudis with their strong identification with Arab interests. Any such plan would have to be taken seriously in the Arab world. The Fahd Plan, proposed in 1981, was an eight-point proposal to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict and it gave the Palestinians an independent state. It received a mixed reception in Arab capitals, because it implicitly recognized Israel, but found support among European countries, anxious to secure their oil supplies. The US, at that time, was more interested in what became known as the Reagan Plan that kept Jordan in place as the sovereign in the West Bank.¹

The elements of the plan were familiar, and loosely based on UN Resolutions 242 and 338: Israel to withdraw from 1967-occupied territories, including East Jerusalem (but not the whole city), dismantling of settlements, recognition of the PLO as the Palestinian representative, establishment of an independent Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital, and secure guarantees of peace. Fahd's plan was not popular at home with the Saudi intelligentsia, middle class, and clergy who were strongly critical of any proposal that recognized Israel. At the Twelfth Arab Summit Conference, held in Fez, Morocco September 9, 1982, the League of Arab states adopted a version of the Fahd plan, which became known as the Fez Initiative. King Hassan of Morocco was a key supporter of the plan and its provision that implicitly

¹ http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_1967to1991_fahd_1981.php

recognized Israel's right to exist. His support at Fez led to a formal visit by Israeli Prime Minister Perez in 1986. The Fez Initiative came only a week after US President Reagan made public his own plan and was disappointing to the Americans. Behind the scenes, Washington had asked Saudi Arabia to work for a final resolution at Fez that would not attack the Reagan Plan and, preferably, would even endorse it, but the Fez summit did not give Jordan the hoped-for mandate to negotiate over the territories' future.²

Still, there was optimism in Washington. Vice-President George Bush said the Fez resolution meant implicit Arab recognition of Israel. Secretary of State Shultz thought the Fez summit could be a "genuine breakthrough," and added: "There might be an implied recognition of Israel. I hope that is so." This mood faded after the Israeli expansion of their incursion into southern Lebanon in mid-September 1982 that led to a temporary cooling of relations between Israel and the US. Israel rejected the Fez Initiative because it made all the usual demands of Israel but did not have anything new to provide for Israel's security. Still, it did represent a shift in Arab policy by a) its implicit recognition of Israel, and b) the possibility of negotiating a peace agreement of some sort. Fez thereby opened the door, a little, to future negotiations and peace initiatives.³

By mid-1982, Reagan Administration attempts to align Arab Middle Eastern states with the US and blunt potential Soviet moves in the region were faltering. The Iranian revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan gave the ideas some credibility, but Arab leaders were not motivated to respond to the American initiatives. Arab Governments were reluctant to become identified with American political objectives, but there was progress toward military cooperation since this directly benefited the Arab states. The series of clashes along the Israel-Lebanon border, followed by Israel's invasion of Lebanon in June of 1982, turned the attention of the Reagan Administration toward the Israel-Arab conflict. In June 1982 the Secretary of State, Alexander Haig -- a leading advocate of close relations with Israel --

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

resigned. The stage was thereby set for an experiment by a section in the State Department, supported by the incoming Secretary of State, George Shultz, and the National Security Adviser, William Clark that favoured a pro-Arab tilt and a top priority effort to find a negotiated settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.⁴

The Reagan plan approach grew out of the belief that the US must show progress towards solving the Arab-Israeli issue -- or, at least, make energetic attempts in that direction -- to retain US influence in the Arab world. The policy was meant to show the Arabs that America was trying to respond to their grievances. There was also an important domestic political component or Reagan. In a speech delivered on September 1, 1982 President Reagan outlined a proposed solution for the Arab-Israeli conflict. He labelled his position as the "next step" in the process that was begun with the Camp David Accords to pave the way for autonomy for the Palestinian people. He spoke of ""the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and their just requirements." He proposed a five-year transition period for "the peaceful and orderly transfer of domestic authority from Israel to the Palestinian inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza" and a freeze on new Israeli settlements during that time. Self-government by the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza would be in association with Jordan and not a separate state. Jerusalem would remain undivided, its final status to be decided through negotiations.⁵

Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the PLO's Arafat had been consulted in preparation of the plan, but Israel had not been notified by the Reagan Administration until right before the speech. In fact, the American Secretary of State had met with Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban a few days before and concealed the imminent announcement from him.

- Although Labour leader Peres expressed support for the plan, Prime Minister Menachem Begin and the Likud opposed it. Begin reacted very negatively, calling the plan "national suicide for Israel".

⁴ http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_1967to1991_reagan_1982.php

⁵ *Ibid.*

The Reagan Plan was finally rejected by Jordan and the PLO in April 1983 -- a development that discouraged Washington about prospects for settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the reliability of Arab "moderates". Consequently, the US-Israel alliance was strengthened, recovering from the blows it had suffered during Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, and Syria was again identified as the prime obstacle to regional stability.⁶

It is to be noted that in June 1978, Prime Minister Begin, under intense American pressure, withdrew Israel's Litani River Operation forces from southern Lebanon. They were replaced by UNIFIL, a UN force to restore peace and help the Lebanese government re-establish its authority, as authorized by UN Resolution 425. The withdrawal of Israeli troops without having removed the PLO from its bases in southern Lebanon became a major embarrassment to the Begin government, maintaining pressure for Israel to return. UNIFIL was unable to prevent terrorists from reinfiltrating the region and introducing new, more dangerous arms. Cross-border conflict between Israel and the various forces in Southern Lebanon continued at differing levels of intensity after 1978. Civilians on both sides, and UNIFIL peacekeepers, were killed as the fighting ebbed and flowed. Israel increased its support of the Lebanese Christian Militia in the south, under Major Saad Haddad, who regularly fought armed PLO fighters but also caused casualties among non-combatants. The US government during the Carter administration (1976-1980) had several times joined in UN condemnations of Israeli raids and reprisals in South Lebanon, always condemning simultaneously PLO terrorist cross-border activities.⁷

In July of 1981 Lebanese-American Philip Habib was sent by the Reagan Administration to negotiate a more lasting cease-fire between Lebanon and Israel. On July 24 Habib announced agreement that all hostile military action between Lebanese and Israeli territory in either direction would cease. For the next eleven months the cease-fire was in effect as a formality, but the PLO repeatedly violated the agreement. Israel charged that the PLO

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_1967to1991_lebanon_198x_backgd.php

staged 270 terrorist actions in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza, and along the Lebanese and Jordanian borders. Twenty-nine Israelis died and more than 300 were injured in the attacks. In April 1982, after a landmine killed an Israeli officer, the rocket attacks and air strikes recommenced. Israeli strikes and commando raids were unable to stem the growth of the PLO army which built camps, trained thousands of fighters, and stockpiled arms in south Lebanon. The situation in the Galilee became intolerable as the frequency of attacks forced thousands of Israeli residents to flee their homes or to spend large amounts of time in bomb shelters. Israel was not prepared to wait for more deadly attacks to be launched against its civilian population before acting against the PLO terrorists.⁸

It is to be noted that the Camp David Agreements are, however, on the larger issue a comprehensive peace plan ensuring the legitimate rights of the Palestinians and the security of all the states in the area – that there was no progress. The near complete Arab rejection of the Camp David brand of autonomy spurred the government of Begin to accelerate its programme of 'Judaising' the West Bank and Gaza as completely and as fast as possible first by establishing more settlements, and 'thickening' the earlier settlements and then by passing a law in the Knesset making it lawful for the Israeli citizens to buy properties in the occupied territories. This led the Security Council of the UN to adopt an unanimous resolution on March 1, 1980 which declared that 'all measures taken by Israel to change the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure or status of the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967 including Jerusalem have no legal validity' and that Israel's policy and practices of settling parts of its population and new immigrants into those territories constituted 'a flagrant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention' and called upon the government and people of Israel to 'rescind these measures, to dismantle the existing settlements'.⁹ Secondly, realizing that in any election even under the 'watchful eye' of the military administration in occupied territories it would be difficult to have

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Europa Publications Limited, *The Middle East and North Africa, 1980-81* (London, 1981), p.8.

elected representatives who would be willing to go along with the policy of Israel, the military administration began to pursue the policy of 'divide and rule' by creating Village League with local toughs and riff-raffs. The Palestinians used the Leagues in breaking up demonstrations. These gave an opportunity to the Israeli army to intervene and, in the name of separating the two sides, clobber the nationalists as hard as possible. The ineffectiveness of these measures and the prospect of the West Bank and Gaza being associated with Jordan as advocated in the Reagan Plan put forward in 1982 made the government of Begin decide to crush the PLO completely by invading Lebanon. The object of the invasion which began on June 6, 1982 was to push the Palestinian forces and artillery 25 miles to the north of Israel's borders'. Immediately after the invasion began, the Security Council unanimously, passed a resolution demanding Israel's immediate withdrawal from Lebanon and to observe a cease fire. When, however, Israel refused to comply and pushed beyond the 25 mile limit, the Security Council met again on June 8, condemned Israel for its failure to withdraw and called for an end to hostilities within 6 hours. The US vetoed the resolution. After capturing the whole of Southern Lebanon, the Israeli army laid siege to Beirut and subjected the city, especially the Muslim inhabited Western part to prolonged aerial and naval bombardment with a view to breaking the backbone of the Palestinian resistance movement. There were also ground and aerial combats between Israel and Syria in which a fairly large number of Syrian MIGs were lost. Despite very heavy Israeli shelling, the Palestine guerrillas in West Beirut held out. Their position, however, was desperate, and they had no alternative to accepting the proposal for leaving Beirut for a number of Arab countries including Syria, Sudan, Jordan, Tunisia and South Yemen. A multi-national force oversaw the evacuation.

The Israeli invasion of Lebanon is a turning-point in Lebanese history as it radically altered the balance enshrined in the National Pact of 1943 in favour of the Maronite Christians. Walid Jumalat, Chairman of the Progressive Socialist Party, complained that the internal political situation had been seriously aggravated by the attempts of the Phalangist Party, Kata'ib, 'to establish, with Israel's direct support, its absolute domination over the country

as a whole.¹⁰ Even though Israel has not succeeded in achieving its main objective of finishing the PLO off, its limited objective of installing a 'friendly' government in Lebanon has been achieved, and it was through an agreement signed with the friendly Amin Gemayel's government that Israel succeeded in maintaining its military presence in Lebanon in the provision for 'the joint patrolling of the borders'.¹¹

The rejection of the Camp David Agreements by the Arab countries – especially by the 'moderate' government of Jordan and Saudi Arabia surprised the US government, but it decided to go ahead because the new arrangements made it easier for the US to establish its control over this extremely important area. Firstly, apprehending Russian objections and other complications to the creation of a UN force for overseeing the withdrawals from the Sinai, provision was made for a multi-national force about 50⁰ of which was provided by the U.S.A. which took positions in the two air bases of Ethion and Eytam to the South-West of Gaza and marines were placed in Sharm al-Sheikh. There were also a substantial number of marines in the multinational force sent to Lebanon in the summer of 1982. Not only was America's military presence in the area strengthened but this increased presence nicely pushed in with the over-all military posture of the USA in this area. The usually cautious *Economist* remarked: "the 32 Airborne Division some of whose men will be holding the line in Sharm al Shaikh and Tiran, is usually assigned to America's Rapid Deployment Force. This has led some people to suspect that the Americans are using the observer force as a cover for securing a base for its RDF on Saudi soil. Tiran Island is no more than 500 meters from the Saudi mainland and only 200 kilometres from the Saudi base at Tabuk."¹² Secondly, the transformation of Egypt from a 'confrontationist' Arab state to an American ally was a net gain for the U.S.A. From now on, Israel and Egypt became the lynch-pins of American policy in the Middle East, as Israel and Iran had previously been with the 'moderate' Arab states – Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Jordan, and Oman as the 'second line of defence'

¹⁰ Text of his statement in *New Times* (April, 1983), p. 14.

¹¹ For an account of the Israeli-Lebanese agreement by which a Joint Liaison committee and a security Agreements committee were formed to ensure that Southern Lebanon remained quiet and which attempts to take Lebanon away from the 'Arab commitments', see Judith Perera, "The Price of Peace", *Meddle East Magazine* (July, 1983), Cited in Safiuddin Joarder, *Dhaka University Studies*, p.

¹² The *Economist*, March 20, 1982.

Even though the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty seemed to be working, there were currents of opposition against Sa'dat's policy which evident from the statement issued by the National Progressive Union Grouping, from the assassination of Sa'dat towards the end of 1981 and from the fact that the successor of Sa'dat Hosni Mubarak is trying to reduce the over-dependence on the U.S.A. by building bridge with other powers, notably the U.S.S.R. and France. On the question of the comprehensive settlement of the Palestine problem, the Camp David system failed miserably partly because of the fact that the sponsoring power is no regarded by the people of the area as an 'honest broken but mainly because the government of Begin was determined from the beginning to 'bantustanize' the West Bank and Gaza rather than gram meaningful self-government. When this plan for the so-called autonomy failed through the opposition of the Palestinians and the various Arab governments, the government of Begin intensified the 'get tough, policy in the occupied territories and Lebanon.

The Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the subsequent agreement that Israel was able to extract from the government of Amin Gemayel are in keeping with the Israeli policy of creating one *fait accompli* after another so that the earlier ones are forgotten and pushed into the background. Even though Israel had been interested in establishing control over the Litani river, the twin aims of the invasion seem to have been the destruction of the PLO as a force and, more importantly to divert the attention of the American government and of the Arabs from the 'Reagan plan which advocated the autonomy for the West Bank and Gaza in association with Jordan' – an obvious improvement over the Camp David arrangement. Israel was opposed to the Reagan Plan because it proposed to take the West Bank out of its complete grip.

The subsequently in-fighting between the 'realists' and the 'projectionists' within the PLO and the deterioration in the relations between Yasir Arafat and Hafez Asad have raised the question of the future of the Palestinian Resistance Movement and of the leadership of Arafat. The resulted 'rebellion' of the young Turks within the PLO has been attributed to their dissatisfaction with the leadership of Arafat. There is some truth in it, and the recent appointment of

Abu Hajem (formerly the PLO commander in Sidon) as the over-all commander of the PLO forces in North Lebanon is not liked by many PLO officers. But the core of the conflict is the acceptance or rejection of any compromise peace plan. The tension within the movement comes on the surface whenever a compromise peace plan is floated such as the Rogers Plan in 1970 and the recent Reagan Plan. The desire of the Syrian president Hafez al-Asad to call the tune of the Resistance Movement has been a contributing factor. It is not accidental that all the rebel leaders - Abu Musa, Abu Saleh, Qadri' and *Saiqa's* Zuhair Mohsin – have very close links with Syria.

Even if Arafat succeeds in riding this storm (he is likely to), his manoeuvrability is likely to be circumscribed and the prospect for the acceptance of a compromise peace plan will be dimmer.

This extreme instability, and horror at the massacre, led President Reagan to announce on September 20, the formation of a new MNF from the US, France and Italy intended to give the Lebanese a chance to stabilize. On September 29, the first elements of some 1,200 Marines began to arrive in Beirut, eventually growing to about 1,800. During the autumn of 1982, there were active negotiations among the United States, Israel, and Lebanon over the withdrawal of Israeli forces and the terms of a possible treaty between Lebanon and Israel. There were also negotiations over the removal of Syrian troops and PLO forces that still remained in Lebanon. The presence of the US Marines put pressure on the Lebanese to agree to the American plans and implied some measure of protection for the Lebanese authorities against those Lebanese, Palestinians, Syrians and other Arabs who adamantly opposed any normalization between Lebanon and Israel. On May 17, 1983, after intense American shuttle diplomacy, Lebanon and Israel signed an agreement ending the State of War between the two countries and providing for a phased Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. The agreement was contingent on the withdrawal of Syrian and Palestinian forces in parallel with the Israelis. However, Syria, who occupied about 35% of Lebanon, had no intention of withdrawing. The agreement did not go into effect. Naturally fighting continued.¹³

¹³ *Ibid.*

On March 5, the Government of Lebanon, under pressure from Syria, announced that it had cancelled the May 17, 1983 agreement providing for the withdrawal of Israeli troops and the end of the state of war with Israel. In June 1985, Israel withdrew most of its troops from Lebanon, leaving a small residual Israeli force and an Israeli-supported militia (the so-called "South Lebanon Army") in southern Lebanon. These forces created a "security zone," a strip of land three to five miles wide along the length of the Lebanese-Israeli border, which Israel considers a necessary buffer to protect its northern areas from attacks originating in Lebanon. With the passage of time, in June 1985, Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres ordered a unilateral withdrawal of most of Israel's troops from Lebanon, leaving only a small residual Israeli force and an Israeli-supported Lebanese militia in a "security zone," a 15 km wide strip of land paralleling the border which Israel considers a necessary buffer against attacks on its northern territory. Many terrorists on their way to northern Israel have been caught and stopped in the security zone. This security for Israel comes at a price; since 1985, about 300 Israeli soldiers have been killed in the security zone by terrorist groups such as Hezbollah (Party of God).¹⁴

After the PLO was expelled from Lebanon in 1982, Yasser Arafat set up a new headquarters in Tunisia. Even though Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba was generally a moderate in his policy on Israel, and had his own misgivings about the PLO, Tunisia was among the Arab countries that allowed the PLO to resettle from Lebanon. About 1,100 PLO fighters arrived by sea at Bizerte to a tumultuous welcome. The chief greeter was Bourguiba himself, waving from the dock. The Bourguiba government let the PLO set up headquarters in Borj Cedria near Tunis. From this new headquarters, the PLO gradually resumed guerrilla warfare on Israel utilizing bases in Lebanon. Israel retaliated without any hesitation. PLO also responded up to the mark as it could do. While Israel planned to annihilate all the leading Palestinian leaders. After the PLO was forced to move to Tunis, Arafat's leadership was called increasingly into question by Palestinians. The more militant PLO factions based in Syria and Lebanon gained influence and Arafat seemed to fade. But on December 14, 1988, Arafat told the United Nations that the PLO

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

renounced terrorism and recognized Israel's right to exist. He said the PLO supported the right of all parties to live in peace -- Israel included. After this surface change of policy, seventy countries recognized the PLO as the government of the Palestinian Arabs, and Arafat was able to reverse his decline to re-emerge as the clear Palestinian leader following the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference and the 1993 Oslo agreement which was negotiated in secret while Arafat remained in Tunis.¹⁵

In the course of settling the Palestine issue acceptable to both the parties, the International Conference on the Question of Palestine took place at the United Nations Office in Geneva from August 29 to September 7, 1983. It was attended by representatives of 137 States -117 as full participants and 20 as observers - as well as by the PLO. This initiative did not receive the support of all parties: Israel, the United States and some other countries expressed their opposition to the holding of the Conference. In general, this conference reflected the anti-Israel bias that infected the United Nations soon after Israel was founded. The Conference adopted by acclamation a Declaration on Palestine, and approved a Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights. The Conference considered it essential that an international peace conference on the Middle East be convened under United Nations auspices, with participation on an equal footing of all parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the PLO. Later in 1983, the General Assembly endorsed the Declaration and welcomed the Geneva Conference's call for an international peace conference on the Middle East. Throughout the 1980s, the Assembly reaffirmed the call for convening the proposed conference. After politically motivated changes in the PLO's position were announced by Yasir Arafat in 1988, and a peace plan fielded by Israel in 1989, a peace conference did eventually take place at Madrid in 1991.¹⁶

Although the PLO's diplomatic contacts with West European and Third World countries were steadily increasing in the mid-1970s, the PLO's terrorism and ideology prevented it from making headway with the US

¹⁵ http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_1967to1991_plo_tunisia.php

¹⁶ http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_1967to1991_intconf_palestine_1983.php

government whose policy, first formulated by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in 1975, was to refuse to deal with the PLO until it accepted UN Resolution 242, abandoned terrorism, and recognized Israel's right to exist. These conditions were designed to show that the PLO had genuinely changed its position so as to make possible successful talks and a stable settlement. There were some secret contacts between US embassy officials and the PLO in Lebanon for security purposes and indirect exchanges in which Washington tried to persuade the PLO to meet the conditions, but formal talks and recognition were delayed. When the PLO and its leadership decided to change tactics, their strategic goal remained unchanged. The goal was still to see, as soon as possible, a Palestinian state with its own government in all the land west of the Jordan River. In their thinking there was no room for Israel or its Jewish inhabitants.¹⁷

Still, it was necessary to give up the PLO image as a terrorist gang and change perceptions, at least in the West, so the PLO would be seen as a peace-seeking organization. At the same time, there was an internal constituency in the PLO and among Islamic extremists who would not be satisfied by diplomatic initiatives alone. Therefore, armed force and violence had to continue in parallel with diplomatic approaches. To reconcile these conflicting aims, the PLO began to develop the distinction between "terrorism", which is forbidden by world opinion, in contrast to the continuation of "the armed struggle" in the territories against the Israeli occupation, which could be sold to the world as "justified". On November 7, 1985, Yasir Arafat formulated these distinctions into a far-ranging declaration, now known as "the Cairo Declaration", which was approved by the Palestinian National Council on November 19, 1988 in Algeria. In this declaration, Arafat says:¹⁸

PLO approves its 1974 decision on the condemnation of all forms of foreign operations and all forms of terror... From today, the Organization will take all deterrent steps against those who violate this decision.

¹⁷ http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_1967to1991_plo_cairo_1985.php

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

However, in the same declaration, Arafat further says, "the opposition to the Israeli occupation," will continue by, "all possible means," in the territories [in order to], "achieve the withdrawal from the territories." Because of American pressure on the PLO, which continued behind the scenes, in an attempt to also blur the term "armed struggle" the PLO did not mention the term in its Declaration of Independence in 1988 or in other documents since then. Arafat claimed that he had renounced terrorism in his 1985 Cairo Declaration, but State Department officials and other agencies say the record shows otherwise. Terrorist actions traced back to the PLO itself or one of its allied organizations continued through the 1980s, 1990s, and into the new century. The PLO maintains that the intifada in the territories is not terrorism, and not an armed struggle, but a form of un-armed civilian struggle. Therefore, the PLO can make the statements required of it, to renounce terrorism, and stay in the diplomatic game while the struggle goes on.¹⁹

In December 1987, a collective Palestinian popular uprising erupted against Israel in the West Bank and Gaza areas. This period of violence is known as the Intifada, or "shaking off." At first a spontaneous outburst instigated by false rumors and incitement by Muslim clerics, the Intifada quickly developed into a well-organized rebellion orchestrated by the PLO from its headquarters in Tunis. Masses of civilians attacked Israeli troops with stones, axes, Molotov cocktails, hand grenades, and firearms supplied by the Fatah, killing and wounding soldiers and civilians. Israeli troops, trained for combat with opposing armies, were not well prepared to fight this kind of war. The original outbreak was a misunderstanding siezed upon as a pretext. On December 6, 1987, an Israeli was stabbed to death while shopping in Gaza. The next day, four residents of the Jabalya refugee camp in Gaza were killed in a traffic accident. Rumors spread that the four had been killed by Israelis as a deliberate act of revenge. Mass rioting broke out in Jabalya on the morning of December 9, during which a 17-year-old threw a Molotov cocktail at an army patrol and was killed by an IDF soldier. His death became the trigger for large-scale riots that engulfed the West Bank, Gaza and Jerusalem. Once the violence started, each incident provided rumor material to keep the violence

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

going. Accumulated frustrations of the Palestinians, largely the result of their own leader's policies, were vented against the Israelis. As the intifada ran its course from 1987 to 1993, the level of violence and the degree to which it was organized and coordinated by the PLO only increased.²⁰

It is to be noted that by this time there took place critical differences in the character and composition of Palestinian society. These differences obviously affected recruitment into the uprising. By the time the intifada had broken out, the traditional strength of the Palestinian landowner, urban merchant, and village leader in the West Bank and Gaza Strip had been replaced or was being supplanted by leadership elites based not only on wealth but also on educational achievement, professional attainment, and an accumulated personal resume of confronting Israeli presence. In the period before each uprising, a better-educated and more radical younger generation emerged to confront traditional leaders.

As a result of Israel's War of Independence in 1948, Jordan occupied East Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria, land known since that time as the "West Bank". In April 1950, Jordan annexed eastern Jerusalem (dividing the city for the first time in its history) and the "West Bank" areas in historical Judea and Samaria that Trans Jordan had occupied by military force in 1948. As a result the name of the country has been changed to Jordan in April 1949. On April 24, 1950, the Jordan House of Deputies and House of Notables, in a joint session, adopted a Resolution making the West Bank and Jerusalem part of Jordan. This act had no basis in international law; it was only the de facto act of Trans-Jordan as a conqueror. The other Arab countries denied formal recognition of the Jordanian move and only two governments - Great Britain and Pakistan - formally recognized the Jordanian takeover. The rest of the world, including the United States, never did. Jordan's annexing of the West Bank, though it nominally expanded the Hashemite Kingdom, provided few benefits for King Hussein. As a result of the Six Day War in 1967, Jordan lost control of the lands west of the Jordan River, including East Jerusalem.

²⁰ http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_1967to1991_intifada_1987.php; Yahya Armajani, *Middle East: Past and Present* (), Trans. Muhammad Inam ul Haque (Dhaka: Bangla Academy), p. thirty two.

Israel began its administration of the territories, which continues today. Jordan not only suffered heavy casualties but also lost much of its best farmland and, as well, had to cope with hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees who fled the Israelis by crossing the Jordan to the east.²¹

Jordan maintained an uneasy relationship with its Palestinians, now the majority east of the Jordan. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) constantly incited the Palestinians against Jordan even though Jordan gave them citizenship and in general treated them better than any other Arab land. By 1970 the PLO became such a threat to Jordan, and an international embarrassment for Jordan because of their terrorism, that King Hussein drove them out of Jordan. Since then a good number of talks took place between Hussein and Yasir Arafat for mutual understanding and settlement. But it did not happen due to the gap of their desires. In the 1970s several peace plans for Israel and the Palestinians were proposed that would have put Jordan in control of the West Bank, but these were rejected by Yasir Arafat who wanted an independent state. With the election of Menachem Begin as Israeli Prime Minister in May 1977, it became Israeli policy under Likud to keep the West Bank, known to Israelis by the biblical names of Judea and Samaria. Peace ideas involving Jordan became moot weakening Jordanian motivation to engage in a conflict with the PLO on that front.²²

Attempting to find a working solution between Jordan and the PLO, King Hussein let the Palestine National Council meet in Amman, and in 1985 he agreed to aid the PLO in coordinating a joint peace initiative. Hussein wanted a confederation of the West and East Banks with autonomy for the Palestinians but under Jordanian rule. Arafat was happy to agree to confederation between a future Palestinian state and Jordan, but his vision always included independence for the West Bank. In February 1986 talks between Hussein and Arafat broke down. Hussein needed assurances from Arafat that he would renounce violence and recognize Israel but such an undertaking was never given. Hussein declared that Jordan would be

²¹ http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_1967to1991_jordan_renounce_claims.php; Inam ul Haque, *Ibid.*, p. thirty one.

²² *Ibid.*

responsible for the economic welfare of the West Bank Palestinians and, as well, he raised the number of Palestinian seats in the National Assembly. Hussein hoped to outflank the PLO and reach some accord with Israel that would leave Jordan with some control of the disputed land. In April 1987 Hussein and Shimon Peres, Israel's foreign minister, agreed to a UN-sponsored conference that would include Palestinian representatives as part of a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. In spite of American assent to the plan, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir refused, wanting the conference to include only Jordan and not the PLO. In December of 1987 the first Intifada, the Palestinian uprising on the West Bank and in Gaza, changed the entire situation for Jordan. Hussein supported the Intifada publicly and offered aid in an attempt to keep, or regain, Palestinian confidence. But Hussein's attempts at being seen as a friend of the Palestinians were rejected as Arafat became the spokesman for the Palestinians.²³

In summary, the Arab and international recognition of the PLO as "the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians," the overwhelming PLO victory in the 1976 municipal elections in the territories, and the fact that seventy percent of the Jordanian population is of Palestinian origins, made it impossible for Jordan to compete with the PLO over representation of the Palestinians in the territories without jeopardizing its domestic stability. In July 1988, in response to the accumulated pressures and the months of intifada demonstrations by Palestinians in the West Bank, King Hussein of Jordan ceded to the PLO all Jordanian claims to the territory. Any hopes of a Jordanian-Israeli resolution to the Palestine problem were effectively ended. He dissolved the Jordanian parliament, half of whom were West Bank representatives, and stopped paying salaries to over 20,000 West Bank civil servants. When the Palestine National Council recognized the PLO as the sole legal representative of the Palestinians, Hussein immediately gave them official recognition. Although the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank posed a potential threat to Jordan as a Hashemite kingdom, Hussein gambled that this was less of a threat than the possibility of Jordan to become the alternative homeland for the Palestinians. By taking

²³ *Ibid.*

Jordan out of the way, relinquishing any claim of sovereignty, he sought to move solutions toward the Palestinian state in line with the desires of Arafat and the PLO.²⁴

In the 1980s, US policy in the Middle East was cautious. Failure in Lebanon during the period of the Israeli operations there starting in 1982, led to a policy of staying out of the area unless and until the local parties to the conflict were ready to negotiate. Negative experiences with the Marines in Lebanon and with the peace process in particular, including the failure of the 1982 Reagan Plan made the White House consider the area very unpromising. And US efforts to bring the PLO into a diplomatic process, directly or through Jordan, were frustrated by the PLO's continued policy of terrorism and its policy that the only end-result that they would accept was the destruction of Israel. The outbreak of Arab violence during the first intifada in December of 1987 brought new urgency to US efforts to broker some kind of solution. To respond to the situation and show US engagement, Shultz produced a new plan, presented in January 1988, which combined elements of the Camp David Accords, the Reagan plan, King Hussein's proposals, and Israeli Foreign Minister Peres' ideas for an international conference. Between February and June 1988, Shultz used the Kissinger technique of "shuttle diplomacy" to promote his plan by travelling three times to the Middle East in the five months.²⁵

The basic elements of the Shultz plan called for:

- Begin negotiations hosted by the five permanent UN Security Council members, attended by all parties accepting UN Resolutions 242 and 338 and renouncing violence and terrorism.
- The Palestinians would be represented by a joint Jordan-Palestinian delegation who would negotiate the terms of a three-year transitional period for the territories

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_1967to1991_shultz_plan.php

- The international meetings would facilitate separate bi-lateral negotiations for a final settlement, but have no veto or enforcement power.

Egypt, Jordan, and Foreign Minister Peres supported the plan. Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir questioned the timetable, international forum, and territory-for-peace formula. The PLO and Syria were very critical and West Bank/Gaza Palestinians refused to meet with Shultz, apparently on orders from the PLO. Shultz was able to maintain that no party had said "no" to his proposal but, by the same token, none took it up enthusiastically.

- The end of the Reagan administration after the election of November 1988 the Schultz Plan was lost.

On November 15, 1988, a Palestinian state was proclaimed by Yasser Arafat at a meeting of the Palestine National Council in Algiers. This was the second declaration of such a state, the first being at a meeting in Gaza in October 1, 1948. Both the Gaza and the Algiers declarations are largely irrelevant today, notwithstanding that the Algiers Declaration received enormous attention at the time. Coming about a year after the outbreak of the intifada and four months after Jordan's King Hussein severed the kingdom's long-standing ties with the West Bank, the Algiers declaration marked an effort to fill a vacuum and a signal of intent for the future. Since the PLO did not control the intended Palestinian territory, it was only a symbolic act. The Palestine National Council based the Algiers declaration of Palestinian statehood on UN Resolution 181, the 1947 Partition Plan which divided Mandate Palestine into Arab and Jewish states. But by citing this UN decision, the Palestinian leadership was on shaky ground, as it contradicted their own Palestinian Covenant and their own oft-repeated statements that 181 is "null and void". They wanted to negate Resolution 181 because Israel based its own declaration of the State of Israel on that UN resolution. Arab rejection of Resolution 181 and initiation of hostilities in 1947-48 had prevented

implementation of the UN's recommendation. Israel was the only relevant party prepared to uphold the terms of 181 at the time.²⁶

Despite the essential contradiction, the PLO's permanent representative at the UN submitted the Algiers declaration to the world body on December 15, 1988 for a vote. Continuing its tradition of anti-Israel bias, the UN General Assembly adopted by a vote of 104-2 (the US and Israel against, with 36 abstentions) resolution 43/177, citing the Algiers declaration, and stating that the Palestinian people have the right to declare a state according to Resolution 181. The UN decision also included a provision elevating the PLO's observer status by replacing references to the "Palestine Liberation Organization" with "Palestine" in all UN bodies. Following the UN vote, 89 nations (including Turkey, Greece, India, China, the Soviet Union, Pakistan and Austria) recognized the independent state of "Palestine". This is extraordinary given that the self-proclaimed Palestinian "state" lacks the fundamental qualifications of a state under established international law. The real significance of the Algiers declaration was that it advanced the negotiations between the PLO and the United States.²⁷

It is to be noted that US policy, first formulated by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in 1975, was to refuse to deal with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) until it accepted certain conditions. Kissinger set these conditions for US contact with the PLO in a 1975 US-Israel memorandum of agreement. Kissinger promised that the United States:

- *... will not recognize or negotiate with the PLO as long as the PLO does not recognize Israel's right to exist and does not accept Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.*

This memorandum – and later the Camp David accords – conditioned any party's participation at a peace conference on "the agreement of all the initial participants." Thus, Israel could veto PLO presence. In later years, US Presidents frequently reiterated these commitments. In 1985 Congress passed,

²⁶ *Ibid.* http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_1967to1991_algiers_declar.php; Inam ul Haque, *op.cit.*, p. thirty one.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

and President Reagan signed a law codifying them and adding that the PLO had to renounce the use of terrorism before the United States would "recognize or negotiate with [it]." These conditions were designed to exclude a radical, terrorist PLO from any negotiations and to use US leverage to press it toward moderation. The PLO had to show that it had genuinely changed its position so as to make possible successful talks and a stable settlement. For more than a decade, however, the PLO had no interest in changing, and continued to use terrorism as its primary method of operation. But by the late 1980s, the PLO found it marginalized, forced to operate from Tunisia, far from the centre of the action, trying to control the streets during the first intifada starting in 1987. Peace negotiations were in the air, but to participate Arafat and the PLO came to recognize that they had to satisfy the United States' pre-conditions.²⁸

During the Shultz Peace Plan initiative in early 1988, the US was firm in blocking PLO participation until the minimal conditions were met. There was a danger to the PLO that Jordan would lead Palestinians at the proposed talks. Arafat acted on two fronts: he made sure no Palestinians would participate in the Shultz talks and he started a process that would meet the US conditions. By late 1988, Yasir Arafat believed that nothing was going to happen in the Middle East without the US and, somewhat overstated, he believed that the US could pressure Israel into an agreement they might not otherwise accept. During 1988, secret channels and intermediaries were used to establish acceptable language for the PLO to use to satisfy the United States. Arafat's next attempt to publicly meet the US conditions was the Algiers Declaration of the Palestinian National Council in November 1988, a document based on the policy revisions discussed in the Cairo Declaration of November 7, 1985. Examining the Algiers declaration, the US government concluded that it fell short since the document did not explicitly recognize Israel's right to exist and was ambiguous on accepting the two UN resolutions and on terrorism. On November 26, 1988, Shultz rejected Arafat's request for a visa to address the UN in New York because of the PLO's continued involvement in terrorism against Americans.²⁹

²⁸ http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_1967to1991_plo_israel_exist_1988.php

²⁹ *Ibid.*

The secret channel discussions continued. During November, a message giving a presidential pledge to start a dialogue if the PLO met the conditions was sent by National Security Advisor Colin Powell through a private individual meeting with PLO officials in Stockholm. Meeting with American Jewish activists there, Arafat hinted at willingness to meet this standard. In early December, Shultz said the Stockholm statement was not sufficient but again said there would be an immediate dialogue if Arafat did so. When the United States denied Arafat a visa, the UN General Assembly voted to meet in Geneva, Switzerland. Arafat secretly pledged to the United States that he would fulfil its conditions in his December 13, 1988 address. But Arafat broke this promise and the United States found his statement unsatisfactory. To avoid losing the opportunity, Arafat went further at a press conference the next day, saying, "Our desire for peace is strategic and not a temporary tactic." He went down the checklist:³⁰

- The PLO accepted UN Resolution 242
- The PLO promised recognition of Israel
- The PLO renounced terrorism

Arafat concluded:

- *We want peace...we are committed to peace, and we want to live in our Palestinian state and let others live.*

Responding to the PLO's public pledges of this policy change, Shultz quickly announced that the US conditions were met and a US-PLO dialogue began in Tunis. Those talks ultimately led to the 1991 Madrid Conference.

The Arab uprising known as the first intifada brought immense pressure upon Israel from the US and other nations to make concessions to the Arabs in order to stop the violence. After Yasir Arafat's announcement of renunciation of terrorism and recognition of Israel's right to exist in 1988, the Shamir government of Israel had to formulate a response.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

As a result of this development, the plan consisted of four basic points:

- Strengthening the peace with Egypt as a regional cornerstone
- Promoting full peaceful relations with the Arab states
- Improving refugee conditions through international efforts
- Palestinian elections and interim self-rule for a five year period leading to a "permanent solution"

There were also several "Basic Premises" set forth that was a non-negotiable part of the initiative:

- Israel opposed the establishment of an additional Palestinian state in the Gaza district and in the area between Israel and Jordan
- Israel would not conduct negotiations with the PLO
- There would be no change in the status of Judea, Samaria and Gaza other than in accordance with the "basic guidelines of the government"

This initiative was based on the Camp David Accords, and in turn, formed the basis of the Baker Plan that led to the 1991 Madrid Conference Middle East peace negotiations. During the five year transition, Israel proposed to remain responsible for defence, foreign affairs and all "matters pertaining to Israeli citizens". The plan explained in great detail the process of elections and, following the Camp David formula, states that no later "than the third year after the establishment of self-rule negotiations for a permanent solution shall begin."³¹

In May 1989 US Secretary of State James Baker III laid out the American position on what is now called the Arab-Israeli peace process. He urged self-government for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza in a manner acceptable to Palestinians, Israel, and Jordan, a formula designed to provide ample scope for Palestinians to achieve their full political rights while

³¹ http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_1967to1991_israel_peace_1989.php

also providing ample protection for Israel's security. On November 1, 1989, US Secretary of State Baker formally submitted his Five-Point Election Plan to Israel and Egypt, although they had reviewed drafts beforehand. It was based on Israel's Four Point Plan of May 1989 and did not go into detail. It was intended as a framework under which Egypt would facilitate bringing Palestinian Arabs (but not the PLO) into a process of discussion about elections to establish proper representation for the Palestinians, and potentially other issues.³²

- Israel agreed in principle in November but attached two reservations: that the PLO not be involved in the naming of Palestinian delegates and that the discussions be limited to preparations for the elections. The Israel National Unity government fell in March 1990 in a vote of no confidence precipitated by disagreement over the government's response to the Baker initiative. Prime Minister Shamir formed a new government in June 1990 and rejected the Baker Plan. Baker attempted to work with Shamir who continued to reject Baker's five point plan, even after most of the Israeli demands had been accepted.

The break-up of the Soviet Union and the Gulf War reshaped the basic political order of the Middle East. In an attempt to take advantage of this change, US Secretary of State James Baker made eight trips to the region in the eight months following the Gulf War. The Madrid Invitation, inviting Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and the Palestinians to an opening conference jointly sponsored by the US and the Soviet Union on October 30, 1991, represents the result of this shuttle diplomacy.³³

The invitation, an outcome of compromises by all sides, detailed the structure of the Madrid process:

- An opening conference having no power to impose solutions
- Bilateral talks with the Arab states bordering Israel

³² *Ibid.*; Inam ul Haque, *op.cit.*, p. fifty six.

³³ http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_1967to1991_madrid_1991.php; Inam ul Haque, *Ibid.*

- Talks with the Palestinians on 5-year interim self-rule, to be followed by talks on the permanent status
- Multilateral talks on key regional issues, like refugees.

Thereupon the Oslo Accords took place. The Oslo Accords officially called the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements or Declaration of Principles (DOP) was a milestone in the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict, one of the major continuing issues within the wider Arab-Israeli conflict. It was the first direct, face-to-face agreement between the government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). It was intended to be the one framework for future negotiations and relations between the Israeli government and Palestinians, within which all outstanding "final status issues" between the two sides would be addressed and resolved. Negotiations concerning the agreements, an outgrowth of the Madrid Conference of 1991, were completed secretly in Oslo, Norway on 20 August 1993; the Accords were subsequently officially signed at a public ceremony in Washington, DC on 13 September 1993, in the presence of PLO chairman Yasir Arafat, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and US President Bill Clinton. The documents themselves were signed by Mahmoud Abbas for the PLO, foreign Minister Shimon Peres for Israel, Secretary of State Warren Christopher for the United States and foreign minister Andrei Kozyrev for Russia.³⁴

The Oslo Accords were a framework for the future relations between the two parties. The Accords provided for the creation of a Palestinian National Authority (PNA). The Palestinian Authority would have responsibility for the administration of the territory under its control. The Accords also called for the withdrawal of the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) from parts of the Gaza Strip and West Bank. It was anticipated that this arrangement would last for a five-year interim period during which a permanent agreement would be negotiated (beginning no later than May 1996). Permanent issues such as positions on Jerusalem, Palestinian refugees, Israeli settlements, security and borders were deliberately left to be decided at a later stage. Interim

³⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oslo_Accords; Inam ul Haque, *Ibid.*, p. fifty eight.

Palestinian self-government was to be granted by Israel in phases. Support for the Accords, of the concessions made and the process were not free from criticism on all sides. The repeated public posturing of all sides has discredited the process, and put the possibility of achieving peace into question [*citation needed*]. It is to be recalled that from the first negotiations at the 1949 Armistice Agreements to the most recent at the Madrid Conference of 1991, there were many failed attempts for a settlement to bring about a lasting end to the Arab-Israeli and Israeli-Palestinian conflicts. What made the Oslo Accord negotiations different however, was the new Israeli government's decision to finally hold direct, face-to-face negotiations with the Palestinian Liberation Organization, as the representative of the Palestinian people.³⁵

A renewal of the Israeli-Palestinian quest for peace began at the end of the Cold War as the United States took the lead in international affairs. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Western observers were optimistic, as Francis Fukuyama wrote in an article, titled "The End of History". The hope was that the end of the Cold War heralded the beginning of a new international order. President George H. W. Bush, in a speech on 11 September 1990, spoke of a "rare opportunity" to move toward a "New world order" in which "the nations of the world, east and west, north and south, can prosper and live in harmony," adding that "today the new world is struggling to be born". The Gulf War (1990-1991) did much to persuade Israelis that the defensive value of territory had been overstated, and that the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait psychologically reduced their sense of security. The Gulf War had also shown that a superior air force and technology was more important than territory in winning a war. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) realized the loss of its most important diplomatic patron, due to the deterioration of the Soviet Union that started in 1989, and Arafat's failing relationship with Moscow. Another factor which pushed the PLO to the accords was the fallout from the Gulf War; because Arafat took a pro-Iraqi stand during the war, the Arab Gulf states cut off financial assistance to the PLO. The PLO was not invited to the Madrid Conference of 1991 at which Israel discussed peace with Lebanon, Jordan, Syria and Palestinian groups

³⁵ *Ibid.*

that were not associated with the PLO, although the behind the scenes coordination of the Palestinian delegation at Madrid by the PLO was an open secret.³⁶

In December 1992, in the background of the official "Madrid negotiations" in London, Israeli vice-minister of foreign affairs Yossi Beilin and Norwegian researcher Terje Rød-Larsen set up a secret meeting for PLO representative Ahmed Qurei and Israeli history professor Yair Hirschfeld. Qurei and Hirschfeld made a connection and decided to meet again in what was going to be a series of 14 meetings in Oslo. During the first few meetings, a concept of an accord was discussed and agreed upon. The Foreign Affairs Minister of Israel, Shimon Peres, was interested and sent the highest-ranking non-political representative and a military lawyer to continue the negotiations. In contrast to the official negotiations in Madrid, where actual meetings between the delegations were often limited to a few hours a day, the Israeli and Palestinian delegations in Norway were usually accommodated in the same residence, they had breakfast, lunch and dinner at the same table, resulting in mutual respect and close friendships. The Norwegian government covered the expenses, provided security and kept the meetings away from the public eye, using the research institute Fafo as a front.³⁷

In August 1993, the delegations had reached an agreement which was signed in secrecy by Peres while visiting Oslo. Peres took the agreement to the United States to the surprise of US negotiator Dennis Ross. However, the Palestinians and Israelis had not yet agreed on the wording of the agreement, in which the PLO would acknowledge the state of Israel and pledge to reject violence, and Israel would recognize the (unelected) PLO as the official Palestinian authority, allowing Yasir Arafat to return to the West Bank. Most of the negotiations for this agreement were carried out in a hotel in Paris, now in full view of the public and the press. An agreement was reached and signed by Yasir Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin, just in time for the official signing in Washington. The optimism of the moment appealed to Israelis, and 60% of them supported the Oslo Accords when they were first presented. Some

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

Israelis had become tired of the constant violence of the First Intifada, and many were willing to take risks for peace. Some wanted to realize the economic benefits in the new global economy.³⁸

The textual analysis of the Accord reveals the following features. It is to be noted that four documents constituted the agreement between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the State of Israel concerning the establishment of a transitional Palestinian self-governing authority in the Gaza Strip and Jericho.

Three of the four documents under study are letters: the first from PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, the second from Arafat to Norwegian Foreign Minister Johan Jorgen Holst, and the third from Rabin to Arafat. All are dated 9 September 1993, though the third was actually signed 10 September. Taken together, the letters constitute the agreement on mutual recognition between the PLO and the State of Israel. The fourth document is the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (DOP), signed by Israel and the PLO in Washington on 13 September 1993.

In summary, the PLO, in recognizing the "State of Israel", recognized a "territorial" state and a "sovereign" state, one with executive, legislative, and judicial "branches of government" but with no fixed borders. Israel in return recognized "the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people", and decided to "commence negotiations" with it in the context of "the Middle East peace process". Israel recognized no rights belonging to the Palestinian people, merely an organization representing a people that can serve as a suitable negotiating partner. That was all the PLO was able to get.

Among other things, to establish a Palestinian Interim Self-Governing Authority, the elected Council, (the "Council") for the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, for a transitional period not exceeding five years, leading to a permanent settlement based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

It is understood that the interim arrangements are an integral part of the whole peace process and that the negotiations on the permanent status will lead to the implementation of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

The agreed points of the DOP are -

1. The jurisdiction of the Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority to be established "will cover West Bank and Gaza Strip territory, except from issues that will be negotiated in the permanent status negotiations. The two sides view the West Bank and Gaza Strip as a single territorial unit" (Art. IV).
2. There will be an Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area (Art. XIV) And a redeployment of Israeli military forces in the West Bank and Gaza Strip that "will be guided by the principle that its military forces should be redeployed outside populated areas" (Art. XIII.2). The only "withdrawal" in the West Bank will be from the Jericho area, yet Jericho, as a populated area, presumably would have benefited from the "redeployment" elucidated in Article XII.2.
3. The Palestinian Interim Self-Governing Authority, or "Council", will be elected by "the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip" (Art. III.1) "not later than nine months after the entry into force of this Declaration of Principles" (Art. III.2). Annex 1.1 notes that "Palestinians of Jerusalem who live there will have the right to participate in the election process, according to an agreement between the two sides".
4. "Upon the entry into force of this Declaration of Principles and the withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area", authority will be transferred to "the authorized Palestinians" preparatory to the "inauguration of the Council" (Art. VI.1). It would appear that the "authorized" Palestinians will be selected by the PLO and approved by Israel.
5. The spheres in which authority will be transferred to the Palestinians are: "education and culture, health, social welfare, direct taxation and tourism".

"Pending the inauguration of the Council, the two parties may negotiate the transfer of additional powers and responsibilities, as agreed upon" (Art. VI.2).

6. Upon the entry into force of the DOP, "the Palestinian side will commence in building the Palestinian police force, as agreed upon" (Art. VI.2). Once the Council is set up, it will "establish a strong police force, while Israel will continue to carry the responsibility for defending against external threats, as well as responsibility for overall security of Israelis for the purpose of safeguarding their internal security and public order". (Art. VIII)
7. An "Interim Agreement", to be negotiated on the interim period itself (Art. VII. 1), will "specify, among other things, the structure of the Council, the number of its members ... [its] executive authority, legislative authority ... and the independent Palestinian judicial organs". (Art. VII. 2) In other words, the basic law of the Council (the constitution) is subject to negotiation, not to the will of the Palestinians.
8. Disputes arising from the implementation or interpretation of the DOP or any subsequent agreements pertaining to the interim period will first be submitted to the Joint Liaison Committee.
9. "In order to enable the Council to promote economic growth, upon its inauguration, the Council will establish, among other things, an Palestinian Electricity Authority, a Gaza Sea Port Authority, a Palestinian Development Bank, a Palestinian Land Authority and a Palestinian Water Administration Authority, and any other Authorities agreed upon, in accordance with the Interim Agreement that will specify their powers and responsibilities". (Art. VII. 4)
- 10.A "Protocol on Israeli-Palestinian Cooperation Concerning Regional Development Programmes", elaborated in Annex IV and relating to Article XVI's reference to a regional "Marshall Plan", sets out areas requiring joint action. Two Programmes are outlined: an Economic Development Programme for the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and a Regional Economic Development Programme. The local Programme (less costly and less important) includes a housing and construction Programme, small and

medium projects, water, electricity, transportation, and communications, and apparently will be financed by a Palestinian Development Bank. The regional Programme involves "the establishment of a Middle East Development Fund as a first step, and a Middle East Development Bank, as a second step". (Annex IV.2B.1) Possible projects listed include: the development of the Dead Sea area, the "Mediterranean Sea (Gaza) - Dead Sea Canal", desalination, agricultural development, prevention of desertification, interconnection of electric grids, "regional cooperation for the transfer, distribution and industrial exploitation of gas, oil and other energy resources" (Annex IV.2B.7), tourism, transportation, and telecommunications. Multilateral working groups will be encouraged by the two sides.

The DOP also provides for the establishment of four joint committees, as follows;

1. *The Joint Israeli-Palestinian Liaison Committee*, the task of which will be "to deal with issues requiring coordination, other issues of common interest, and disputes" so as "to provide for a smooth implementation of this DOP and any subsequent agreements pertaining to the interim period". (Article X)
2. *The Israeli-Palestinian Continuing Committee for Economic Cooperation* has far-reaching jurisdiction extending curiously, to "the field of communication and media". (Annex III. 11) Other priorities for the committee include:
 - The field of water resources.
 - Cooperation in the field of electricity.
 - Cooperation in the field of energy.
 - Cooperation in the field of transport.
 - Trade Promotion Programmes.

- Cooperation in the field of industry.
- Labour relations and social welfare issues.
- The development of human resources.
- Joint Israeli-Palestinian workshops and joint vocational training centres, research institutions, and data banks.
- An environmental protection plan (Annex III.10).

In short, the scope of the Israeli-Palestinian Continuing Committee for Economic Cooperation goes far beyond the spheres over which the Palestinian Council will have authority.

3. *A continuing committee in which the governments of Jordan and Egypt will be invited to participate* will be charged with "establishing further liaison and cooperation arrangements between the Government of Israel and the Palestinian representatives, on the one hand, and the Government of Jordan and Egypt, on the other hand, to promote cooperation between them" concerning "persons displaced from the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967, together with the necessary measures to prevent disruption and disorder. Other matters of common concern will be dealt with by this committee" (Article XII). A major function of this committee is certainly security - the coordination of the intelligence services of the four committee participants.
4. *A Joint Palestinian-Israeli Coordination and Cooperation Committee for mutual security purposes.* The Joint Palestinian-Israeli Coordination and Cooperation Committee for mutual security purposes (Annex II. 3e) can be presumed to be the highest link between Palestinian and Israeli security institutions; i.e., between the Palestinian police and intelligence on the one hand and Mossad, and the Israeli ministry of the interior on the other.

In addition to these four committees, the DOP refers to "multilateral working groups as an appropriate instrument for promoting a 'Marshall Plan', the regional Programmes and other Programmes including a special

Programme for the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as indicated in the protocol attached as Annex IV" (Art. XVI).

The most striking thing about the committees is that they will apparently function over the head of the self-governing authority. It is in their hands that real authority will lie; important decisions will be channelled through them. They are at the apex of the pyramidal structure in the DOP, covering all areas in which authority has not been relegated to the Council. In effect, the Council, with its five authorities, remains a largely ceremonial body, a facade of honorifics. Final settlement will be made within 1995 and will be effective from 1998.

On both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian divide, the Rabin-Arafat deal provoked strong and vociferous opposition on the part of the hard-liners. Both leaders were accused of a betrayal and a sell-out. Leaders of the Likud and of the nationalistic parties further to the right attacked Rabin for his abrupt departure from the bipartisan policy of refusing to negotiate with the PLO, and charged him with abandoning the 120,000 settlers in the occupied territories to the tender mercies of terrorists. The Gaza-Jericho plan they denounced as a bridgehead to a Palestinian state and the beginning of the end of Greater Israel.

The Knesset approved the accord, at the end of a debate which stretched over three days, by sixty-one votes for, fifty against, and nine abstentions. During the debate, the right appeared more seriously divided on the peace issue than the centre-left coalition, which was backed by five Arab members of the Knesset. The margin of victory, much greater than expected, was a boost to Rabin and his peace policy. Given the importance he attached to having a "Jewish majority" for his policy, he was greatly reassured by the fact that more Jewish members voted for than against. The vote gave him a clear mandate to proceed with the implementation of the Gaza-Jericho plan.

Within the Palestinian camp, the accord also encountered loud but, at least initially ineffective opposition. The PLO itself was split, with the radical nationalists accusing Arafat of abandoning principles to grab power. These included the Damascus-based Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) led by George Habash, and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) led by Nayif Nawarmah. Arafat succeeded in mustering the

necessary majority in favour of the deal on the PLO's eighteen member Executive Committee, but only after a bruising battle and the resignation of four of his colleagues. Outside the PLO, the deal aroused the implacable wrath of the militant resistance movements Hamas and Islamic Jihad, which regard any compromise with the Jewish state as anathema.

Opposition to the deal from rejectionist quarters, whether secular or religious, was only to be expected. More disturbing was the opposition of mainstream figures like Faruq Qaddumi, the PLO "foreign minister", and prominent intellectuals like Professor Edward Said and the poet Mahmud Darwish. Some of the criticisms related to Arafat's autocratic, idiosyncratic, and secretive style of management. Others related to the substance of the deal. The most basic criticism was that the deal negotiated by Arafat did not carry the promise, let alone a guarantee, of an independent Palestinian state.

This criticism took various forms. Faruq Qaddumi argued that the deal compromised the basis of national rights of the Palestinian people as well as the individual rights of the 1948 refugees. Edward Said lambasted Arafat for unilaterally cancelling the intifada, for failing to coordinate his moves with the Arab states, and for provoking appalling disarray within the ranks of the PLO. "The PLO", wrote Said, "has transformed itself from a national liberation movement into a kind of small-town government, with the same handful of people still command". For the deal itself, Said had nothing but scorn, "All secret deals between a very strong and a very weak partner necessarily involve concessions hidden in embarrassment by the latter", he wrote. "The deal before us", he continued, "smacks of the PLO leadership's exhaustion and isolation and of Israel's shrewdness".³⁹ "Gaza and Jericho first ... and last" was Mahmud Darwish's damning verdict on the deal.⁴⁰

Arab reactions to the Israeli-Palestinian accord were rather mixed. Arafat got a polite but cool reception from the nineteen foreign ministers of the Arab League who met in Cairo a week after the signing ceremony in Washington. Some member states of the league, especially Jordan, Syria,

³⁹ Edward Said, "The Lost Liberation", *The Guardian*, 9 September 1993.

⁴⁰ *The Economist*, 4 September 1993.

and Lebanon, were dismayed by the PLO chairman's solo diplomacy which violated Arab pledges to coordinate their negotiating strategy. Arafat defended his decision to sign the accord by presenting it as the first step toward a more comprehensive peace in the Middle East. The interim agreement, he said, is only the first step toward a final settlement of the Palestinian problem and of the Arab-Israeli conflict which would involve Israeli withdrawal from all the occupied territories, including "Holy Jerusalem". He sought to justify his resort to a secret channel by arguing that the almost two years of public negotiations under U.S. sponsorship had reached a dead end. Some of the Arab foreign ministers agreed with the PLO chairman that the accord was an important first step, even if they were not all agreed on the next step or the final destination.

Jordan is the country most directly affected by the Israel-PLO accord. A day after the accord was presented to the world, in a much-more-modest ceremony at the State Department, the representatives of Jordan and Israel signed a common agenda for detailed negotiations aimed at a comprehensive peace treaty. This document bore the personal stamp of King Hussein, a noted realist who has steered his country through numerous regional crises since ascending the throne forty years ago. In 1988 the king turned over to the PLO the territorial claim to the West Bank, which Jordan had lost to Israeli in the June 1967 war. In 1991, when the Madrid conference convened he took the Palestinian negotiators into the peace talks as part of a joint delegation. The Jordanian-Israeli agenda was ready for signature in October 1992, but the king preferred to wait until progress had been made between Israel and the Palestinians. Great, therefore, was his anger when he found out that the PLO chairman had kept him in the dark about his secret negotiations with Israel.

Even after the king had studied the Israel-PLO accord and given it his public endorsement, his attitude remained somewhat ambivalent. On the one hand, he felt vindicated, having argued all along that the Arabs would have to come to terms with Israel. On the other hand, the new unholy alliance between the PLO and Israel could threaten Jordan's traditional position as "the best of enemies" with Israel. If Israel and the Palestinian entity became close economic partners, the result could be inflation and unemployment on the East Bank, leading to political instability. More than half of Jordan's 3.9

million people are Palestinian. If, for whatever reason, there is an influx of Palestinians from the West Bank to the East Bank, the pressure will grow to transform the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan into the Republic of Palestine. In short, *Jordan's very survival in its present form could be called into question.*

The Israel-PLO accord also had implications for Jordan's progress toward democracy. This process got under way with the elections of November, 1989 and provides the most effective answer to the challenge of the Islamic fundamentalists. Another election was scheduled for 8 November 1993. Arafat's deal, however, meant that some Palestinians could end up voting for two legislatures, one in Amman and one in Jericho. This split in the area of Palestinian self-government into two centres involves an additional complication in as much as Jordan has close political, economic, and administrative links with the West Bank, but only tenuous links with Gaza.

The other key "front-line" leader, President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria, greeted the Israel-PLO accord with a coolness verging on hostility, and gave free rein to the dissident Palestinian groups based in Damascus to attack it. President Asad is a cold and calculating realist, the Bismarck of the Middle East. His political career has been dominated by the desire to regain the Golan Heights, which Syria lost to Israel when he was minister of defence in 1967, and by the wider geo-political contest with Israel for mastery in the region. Asad agreed to participate in the peace process started at Madrid but insisted all along on a unified Arab front leading to related peace treaties. For most of 1993 it looked as if Syria would lead the way. Suddenly, Syria was upstaged by the PLO.

Asad felt that Arafat, by going off secretly on his own and striking a separate deal, had played into the hands of Rabin, who prefers to deal with the Arab partners individually and not as a bloc. Asad even compared Arafat's actions to those of Anwar Sadat, whose separate deal with Israel led to Egypt's isolation and vilification in the Arab world for nearly a decade. Israel along stood to benefit from the new deal, claimed Asad. He suspected that Israel made this deal with a weak PLO in order to draw Jordan next into its

orbit, to isolate Syria, and to consolidate its own regional hegemony.⁴¹ He reacted to the Israel-PLO deal by suspending Syria's participation in the Washington forum.

While the Washington forum remained in limbo, Israel and the PLO entered into intensive negotiations on the implementation of the Oslo accord in the Red Sea resort of Taba, in Cairo, and in other locations. These negotiations were billed as the first official, full-scale, face-to-face Israeli-Palestinian peace talks in history. But they were really back-to-back talks, because both sides spent most of their time with their backs to each other, their eyes looking homeward, taking great care not to say anything that could get them into trouble with their domestic constituencies.

Apart from the domestic constraints on the two sides, there were the inherent defects of the Oslo accord itself. The accord contains so many ambiguities and contradictions that it is open to widely differing interpretation. For the Israeli government the accord makes provision for an interim arrangement, which carries only the most general implications for the permanent transfer of territory or power. For the PLO, the accord is the first step toward full statehood. The two sides could not march forward together because they were intent on marching in different directions.

⁴¹ Patrick Seale, "Israel's Vision Fades on the Road to Damascus", *The Independent on Sunday*, 19 September 1993.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

Before the Muslim conquest Palestine was over run and administered by a number of dynasts and conquerors. Throughout the period socio-economic and demographic changes took place. Palestine came under the Arab Muslims during the Caliphate of Hazrat Umar in 637. It remained so for centuries together with a little break. With the passage of time, it came under the Mamluks of Egypt. In 1517 Ottoman Turks conquered Palestine and it remained four centuries under their control until 1917. The Allied powers i.e. the British occupied it during the First World War.

Under the Ottomans, the Jews were organized and they appealed to handover Palestine to them. In continuation of this endeavour, in 1882 a Bilu group (a group of Russian Jews) in Constantinople issued a manifesto demanding a home in Palestine. They proposed that they should beg it from the Sultan of Turkey, in whose empire Palestine lay. In 1897 Theodore Herzl found and advocated for an autonomous Jewish state at the Bastele congress in Switzerland. He recognized as the founder of political Zionism. Zionism was a reaction to the twin challenges to Jewish identity of assimilation by the Christian European environment and persecution by the Christian European environment. In the all-pervasive nationalist climate of nineteenth-century Europe, Zionism was also a positive assertion of Jewish national identity. Since then the Jewish sentiment and awareness of nationalism was to be strengthened, and efforts were to be made to collect the necessary funds for achieving the Zionist movement that grew up of this congress. By the outbreak of First World War, Zionism had grown from Herzl's visionary idea to a strong, organized world-wide movement. In 1902 Herzl met with Jews Multi - millionaire Lord Rosch Child. They decided that under the British flag Jews colony would be established in Palestine. The end of the Turkish Empire after the First World War, the new possibilities of getting home or state in Palestine opened up before the Zionists. During the war, the Husain-McMahon Correspondence was made and it encouraged the Arab nationalists for getting independence of the Arab lands. This expectation was shattered as a result of the Sykes - Picot

Agreement made at the same time that put emphasis on the division of the Arab lands between the British and the French keeping Palestine under international administration. In October 1916 Zionists submitted a memorandum to the British government for getting a dwelling land in Palestine.

It is needful to mention that the Jews had an inherent qualitative superiority over the indigenous Palestinian population. They were a Western, industrialized, socialistic, centrally controlled, highly mobilizable urban community led by an efficient, dedicated managerial elite supremely confident in its capacity to change the natural order of things. The leadership also had access to the talents and resources of the Jewish Diaspora, and to its political clout in the metropolitan centres of the West. Facing the Jewish community was a decentralized, pre-industrial, predominantly rural society led by a traditional, relaxed, patrician, urban elite supremely but naively confident in the irreversibility of the natural order of things. This leadership had no institutional links to the neighbouring Arab capitals, which themselves were struggling under various of Western tutelage.

Ignoring the wartime promises of Arab independence made under the Husain - McMahon Correspondence as well as the Sykes-Picot Agreement that provided internationalization of Palestine, the British Foreign Secretary Balfour made a deal with the Zionist. The world Jewry was organized into a powerful lobby and wielded great influence in both Washington and London. They had formed a provisional Executive Committee for general Zionist affairs.

Influential Zionists, notably Dr. Chaeim Weizmann, saw their opportunity to press Britain for a commitment to provide a home for the Jews in Palestine. In November 1917 Arthur Balfour, the British Secretary of State for foreign affairs, addressed a letter to Lord Rothschild, promising British support for the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jews people on the understanding that nothing shall be done which may be prejudicial to the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine. The British forces under the command of Gen. Sir Edmund Allenby captured Jerusalem in December 1917 and the British occupied the

rest of the country before the end of war in 1918. A British military administration was set up after the capture of Jerusalem. The Jews were charmed at this development.

Under the British the Arab-Jewish conflict took place as a result of the colonization of Palestine by the Jewish agriculturists and industrial workers. In April 1920 anti-Zionist riots took place over the question of immigration. A commission of inquiry attributed the riots to Arab disappointment at the non-fulfilment of the promises of independence and to their fear of economic and political subjection to the Zionists. In July military administration was replaced by the civilian administration. Sir Herbert Samuel, a British Jew, was appointed the first High Commissioner of Palestine.

The terms of the Mandate had yet to be settled and both Britain and Zionists worked for incorporation of the Balfour Declaration into the mandate instrument. Although the mandate was not approved by the League of Nations until July 1922, the administration in Palestine proceeded with the implementation of the Balfour Declaration and in August 1920 announced a quota of 16,500 Jewish immigrants for the first year. This announcement aroused Arab opposition, which was organized in the form of Christian - Muslim associations throughout the country. The Arabs bitterly opposed the Balfour Declaration and Jewish immigration and called for the prohibition of land sales to the Jews. Britain would neither accede to their demands nor to Jewish claim to majority in Palestine.

In May 1921 anti-Zionist riots resulted in 46 Jews being killed and 146 wounded. A commission of inquiry attributed the riots to the Arab fear of Jewish immigration. Impressed by Arab opposition, the British government issued in a White Paper in June 1922 an interpretation of its concept of the Jewish national home. The intention was not that Palestine, as a whole should be converted into a Jewish national home but that such a home should be established in Palestine. Immigration would not exceed the economic absorptive capacity of the country and steps would be taken to set-up a legislative council. The Arabs rejected these proposals, but the Jewish immigration continued.

During 1923 the British High commissioner tried to win Arab co-operation by the offer first of a legislative council and then of an Arab agency. The Arabs as falling far short of their national demands rejected both offers. In August 1929 negotiations were concluded for the formation of an enlarged Jewish agency to include the non-Zionist Jewish sympathizers throughout the world. In the same year, the Wailing Wall Incident took place. It was not good for Britain. A statement of policy made by the Colonial Secretary in October 1930 accorded some priority to Britain's obligation to the Arabs. These were seen by the Zionists to cut at the root of their programme, for if the Arab residents were to gain priority over that of the Jewish immigrant, potential of the Jewish national home would come to a stand still.

In February 1931 the British Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald addressed an explanatory letter to Chaim Weizmann, president of the Jewish Agency that was virtually a return to the 1922 White Paper policy. This letter convinced the Arabs that recommendations in their favour made on the spot could always be annulled in London by the Zionist influence at the centre of power. In December 1931 a Muslim congress was called at Jerusalem and attended by delegates from 22 Muslim countries to combat against the dangers of Zionism. In 1933 a boycott of Zionist and British goods was proclaimed. In the same year the Nazi accession to power gave a great impetus to Jewish immigration.

In November 1935 the Arab political parties collectively demanded the cessation of Jewish immigration, the prohibition of land transfer, and the establishment of democratic institutions. In April 1936 the Arab political parties formed an Arab Higher Committee presided over by Al Haj Amin al-Husaini, Mufti of Jerusalem, which called for a general strike. They maintained for six months simultaneously with the strike. Arab rebels, joined by volunteers from neighbouring Arab countries, took to the hills, and by the end of the year the movement assumed the dimensions of a national revolt. The strike was called off in October at the request of the heads of the neighbouring Arab states, but the armed rebellion continued. During this period, the British endeavoured for settlement through the Peel Commission and Woodhead Commission failed

because of the wider gap between the claims and counter-claims of the Jews and the Arabs.

Thereafter to settle the issue, the British on its own initiative called a conference of the Palestinian Arabs, the Jews and the representatives of the neighbouring Arab states in London in 1939. But no agreement took place at the London Conference. On May 17, 1939, the British government issued a White Paper that laid down new principles concerning Palestine. This White Paper marked the end of the Anglo - Zionist entente. The Zionist found them in Second World War in the paradoxical position of having the fight of the 1939 White Paper policy while rallying to Britain's side against the common enemy.

It is to be noted at this stage that in the 1930s the Arab countries were under foreign domination. These countries were trying to achieve independence. At that time development in Palestine drew the attention of the people of the Arab countries beyond Palestine. With the outbreak of the revolt of the Palestinian Arabs in 1930s the people of the Arab countries sided with their fellow brethren of Palestine. The governments of the Arab countries could not ignore the situation. At that time there was no possibility of Arab collaboration with the British over the mandatory policy in Palestine. Thus, those Arab Governments which, formally like Egypt and Iraq, or informally like Saudi Arabia, had established a *modus vivendi* with Great Britain either had to ignore the position of the Palestine Arabs or try, if possible by persuasion, if necessary by threats, to induce the British Government to a change of policy in Palestine. After the Arab rebellion had broken out in April 1936 it became impossible for the independent Arab Governments to ignore Palestine, and it became urgently necessary for them to try and influence events in Palestine. This realization marks the beginning of a new phase in Anglo-Arab relations and also over the formulation of policies towards Palestine.

The first official Arab move came in August 1936 when Taufiq as Suwaidi, the Prime Minister of Iraq, with the connivance, and possibly at the invitation of, the British Government made an unsuccessful attempt to persuade the Palestine Arab Higher Committee to call off the strike which had been declared at the beginning of the disturbances. Two months later, the

strike was called off as the result of an appeal to the Arab Higher Committee by Amir Abdullah of Trans Jordan and by Abdul Aziz ibn Saud, who declared their conviction that Great Britain would do justice to the Palestine Arabs. The wording of this appeal, which had clearly been made after prior consultation with the British Government, made it apparent that the British Government had become committed to find a solution to the Palestine troubles which would be acceptable to moderate Arab opinion as represented by the independent Arab Governments. From that time on, consultation between the British Government and the Arab Governments over the future of Palestine was continuous, and accompanied by a continuous pressure on the Arab Governments, from the Arab side, in the form of resolutions, demonstration, 'Palestine Days', etc. The rejection by the British Government of the Report of the Peel Commission, which recommended the partition of Palestine into Arab and Jewish areas, was the result of intimations received from the independent Arab states that such a solution would be unacceptable to them - or rather to public opinion in their countries. The solution imposed by the British Government in 1936, according to the provisions of what has become known as the 1939 White Paper, was promulgated after consultation with the Governments of Egypt, Iraq, Trans Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Yemen, representatives from which had attended the Conference in London preceding the issue of the White Paper, although these Governments felt unable publicly to commend this solution to the Palestine Arabs. Under the provisions of the 1939 White Paper Jewish immigration into Palestine was to be limited to a further 75,000, to be admitted during the succeeding five years, after which there was to be no further Jewish immigration without Arab consent. Land sales to Jews were to be forbidden over most of Palestine and restricted over most of the rest. This statement of policy, like the Anglo-Iraqi and Anglo-Egyptian Treaties, contained sufficient concessions to the Arab nationalist viewpoint to serve as a logical extension to the policy underlying these treaties, which was to secure the Middle East as a strategic base and as a corridor of communication for the military and commercial purposes of Great Britain and her allies by finding a *modus vivendi* with the increasing exigencies of Arab nationalism. The growing certainty of a Second World War

increased both the urgency and the difficulty of maintaining and widening that *modus vivendi*.

The consultations with and between the Arab states arising out of the Palestine rebellion had the effect of restoring the Arab world as a psychological entity both in the minds of outsiders and in the minds of Arabs themselves. The effect on the Arabs was seen in the assistance to the Palestine Arab cause given by Arab volunteers from Syria, Iraq and elsewhere and in the two pan-Arab Conferences held in Bludan in 1937 and in Cairo in 1938, both of which put heavy pressure on the Arab Governments who, in their turn, put heavy pressure on the British Government. Arab nationalists in all countries were beginning to look once more beyond the state boundaries.

Being dissatisfied with the publication of the British White Paper 1939, the Zionist leaders shifted their field of activities from UK to the USA during the Second World War. The Zionists took decisions in a meeting at the Biltmore Hotel in New York in 1942 called Biltmore programme. The programme demanded control by the Jewish Agency over immigration into Palestine and establishment of the country as a Jewish Commonwealth. The British Labour Party not only fully supported Zionist demands; it went further and in 1944 called for the transfer of Palestine Arabs to neighbouring countries. In the 1944 American presidential election campaign, both Republican and Democratic leaders called for the removal of restrictions on Jewish immigration to Palestine and Land purchases there. In August 1945 President Harry S. Truman requested Clement Atlee, the British Prime Minister, to facilitate the immediate admission of 100,000 Jews into Palestine, and in December the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives asked for unrestricted Jewish immigration up to the limit of the economic absorptive capacity of Palestine. Political pressure was applied on the British and American governments. As a result, illegal immigration was increased, and by 1946 Jewish terrorism against British troops in Palestine had been renewed. A Joint - Anglo - American Committee was sent to Europe and to the Middle East in 1946 to make recommendations concerning Jewish immigration to Palestine and the country's future. Towards the end of the Second World War

they (Jewish) embarked on the policy of violence designed to impose the Biltmore programme. They successfully made the mandate unworkable and Britain referred it to the United Nations on April 1947.

The UN General Assembly sent a Special Committee (UNSCOP) to Palestine to report on the situation, and its report proposed two plans; a majority plan for the partition of Palestine into two states, one Jewish and one Arab, with economic union; and a minority plan for a federal state. The Assembly adopted the majority plan. The plan divided Palestine into six principal parts, three of which, comprising 56% of the total area, were reserved for the Jewish state, and three (with the enclave of Jaffa), comprising 43% of the area, for the Arab state. It proved that Jerusalem would be an International Zone administered by the UN as the holy city of Jews, Muslims and Christians. The Arabs were determined to resist the partition of their country. The Jews were equally determined to create a Jewish state in Palestine. The Arabs discarded to accept this decision, In April 1948 the Jewish forces swung into full-scale attack and, by the time the Mandate was terminated on 14 May, 400,000 Arabs had evacuated their homes to become refugees in neighbouring Arab countries. In this connection it is to be noted that as long as the British remained in the country, until the middle of May 1948, the Arab-Jewish conflict was a civil war between Jewish and Arab Palestinians. On May 14, 1948 when the mandate formally came to an end, the last British units departed and the state of Israel was proclaimed. Within a few hours it won de facto recognition from President Truman.

With the proclamation of the Jewish State of Israel the neighbouring Arab states led an invasion. But they did badly. The failure of the Arab states in 1948 created a great shock throughout the region, adding the Arab-Israeli interstate dimension to the local conflict.

It is evident that in the Middle Eastern politics the most constant factor since 1948 has been the enduring hostility between the Jews, the Palestine Arabs and Arab states. As a result, two-thirds of the Arab inhabitants lost their lands and homes. The establishment of Israel thus resulted, in a Diaspora in reverse.

The creation of Israel gave a powerful stimulus to the Arab nationalist sentiment. This great surge of nationalism produced new stresses and strains

in the Middle Eastern politics. It drove a wedge between the newly-emergent nationalist Arab states with a strong socialistic streak and the traditionalist Arab regimes with a strong aversion to socialism and even to liberalism. This made it inevitable that the Middle East should be subjected to the pressures of cold war politics and that it should become a cockpit of the Big Power struggle for world supremacy.

It is to be noted that political developments in the Middle East have largely been shaped by the interaction of certain basic factors chief of which are: the plight of the Palestinian refugees: the subservience of Israel to the West: the intra-Arab rivalry and the cut and thrust of the Big Power politics. These factors were demonstrably at work in the building up of subsequent crisis and its catastrophic denouement.

For the Palestinian Arabs the emergence of Israel meant the loss of a homeland in which for hundreds of years they had constituted an overwhelming majority. Now, to the bitterness of dispossession and the humiliation of defeat was added a vast refugee problem. It was ironic that Israel, a haven for homeless Jews, should have rendered homeless seventy per cent of the Arab population of Palestine. Refused permission to return to their homes in Palestine and not assimilated by the other Arab states, who feared that, would be tantamount to recognizing Israel; they clustered in refugee encampments, maintained at subsistence level by the United Nations. For almost twenty years they remained a pathetic symbol of Arab opposition to the creation of Israel.

From the traumatic experience of 1948 up to the mid - 60's, the activities of the bitterly angry Palestinians living in refugee camps consisted of occasional forays into Israel to cause whatever damage they could inflict on Israel. Except for the *fedayeen* raids from Gaza in 1955, such forays were not very effective and often ended in disasters. Majority of the Palestinians still believed that the various Arab governments will be able to find a solution to the Palestine problem that would make it possible for them to return to their 'homes'. This illusion was rudely shattered in June, 1967 as a result of Arab defeat. To take the matter in their own hands for honourable solution a

number of guerrilla groups emerged among the Palestinian Arabs. The unification of these groups in 1964 led to the emergence of PLO. With passage of time, the Arab states recognised it and Yasir Arafat, a civil engineer by profession, took the leadership.

Even though the Palestinian guerrillas were divided into a number of 'parties' (about which later) whose mutual relationship was not always cordial, they succeeded in giving hope to and raising the morale of the Palestinians living in sub-human conditions in the refugee camps. The guerrillas, after all, were fighting to preserve the Palestinian entity, and in this the refugees saw their only hope of return to a normal human existence. And it is this entity that Israel was trying to destroy or just refuses to recognize its existence.

Under the prevailing situation various efforts were made to settle the Palestine issue but without any results. The 1970s saw another Arab-Jewish War (1973) and US initiatives to solve the problem. Towards the end of 1970s a radical change took place in the mind of Egyptian President Sadat. The continuing stalemate and the coming of a rightist government to power in Israel after 1977 elections made Sa'dat think that only a spectacular move could break the vicious circle of mutual distrust and continuous hostility in the Middle East. His trip to Jerusalem on November, 19, 1977 during which he talked with the Israeli leaders including the new Prime Minister Begin and addressed the Knesset was such a move. Though Sa'dat maintained in course of his discussions that a comprehensive peace plan ensuring the legitimate rights of the Palestinians was a prerequisite for a durable peace in the Middle East, the Israeli leaders did not commit themselves. The subsequent talks between the two countries – in Ismailia on December 25, 1977, in Cairo on January 11, 1978 and in Jerusalem on January 16 did not achieve much partly because of the small degree of autonomy that Israel was prepared to concede to the West Bank and Gaza and partly because of the continuation of the programme for the establishment of settlements in the occupied territories.

Eventually the talks between Carter, Sa'dat and Begin took place in the Presidential Lodge at Camp David from September 4 to September 17, 1978,

and the 'agreements' were signed ceremonially amidst jubilation on the lawn of the White House on September 17. In reality, two documents were signed: (a) "A Framework for Peace in the Middle East Agreed at Camp David", and (b) "Framework for the Conclusion of a Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel".

Following the signing of the Treaty, there were a number of meetings between the two countries on the *modus operandi* of Israeli withdrawal and the establishment of Egyptian authority over the Sinai in stages and on the larger question of Palestinian self-rule. While Sa'dat's credibility in the Arab world depended on the kind of self-rule for the Palestinian that he could extract from Israel, for Israel, it was just a 'talking point'. It became quite clear as the negotiations preceded that to Israel Palestinian self-rule did not mean more than the rule through the autonomous municipal and local councils under the watchful eye and the military might of Israel. As the concept of 'linkage' between the conclusion of the peace treaty and the establishment of Palestinian autonomy was whittled away in the pre-treaty negotiations, Sa'dat actually had no bargaining power on this point and had to be satisfied with the assurance that Israel would implement the provisions for the establishment of Palestinian autonomy in good faith and in good time. In *realpolitik* this sort of naiveté can only lead to disillusionment, and it did not take long for Sa'dat to be disillusioned. The failure of the Arab states brought PLO to the forefront.

It is to be recalled that the formation of the PLO reflected the Palestinian shift in orientation from the pan-Arab to a more particularistic self-image. This shift in itself was an indication of loss of faith in the ability of the Arab countries to help the Palestinian cause to accelerate the guerrilla movements. The guerrilla movement amended the PLO charter specifically to include armed struggle as the only means of liberation. The guerrilla movement argued that Palestine was not on the agenda of the international community nor, for that matter, on that of any of the Arab countries, and that there was no alternative to auto-emancipation for placing it on the agenda. It argued that the Palestinians had to take matters in their own hands, and through guerrilla operations would be able to achieve the cherished goal of establishing a Palestinian state.

With the passage of time, a change in Palestinian outlook took place. The PLO under the leadership of Arafat began from the early 1970s to undergo a slow, agonizing, but cumulative learning process in the face of these realities. This process is distinctly discernible in the resolutions taken by the successive PNCs, of which there have been twenty since the first was held in 1964. These resolutions have shown an evolutionary process in the reformulation of the objectives of the PLO, away from total liberation, and in their reformulation of the means for attaining these objectives, away from exclusive reliance on the armed struggle. With the passage of time evolutions took place in the resolutions adopted by the PNC which eventually put emphasis on diplomacy against armed struggle and for reciprocal recognition. This it did in the Algiers session in 1988.

It is to be noted that as a result of the change of PLO's stand, the USA recognized it as the sole representative of the Palestinians. By this time, after the first intifada of 1987, Jordan withdrew its claim on the West Bank. This congenial situation opened the door for mutual talks between the PLO and Israel. As a result, after much debate and persuasion the Oslo Accord was signed and Palestinian autonomy was recognized by Israel. This also resulted the reciprocal recognition. The main features of the Palestinian Autonomy Accords are the withdrawal of Israeli forces from parts of the Gaza Strip and West Bank, and affirmed a Palestinian right of self-government within those areas through the creation of a Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority. Palestinian rule was to last for a five-year interim period during which "permanent status negotiations" would commence - no later than May 1996 - in order to reach a final agreement. Major issues such as Jerusalem, Palestinian refugees, Israeli settlements, and security and borders were to be decided at these permanent status negotiations. Israel was to grant interim self-government to the Palestinians in phases. Along with the principles, the two groups signed *Letters of Mutual Recognition* - the Israeli government recognized the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, while the PLO recognized the right of the state of Israel to exist and renounced terrorism as well as other violence, and its desire for the destruction of the Israeli state.

The aim of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations was to establish a Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority, an elected Council, for the Palestinian people in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, for a transitional period not exceeding five years, leading to a permanent settlement based on United Nations Security Council Resolution 242, and 338, an integral part of the whole peace process. In order that the Palestinians govern themselves according to democratic principles, free and general political elections would be held for the Council. Jurisdiction of the Palestinian Council would cover the West Bank and Gaza Strip, except for issues that would be finalized in the permanent status negotiations. The two sides viewed the West Bank and Gaza as a single territorial unit. The five-year transitional period would commence with Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Jericho area. Permanent status negotiations would begin as soon as possible between Israel and the Palestinians. The negotiations would cover remaining issues, including: Jerusalem, Palestinian refugees, Israeli settlements, security arrangements, borders, relations and cooperation with other neighbours, and other issues of common interest.

There would be a transfer of authority from the Israel Defence Forces to the authorized Palestinians, concerning education and culture, health, social welfare, direct taxation, and tourism. The Council would establish a strong police force, while Israel would continue to carry the responsibility for defending against external threats. An Israeli-Palestinian Economic Cooperation Committee would be established in order to develop and implement in a cooperative manner the programmes identified in the protocols. A redeployment of Israeli military forces in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip would take place. The Declaration of Principles would enter into force one month after its signing. All protocols annexed to the Declaration of Principles and the Agreed Minutes pertaining to it, were to be regarded as part of it. This accord has created a ray of hope for mutual settlement of the thorny problem for establishing durable peace in the area under study.

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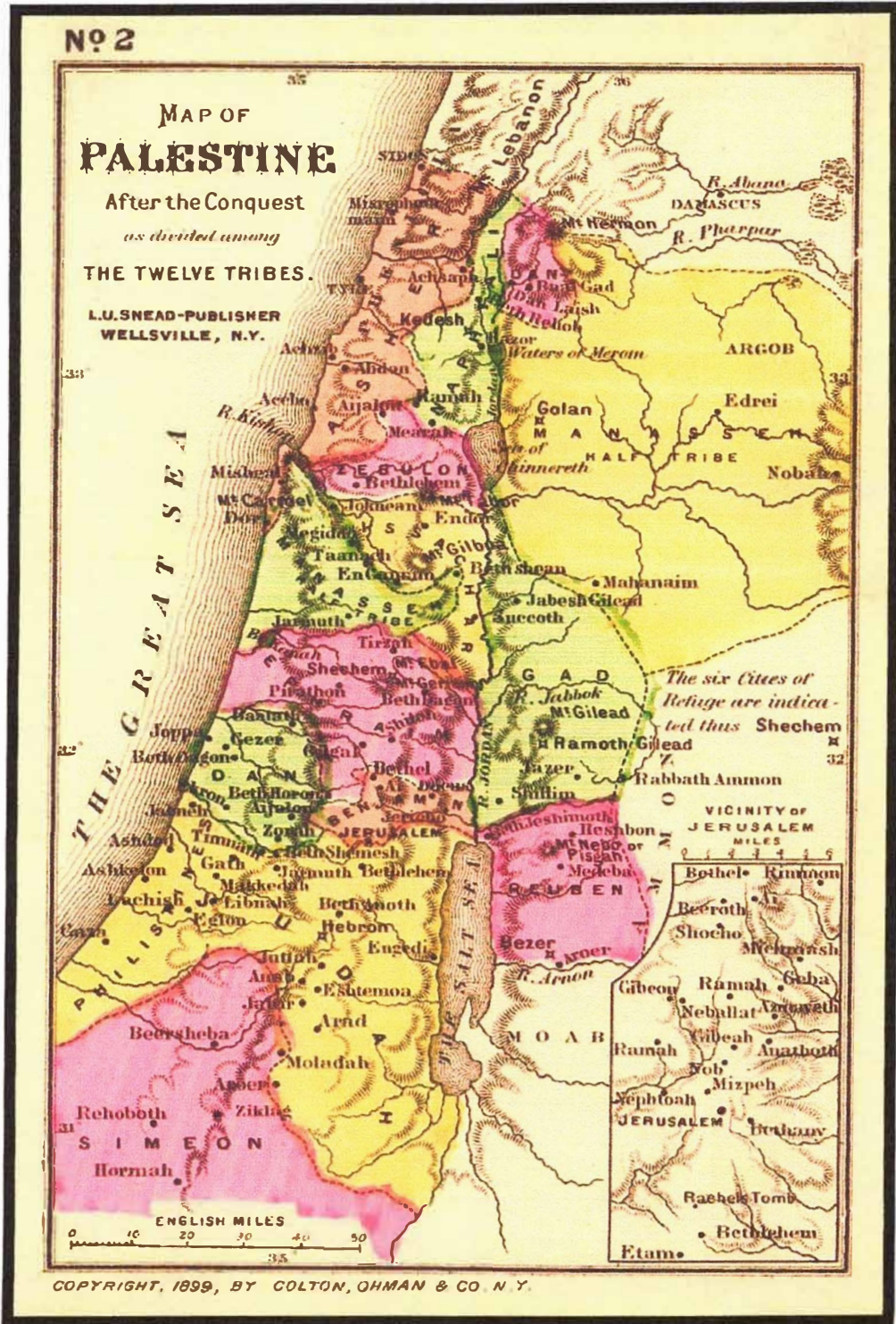
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Appendices

Appendix - I Map of Palestine



Appendix - II Israel within Boundaries and Cease-Fire Lines, 1993

